

SPANISH COLONIAL MAIL IN MEXICO

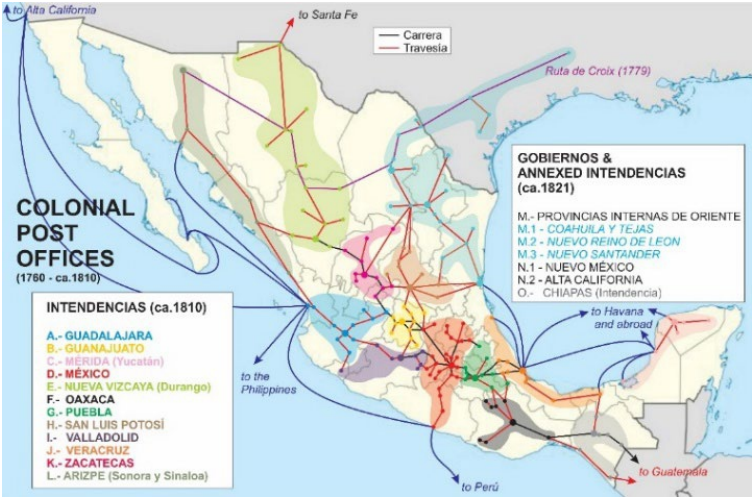
BACKGROUND: The Viceroyalty of **NUEVA ESPAÑA** (New Spain) encompassed a vast portion of the North American continent. It far surpassed the natural resources and wealth of any other territory in the New World and was also the most populated and culturally advanced of the conquered Americas. Consequently, it became exceedingly important to the Spanish Crown, thus the early establishment of the Viceroyalty which was to govern it for nearly three centuries beginning soon after the conquest of the Mexica (Aztec) Empire in 1521 and lasting until the end of the War of Independence in 1821.

SCOPE: From a postal history perspective, the handling of mail, closely monitored by the authorities, was a monumental task given the vast and challenging geography of the viceroyalty. These conditions made communications difficult to manage and regulate, as evidenced by the complex network of postal land routes within New Spain shown on the map below with the approximate boundaries of the administrative divisions of the Viceroyalty after 1786. Since the exhibit is defined by the historical boundaries of Mexico after independence, the Chiapas Intendancy is included, even though it was not annexed until 1824, when it severed political ties with Guatemala and the newly formed Central American republics. The exhibit also features colonial mail from former Mexican territories lost during the 19th century as a result of the Texas War of Independence and the Mexican-American War.

TREATMENT: The exhibit follows the chronological and administrative progression of the colonial mail system; beginning with early pieces from the 17th and 18th centuries, then covering the Correo Mayor concession, continuing with the Real Renta de Correos, when the postal structure came under direct Crown control. Afterwards, the material presented is organized by service type, reflecting also the successive rate changes accordingly. Finally, it will take also into account geographical particularities, administrative measures for mail handling, and noteworthy events of historical relevance.

Exhibit Plan

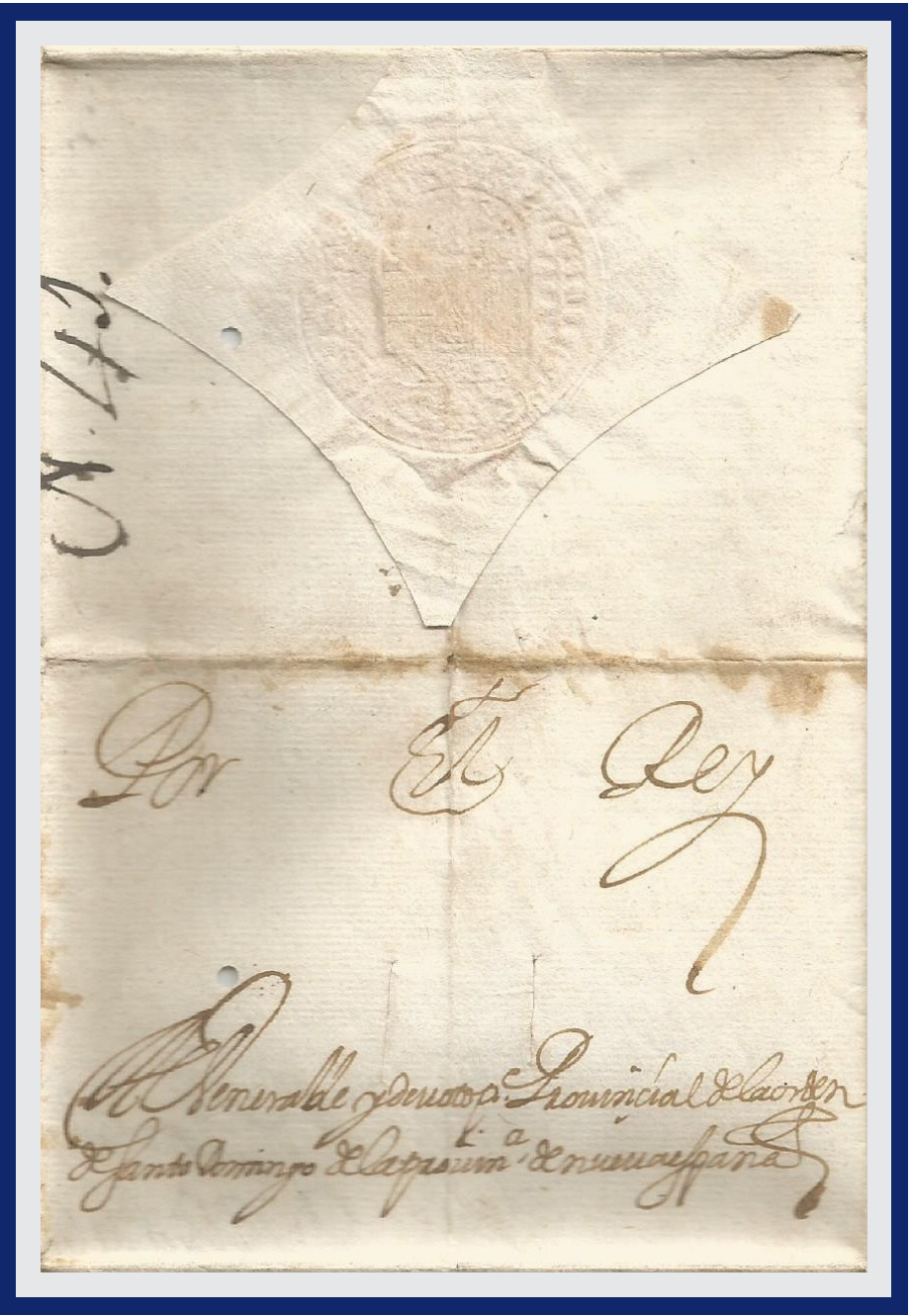
- 1.0 Royal & Viceregal Mail (17th Century)
- 2.0 Early Ecclesiastical Mail (16th and 17th Centuries)
- 3.0 Early Private Mail & Carriers (17th and 18th Centuries)
- 4.0 *Correo Mayor* concession (1579-1766)
- 5.0 *Real Renta de Correos* (1766-1821) – *Fee paid on arrival*
- 6.0 *Real Renta de Correos* (1766-1821) – *Pre-paid mail*
- 7.0 Certified Mail (1766-1821)
- 8.0 Official Mail (1766-1821)
- 9.0 Outgoing Maritime Mail (1764-1821).
- 10.0 Incoming Maritime Mail (1764-1821).
- 11.0 Spanish Patriotic and Insurgent postmarks (1809-1821)
- 12.0 Post-Independence Spanish Mail (1821-1825)



ADDITIONAL NOTES: Rate notations were not applied to mail during the *Correo Mayor* period, so the fees collected are still subject to debate, study and research. For unrated items sent after the Crown takeover, a single-letter rate fee will be assumed if the piece lacks enough information to determine the true charge, especially on fronts and on official correspondence with uncertain franking privileges. Important items in the exhibit are framed with gray matting, while items of outstanding relevance or uniqueness are further highlighted with an additional blue mat.



Royal and Viceregal Mail (17th Century). 1.1. *Correo del Rey*.



Date: 19/Apr/1635.
Rate: Royal franchise.
Route: Madrid - Cádiz/fwd. - Veracruz/fwd. -Mexico.
Other: Endorsed “*Por el Rey*”.

Order sent by King **Philip IV of Spain** to the Provincial (leader) of the Order of Santo Domingo in New Spain, most likely carried by an “*Aviso*”. On the reverse, the letter was sealed with the monarch’s personal arms in wax over paper, which remain intact. Inside, it further contains the handwritten signature of the king.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, mail between Spain and New Spain was carried mainly on the fleets and galleons of the **Carrera de Indias**, which sailed from Seville (and later Cádiz) to Veracruz, where mail was redistributed across the mainland. To improve regularity, the Crown created the **Avisos System**, using lighter ships for urgent and official dispatches.

1.2. Correo del Virrey.

In 1607, as part of the settlement between the Crown and **Alonso Díez de la Barrera** to secure his appointment as the **2nd Correo Mayor** of New Spain, the basic conditions of the office were established. Among them was the obligation to dispatch, under postal franchise, all correspondence from the Viceroy, the authorities, and the government administration.



Date: 8/Nov/1628.
Rate: Official franchise.
Route: Mexico - Veracruz
~ 83 leguas (397 km).



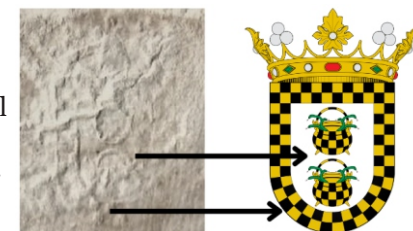
Folded letter endorsed **VIRREY**, indicating that it originated from the office of the Viceroy and was therefore exempt from postage. Sent by Rodrigo Pacheco y Osorio de Toledo, 15th Viceroy of New Spain.

Facsimile of the Viceroy's signature.

Date: 24/Aug/1630.
Rate: Official franchise.
Route: Mexico - Veracruz
~ 83 leguas (397 km).
Other: Endorsement **VIRREY**.

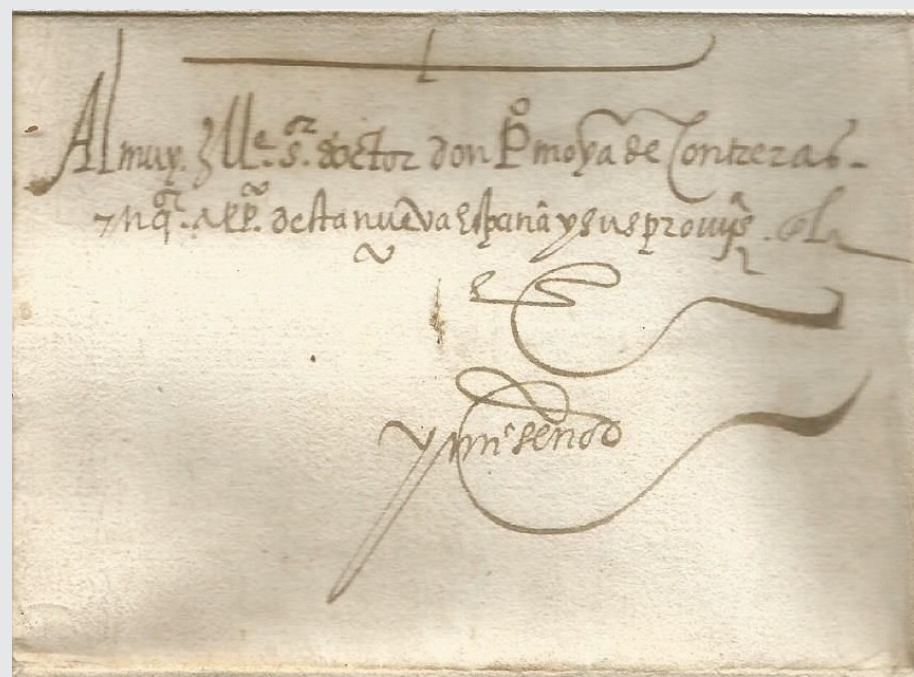
Although the handwriting in this letter differs markedly from the previous one, this can be explained by the use of **escribanos**, while the Viceroy's signature (shown to the left) appears almost identical in both cases.

Both items are sealed with the Viceroy's personal arms set in wax over wafer paper.



2

Early Ecclesiastical Mail (16th & 17th Centuries).



INQUISITION MAIL

Date: 24/Sep/1572. **Rate:** Unkwnon.
Route: Veracruz - Mexico ~ 83 leagues (397 km).

Lettersheet addressed to **Pedro Moya de Contreras**, the first General Inquisitor of New Spain. Sent two years after the founding of the Mexican Inquisition and seven years before the creation of the Correo Mayor.



INCOMING MAIL FROM ROME

Date: 15/Aug/1668.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Rome - Cádiz/fwd. -Havana - Veracruz/fwd. - Mexico.

Outstanding piece sent in the 17th century from Rome to Mexico City. It was carried by the **Avisos System** under the responsibility of the **Correo Mayor of Indias**, and from Veracruz to Mexico by the **Correo Mayor of New Spain**. The front bears the handwritten legend "**2^a Via**", indicating that this was a duplicate sent through a different route and ship. On the reverse, it features a wafer seal with the Jesuit arms, along with a reception note stating that it arrived on the **Aviso** of May 1669, a transit of nine months.



Early Private Mail & Carriers (17th and 18th Centuries).

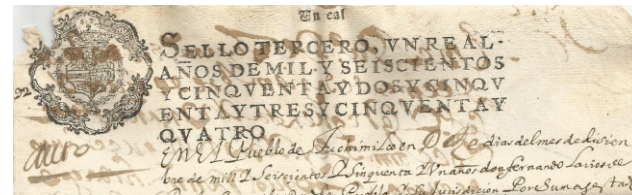
In **New Spain**, the monopoly of the **Correo Mayor** was intended to guarantee exclusive control over the handling of correspondence, carried by its **official couriers** along established routes and itineraries. In practice, however, private correspondence persisted throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, forwarded extralegally by individuals known as **portadores** (*private carriers*) outside the official channels.

OFFICIAL COURIER

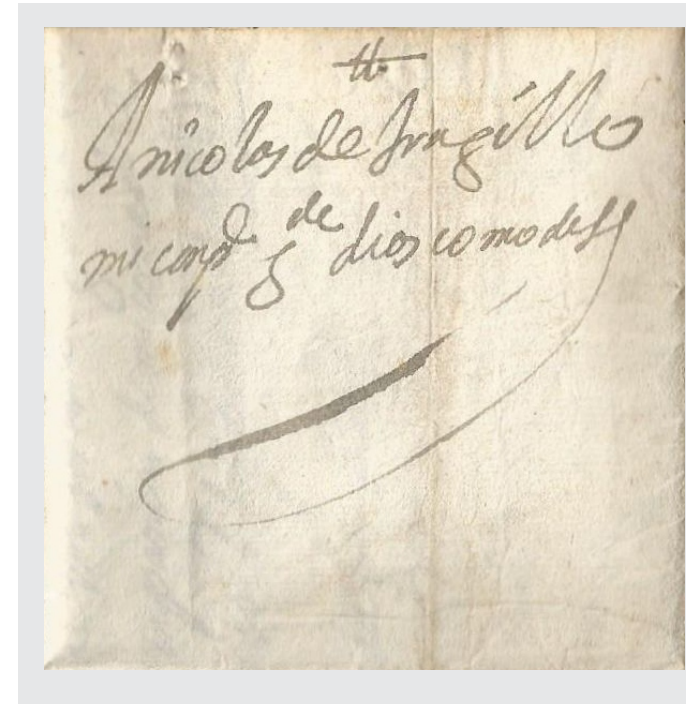
Date: 12/Dec/1651.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Puebla - Tochimilco
~ 12 leguas (49.5 km).



Wrapper endorsed **Auto**, a term used for files of judicial nature. Its content still survives, consisting of **Papel Sellado** (revenue paper) of the type **Sello Tercero**. Its judicial nature and the involvement of official authorities allow us to assume that it was handled by the **teniente** of the **Correo Mayor** in Puebla.



Facsimile of the revenue paper's printed heading contained in the piece.



PRIVATE CARRIER

Date: 4/Sep/1652.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Jalapa - Unknown.



Folded letter sent when Jalapa was still a small town of about 1,000 inhabitants. The contents mention a **portador** named **Joseph Camarillo**, entrusted with delivering a libranza to the addressee. The lack of a written destination, together with the use of a private carrier, suggests that the letter was not handled by the Correo Mayor.

OFFICIAL COURIER

Date: c. 1710.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Unknown - Mexico.

Wrapper endorsed "**1^a Vía**" indicating it was the first of several copies sent along different routes to ensure delivery. Although the contents are lost and the origin unknown, its destination and the note on the reverse, stating that it enclosed documents on a land sale and testamentary taxes, support the assumption that it was handled by the **Correo Mayor**.



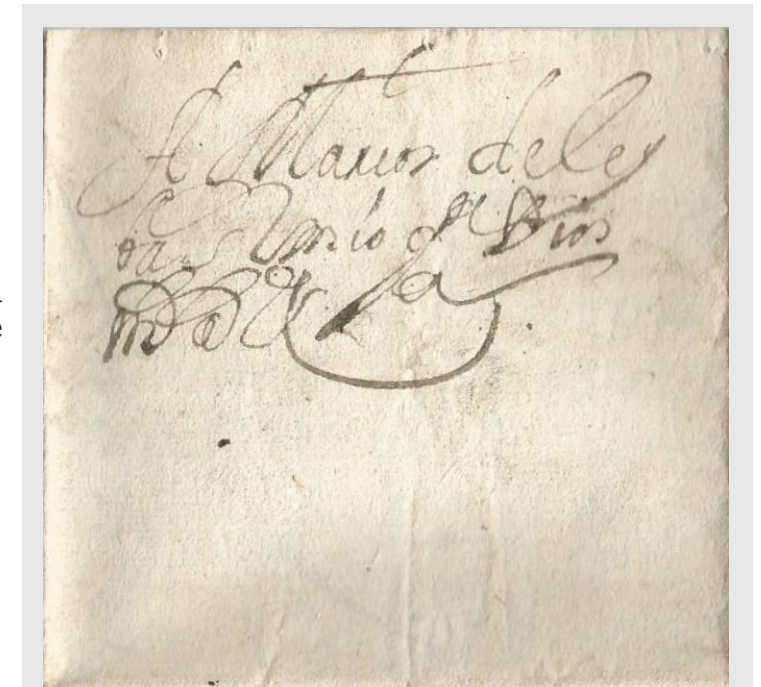
PRIVATE CARRIER

Date: 19/Sep/ 1701.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Santiago Tecali
(today's Tecali de Herrera, Puebla) - Unknown.

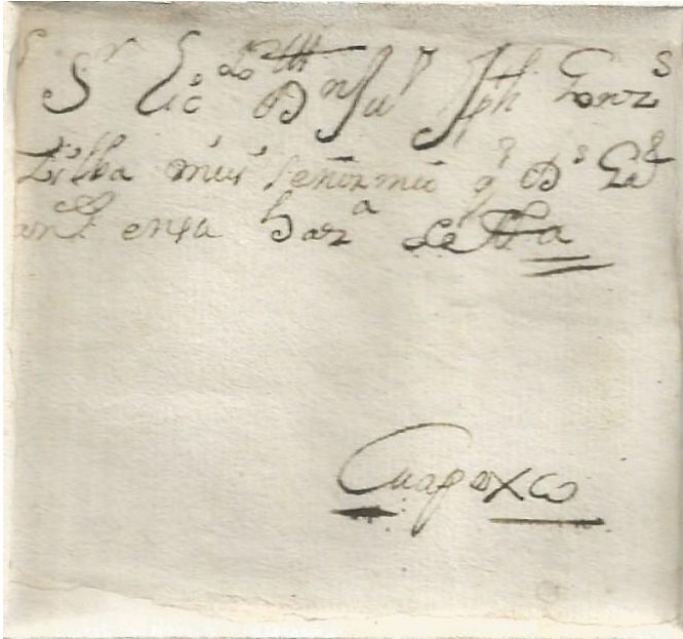
Folded letter whose contents mention a **portador** delivering a previous message to the writer:

"Viniéndome a casa me alcanzó el portador en ste Pueblo de Tecali con su carta y las buenas nuevas de su salud [...]" (sic) ("As I was coming home, the carrier from this town of Tecali caught up with me and delivered your letter with the good news of your health").

This implies that the letter was carried privately.



3 - Early Official Couriers and Private Carriers (Cont.)



PRIVATE CARRIER

Date: ca. 1700.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Unknown -
San Felipe Cuapexco (Puebla).

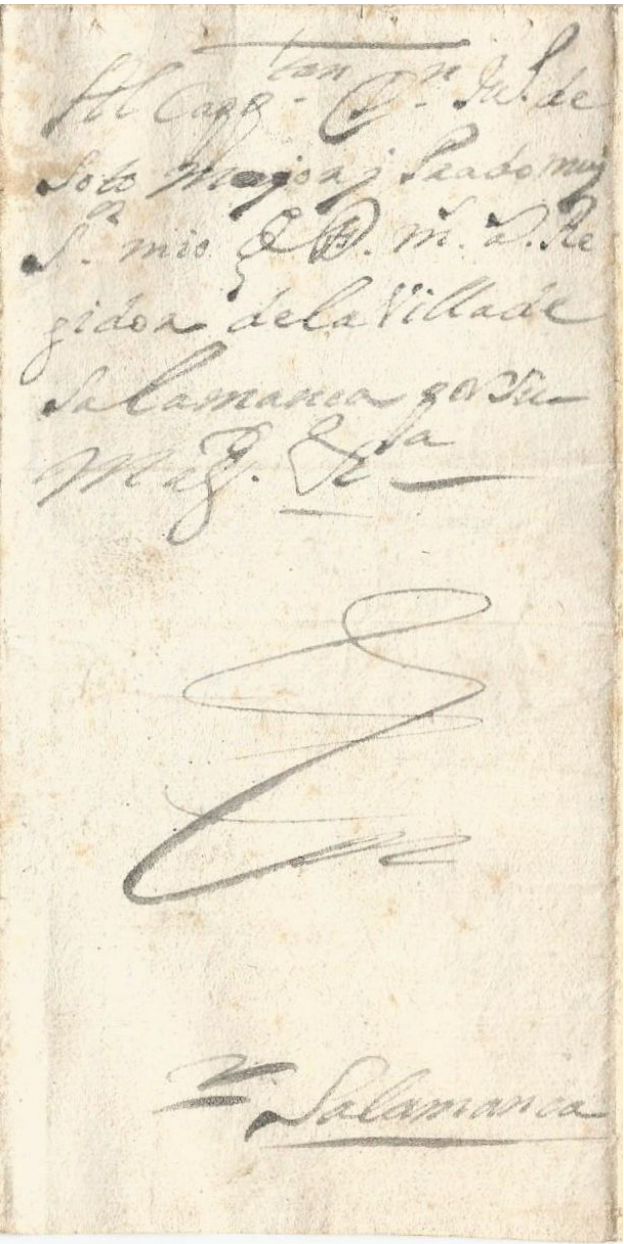


Wrapper whose calligraphy suggests a date around 1700. It lacks features that would link it to the Correo Mayor and was most likely carried by private hands, as it was delivered to a minor and outlying location.

PRIVATE CARRIER

Date: 20/Jun/1702.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Irapuato - Salamanca ~ 7 leagues (30 km).

Folded letter sent during the Correo Mayor period, when an **estafeta** was already operating in Irapuato. Its contents do not mention a portador, yet there is not enough evidence to assert that it was handled by said service. No colonial postmarks from this town are known, although they must have existed.



PRIVATE CARRIER

Date: 29/Oct/1753.
Rate: “1r”.
Route: Mexico - San Cristóbal Polaxtla (Puebla)
~ 28 leagues (119 km).

Folded letter with a note on the reverse mentioning a portador:

“Al portador le di un real que me pidió a su cuenta para irse” (I gave the carrier one real that he asked for on his own to leave).

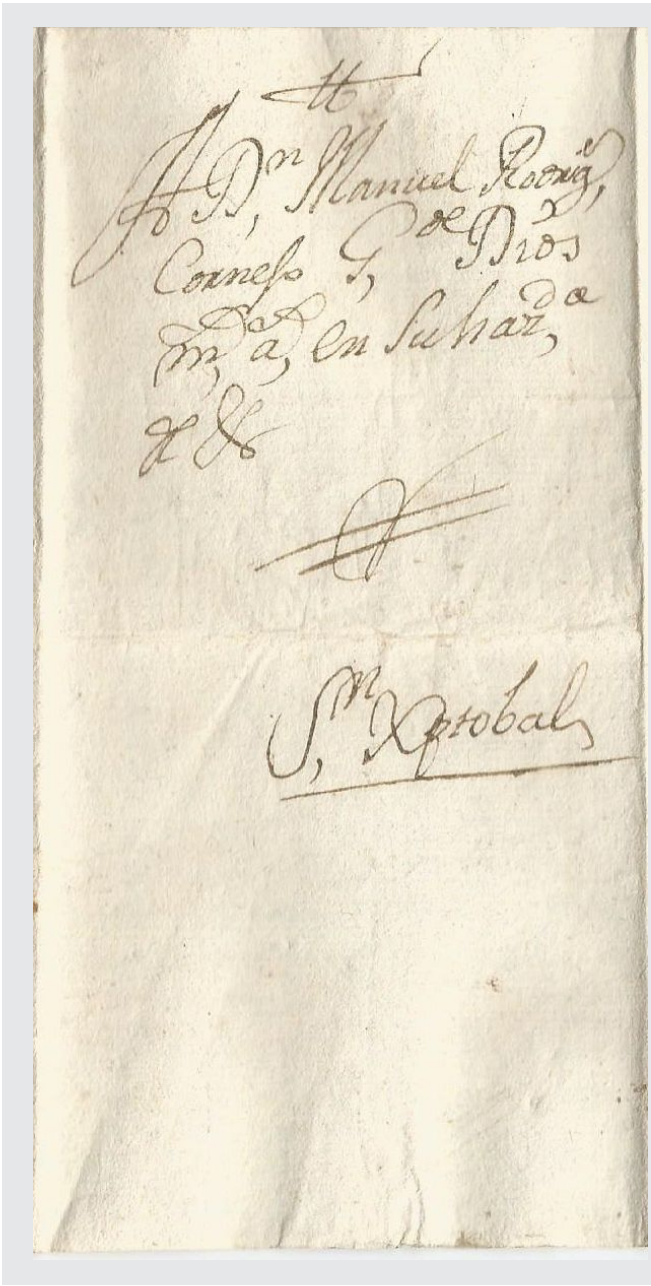
This constitutes the earliest known instance of a rate being noted on a cover in New Spain.

EARLIEST KNOWN LETTER FROM NEW SPAIN WITH A RATE NOTATION

PRIVATE CARRIER

Date: 26/Jun/1702.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Guanajuato - Salamanca ~ 15.5 leagues (65 km).

Folded letter sent only six days after the piece to the lower left, by the same sender to the same addressee. Its contents mention a **portador** named **Pedro Martín**, which conclusively rules out any involvement by the Correo Mayor. In both cases, the use of a private carrier is explained by the short distance between origin and destination.



Established in 1579, the **Correo Mayor de la Nueva España** held exclusive mail rights for nearly two centuries, with unreliable service quality. Due to inefficiency and abuse, the Crown ended the concession in 1766, creating a state-run postal system. The rates observed during the Correo Mayor period have not been verified and remain largely unknown.



Correo Mayor postmarks date back to 1736, with the earliest recorded in **Veracruz**; however, most surviving letters are from the final six years of the service (1760-1766). The map to the right shows the twelve **estafetas** with known postmarks, along with the routes connecting them.



A LATER USE OF THE OLDEST KNOWN POSTMARK OF NEW SPAIN

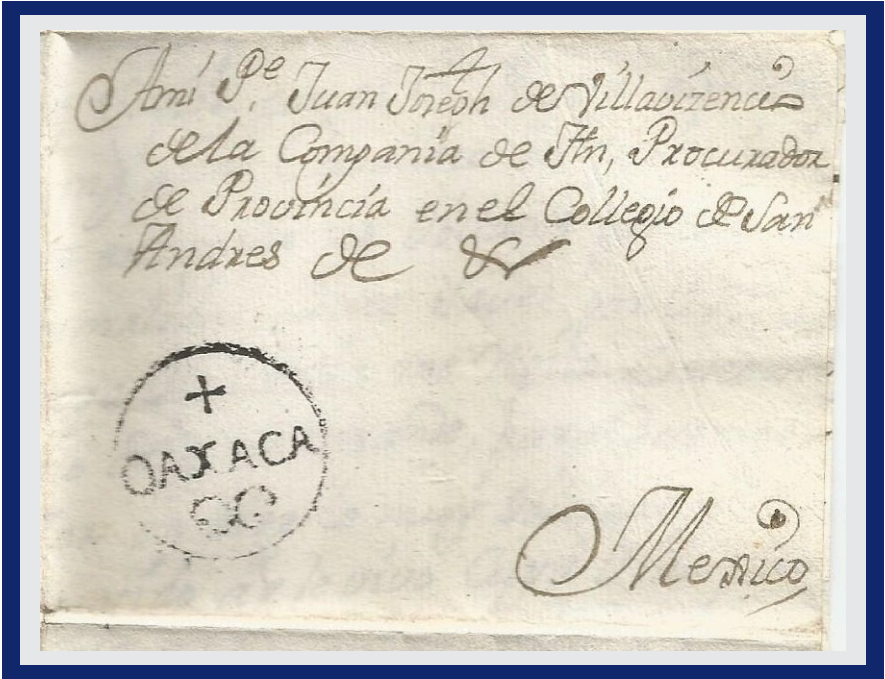
Date: 11/May/1756.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Veracruz - Mexico ~ 83 leagues (397 km).
Postmark: Circular **COREO/ MAYOR/ DE VERA/ CRVZ**, used from 1736 to 1767.

Folded letter bearing the oldest known postmark used by the Correo Mayor of New Spain.

FOUR COVERS DOCUMENTED

Date: 24/May/1756.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Oaxaca - Orizaba/fwd. - Mexico ~ 97 leagues (466 km).
Postmark: Circular +**OAXACA**, used from 1756 to 1767.

Mail service in Oaxaca dates back to the period of the first Correo Mayor of New Spain, Martín de Olivares. By 1752, a weekly mail between Mexico and Oaxaca was formally established.



Date: c. 1767.
Rate: “3r” (Double letter).
Route: Oaxaca - Orizaba/fwd. - Mexico ~ 97 leagues (466 km).
Postmark: Circular +**OAXACA**, used from 1756 to 1767.

Wrapper also bearing the Oaxaca Correo Mayor postmark, **the rating mark indicates it was sent after the takeover of the Real Renta.**

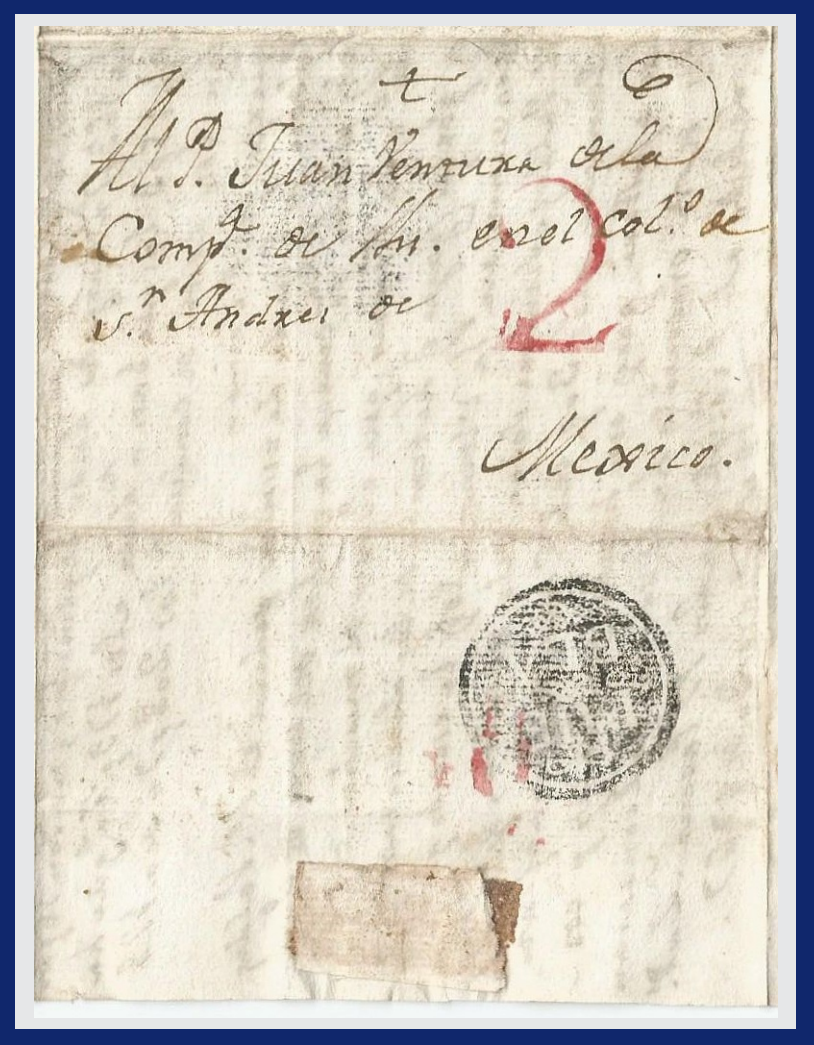
THREE ITEMS KNOWN



Date: 3/May/1767.
Rate: “2r” Single letter.
Route: Puebla - Mexico ~ 22 leagues (106 km).
Postmark: Circular **PUE/BLA**, used from c. 1765 to 1767.

Although this is the only documented example of the postmark, its style and Jesuit context have led postal historians to accept it universally and by convention as originating from the Correo Mayor era, especially since the next known postmark from Puebla appears only in 1782.

SOLE DOCUMENTED SURVIVOR



4. Correo Mayor Postmarks (Cont.)



Date: 27/Jun/1760.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Patzcuaro - Valladolid/fwd. - Mexico ~ 72 leagues (346 km).
Postmark: Fancy COR./DE./PASQ., used in writing ink in 1760.

The Pátzcuaro Correo Mayor postmark is notable for its distinctive pomegranate-shaped outline.



Date: 29/May/1767.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Valladolid - Mexico ~ 64 leagues (307 km).
Postmark: Fancy CORO/ DE/ VALLA (Valladolid Type II), used in red ink from 1766 to 1770.

Although all six surviving items bearing the **Valladolid Type II** postmark date from shortly after the abolition of the Correo Mayor, it has conventionally been considered to have originated in that period.



ONLY ONE KNOWN



Valladolid Correo Mayor Type I postmark.



Valladolid Correo Mayor Type II postmark.

CERTIFIED MAIL

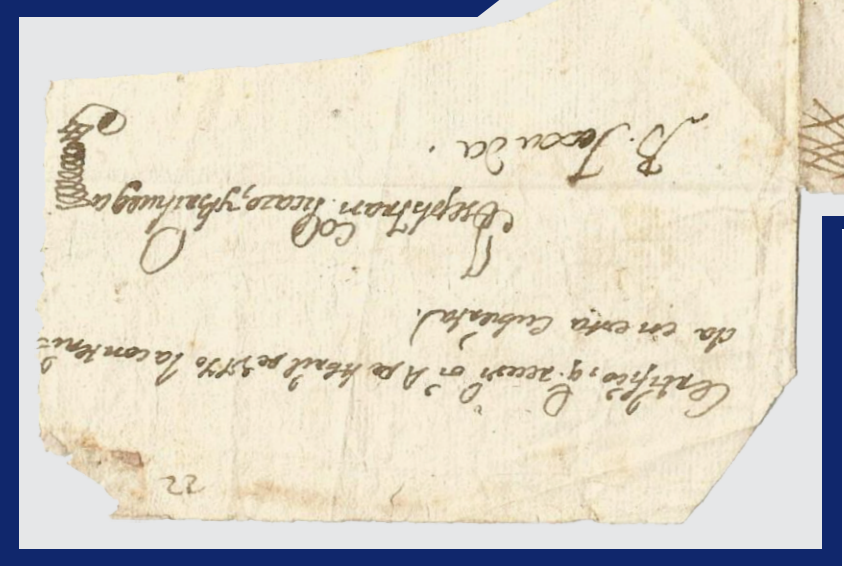
Date: 4/Apr/1770.
Rate: At least 16 rs. for a certified single letter.
Route: Valladolid - Mexico ~ 64 leagues (307 km).
Postmark: Fancy CORO/ DE/ VALLA (Valladolid Type II), used in red ink from 1766 to 1770.
Other: Handwritten “Certificación a Valladolid”.



Only two certified fronts bearing a Correo Mayor postmark are known. This example bears the surname and signature of postmaster **Juan Antonio Moche** along with the rare endorsement “**En parte**”, an early term for certified letters, reflecting their entry in the postal log (*parte*) for purposes of traceability.

Date: 30/Nov/1760.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Valladolid - Mexico ~ 64 leagues (307 km).
Postmark: Fancy CORO/ DE/ VALLA (Valladolid Type I), used in red ink from 1760 to 1767.

There are seven recorded surviving covers bearing the heart-shaped **Valladolid Type I** postmark.



4. Correo Mayor Postmarks (Cont.)



Date: 23/May/1751.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Queretaro - Mexico
~ 42 leagues (176 km).
Postmark: Fancy **CORO/ DE QUE/ RETA/ RO**, used from 1751 to 1760.

The Queretaro Correo Mayor postmark is the second-oldest known of New Spain.

◀ **EX-CAMINO**

ONLY KNOWN SURVIVING CORREO MAYOR LETTER SENT TO A LOCATION OTHER THAN MEXICO CITY

Date: 9/Dec/1765.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Guadalajara - Guanajuato /fwd. - Mexico
~ 132 leguas (554 km).
Postmark: Circular **GUADALAXARA**, used from 1765 to 1766.

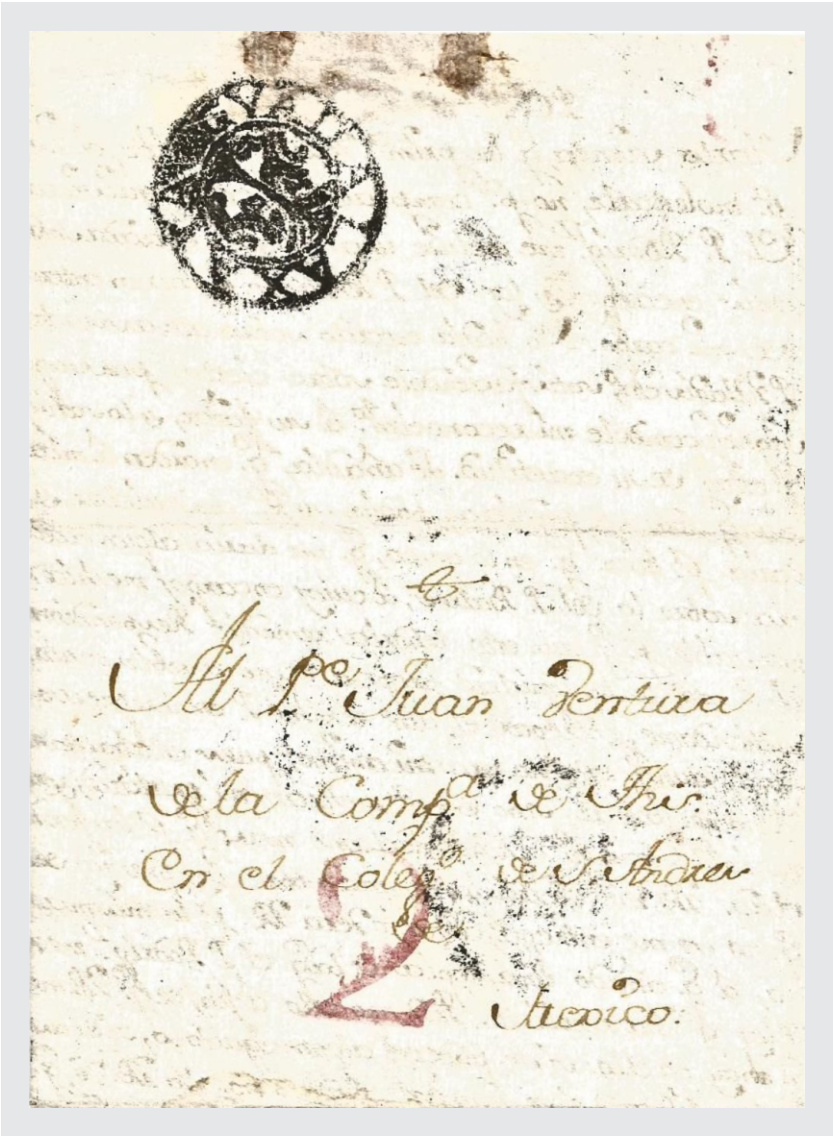
Wrapper handstamped with the Guadalajara Correo Mayor postmark, featuring the city's coat of arms.



Date: 7/Dec/1760.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Queretaro - Mexico ~ 42 leagues (176 km).
Postmark: Two strikes (see reproduction above) of the Fancy **CORO/ DE QUE/ RETA/ RO**, used from 1751 to 1760.

Cover bearing a previously misinterpreted marking, leading to the classification of a “Type II” postmark for this *estafeta*. At first glance, it appears to have a wider design than the two other known surviving examples; however, this effect is due to the same postmark being struck twice, side by side.

THREE DOCUMENTED COVERS



Date: 22/Nov/1766.
Rate: “2r” (Single Letter).
Route: Guadalajara - Guanajuato fwd. - Mexico
~ 132 leguas (554 km).
Postmark: Circular **GUADALAXARA**, used from 1765 to 1766.

Folded letter with a clear strike of the Guadalajara Correo Mayor postmark, the only known example of its use after the takeover of the *Real Renta*.

FOUR KNOWN ITEMS



Date: 2/Jul/1760.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Celaya - Queretaro/fwd. - Mexico ~ 56 leagues (498 km).
Postmark: Crowned ZELAYA (Type I), used from 1760 to 1765.

The **Celaya Correo Mayor Type I** postmark is the most “common” of the period, with at least eight reported surviving covers.



Celaya Correo Mayor Type I postmark
 (Crowned ZELAYA)



Celaya Correo Mayor Type II postmark
 (Circular CELAYA and arms)

Date: 30/Nov/1760.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Celaya - Queretaro/fwd. - Mexico ~ 56 leagues (498 km).
Postmark: Crowned ZELAYA (Type I), used from 1760 to 1765.

Folded letter with a horizontal strike of the **Type I Celaya Correo Mayor** postmark. It bears a **courtesy formula**, reading “N.Fr.P.” (Nuestro Padre Provincial, “Our Provincial Minister”) and “M.I.H.D.” (Muy Ilustre Hermano en Dios, “Most Illustrious Brother in God”).



Date: 2/Nov/1765.
Rate: Unkwnon.
Route: Celaya - Queretaro/fwd. - Mexico ~ 56 leagues (498 km).
Postmark: Crowned ZELAYA (Type I), used from 1760 to 1765.

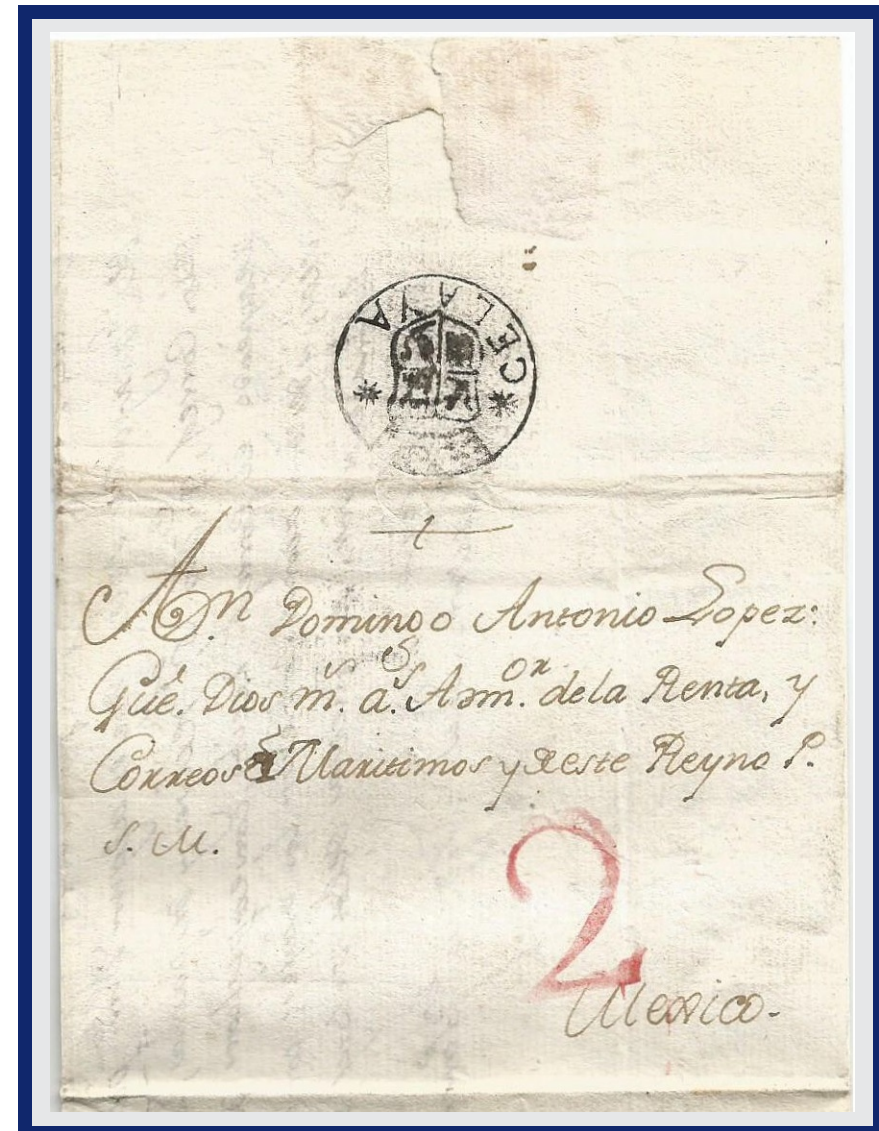
Latest known dated cover bearing the Celaya Correo Mayor Type I postmark.



Date: 10/Aug/1767.
Rate: “2r” (Single Letter).
Route: Celaya - Queretaro/fwd. - Mexico ~ 56 leagues (498 km).
Postmark: Circular CELAYA and arms (Type II), used from c. 1765 to 1767.

Although posted after the Crown took control of mail handling, the postmark is believed to have been adopted around 1765 and continued briefly in use after the postal reform took effect.

EX-CAMINO
ONLY KNOWN EXAMPLE OF THE CELAYA CORREO MAYOR TYPE II POSTMARK



4. Correo Mayor Postmarks (Cont.)

Date: 27/Feb/1760.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: San Luis Potosí - San Miguel el Grande/fwd. - Mexico ~ 86 leagues (418 km).
Postmark: Circular **SALVIS/ POTOSI**, (Type I) used from 1760 to 1766.

The **Type I San Luis Potosí Correo Mayor** postmark, catalogued in greenish or bluish-black ink, was likely struck with iron-gall ink that later oxidized due to humidity and paper acidity.



THREE DOCUMENTED COVERS



Date: 11/Mar/1760.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Aguascalientes - Mexico ~ 110 leagues (461 km).
Postmark: Fancy **CORREO/ DE AGS/ CALIENTES**, used from 1760 to 1765.

Earliest reported example of the Aguascalientes Correo Mayor postmark.

TWO KNOWN EXAMPLES



Date: 11/Feb/1760.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: San Luis Potosí - San Miguel el Grande/fwd. - Mexico ~ 125 leagues (603 km).
Postmark: Circular **SACATECAS**, used in 1760.

FOUR KNOWN COVERS



San Luis Potosí
Correo Mayor Type I postmark

Date: 15/Nov/1765.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: San Luis Potosí - San Miguel el Grande/fwd. - Mexico ~ 86 leagues (418 km).
Postmark: Circular **SALVIS/ POTOSI**, (Type II) used in 1765.

This is the only documented cover bearing the **San Luis Potosí Correo Mayor Type II** postmark. As with Type I, the ink has been incorrectly described as bluish.



San Luis Potosí
Correo Mayor Type II postmark



ONLY ONE KNOWN



Date: 4/Mar/1766.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Durango - Mexico ~ 185 leagues (893 km).
Postmark: Oval **DURANGO**, used in violet ink in 1766.

Unique piece originating from the northernmost known *estafeta* of the **Correo Mayor** who used postmarks. Local water sources have high iron levels, probably causing the eventual chemical alteration of the ink from red to violet.

SOLE DOCUMENTED EXAMPLE



The Real Renta de Correos (1766-1821).

5.1 Early Postmarks.

In 1766, the **Crown** took control of the mail in New Spain. The new **Real Renta de Correos** was organized under the **1762 Ordenanzas**, which defined the regulations for all postmasters of the Spanish realms. They required that all letters be marked on the cover with the proper fee and the name of the locality, thereby officially mandating the use of **postmarks of origin**.

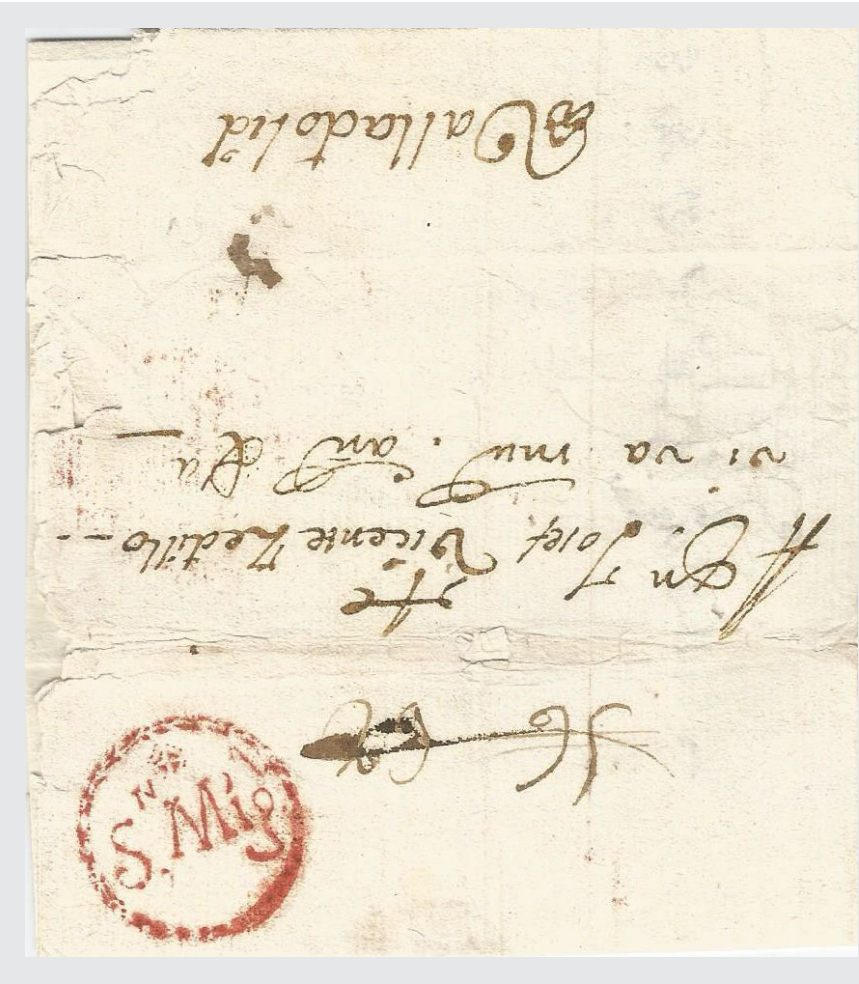


TRANSITIONAL ITEM/ CORREO MAYOR POSTMARK



Date: 14/Nov/1766.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Valladolid - Mexico ~ 62 leagues (300 km).
Postmark: Fancy **CORO DE VALLA**, used from 1766 to 1770.

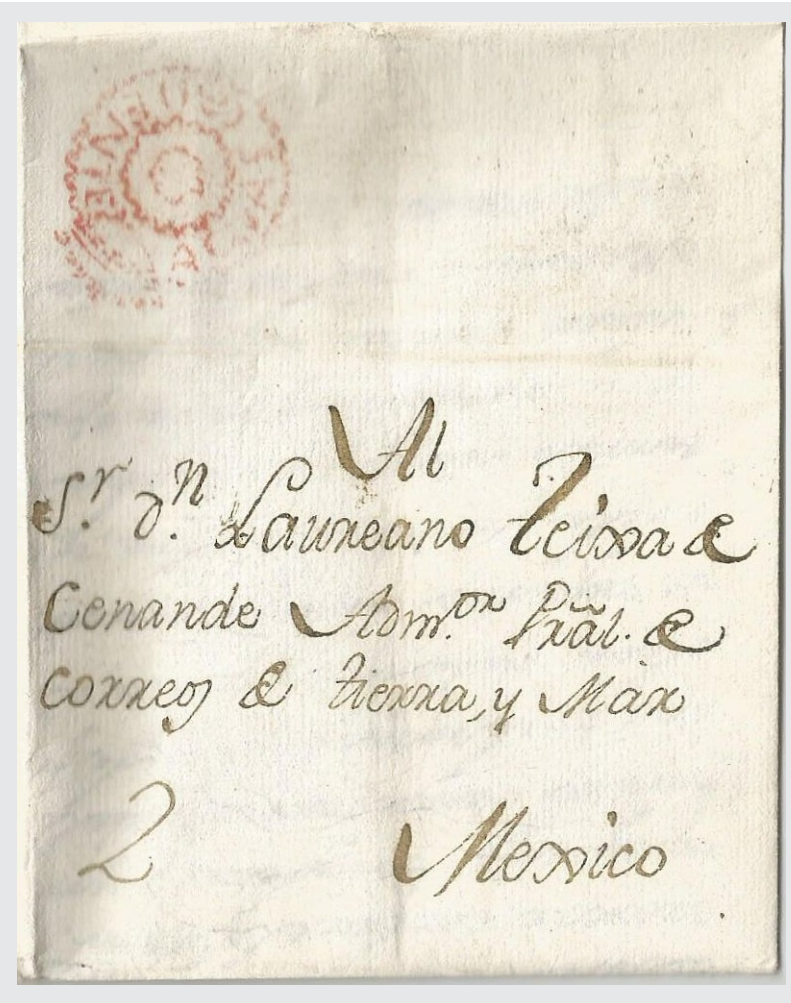
Many of the postmarks used during the **Correo Mayor** period were inherited by the new state-run mail and, in some cases, remained in use for up to five years.



Date: c. 1783.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: San Miguel el Grande - Querétaro/fwd. - Valladolid ~ 39 leagues (189 km).
Postmark: Fancy circular **SN. MIG.**, used from 1783 to c. 1800.

Wrapper bearing the earliest known use of an origin postmark from San Miguel el Grande. The style of this example closely resembles designs used in other offices before 1766, suggesting continuity with those used during the **Correo Mayor** period.

EX-CAMINO ONLY ONE KNOWN IN RED INK



Date: 1785.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Valladolid - Mexico ~ 62 leagues (300 km).
Postmark: Circular **VALLA/ DOLID**, used in red ink from 1785 to 1801.

Cover bearing the earliest reported use of a **VALLADOLID** postmark of origin. It clearly illustrates the transition from **Correo Mayor** markings to the early postmarks mandated after the 1766 postal reform.



Date: 10/Jun/1785.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Aguascalientes - Mexico ~ 103 leguas (499 km).
Postmark: Fancy circular **AGUASCALIENTES**, used in 1785.

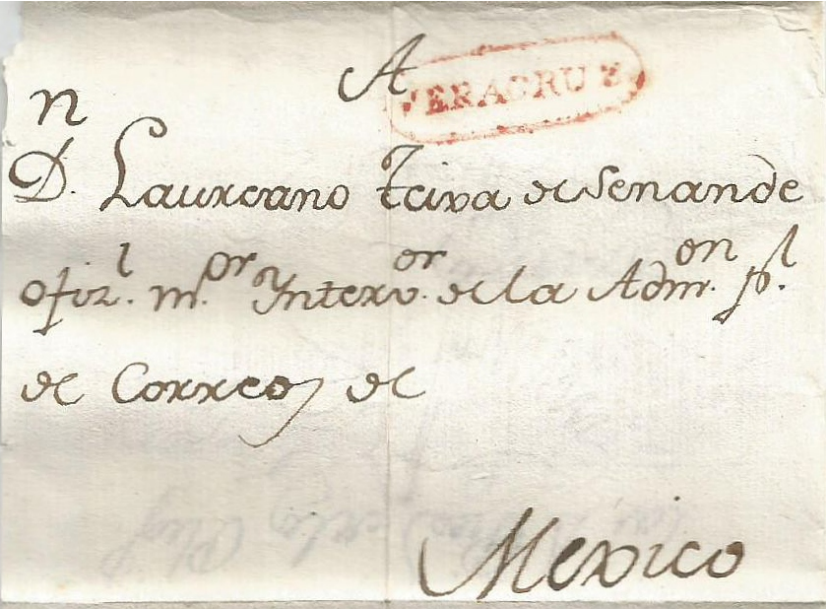


Wrapper featuring the only surviving example of the earliest documented **AGUASCALIENTES** postmark of origin. It reflects the transition from the **Correo Mayor** mark (above left) to the one adopted after the **Real Renta** takeover (above right).

EX-CAMINO SOLE DOCUMENTED EXAMPLE

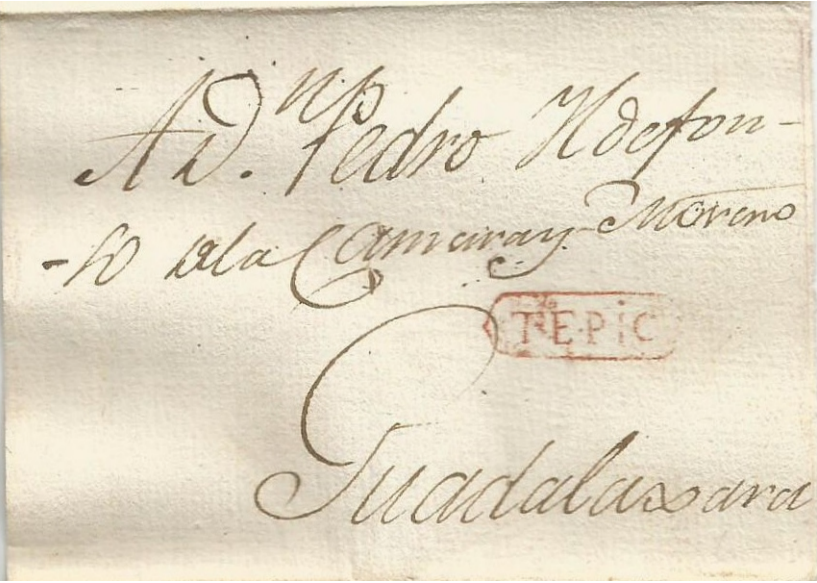
5.1. Postmarks of Origin (Cont.)

Later postmarks reflect a clear shift toward simplicity, as most postal offices (with a few exceptions) abandoned ornate, complex styles in favor of simple linear or framed (mostly oval) toponymic styles. The characteristics of the postmarks were not regulated, so every cancel reflects the local manufacturing styles, forging talent and budget.



Date: c. 1790.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Tepic - Guadalajara
~ 42 leagues (294 km).
Postmark: TEPIC inside a cartouche, used from 1790 to 1821.

Besides the oval types, some postmarks have outlines with sharper or irregular angles, conventionally described as cartouche-shaped.



Date: c. 1790.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Lagos - Guadalajara
~ 38.5 leagues (186 km).
Postmark: LAGOS inside a double-line cartouche, used from 1790 to 1800.



Wrapper bearing the cartouche postmark of Lagos. Although today it appears violet, it is most likely red ink that has faded or oxidized over time due to iron content.

Date: Sep/1785
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Guanajuato - Mexico
~ 75 leagues (360 km).
Postmark: Ornate frame and two-line GVANA/XVATO, used in 1785.



Wrapper featuring the earliest known postmark of Guanajuato.



Date: 1790.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Veracruz - Mexico ~ 70 leagues (293 km).
Postmark: Oval two-line VERA/CRUZ, used in red ink from c. 1790 to 1801.

This wrapper is the earliest known example of the oval postmark of Veracruz.



Date: c. 1789.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Mexico - Zacatecas
~ 125 leagues (602 km).
Postmark: Linear MEXICO (wide M), used from 1780 to 1789.

Cover bearing the first fully attested linear postmark of Mexico City, identifiable by its wide “M.” Undated simple linear postmarks represent the apex of the simplification of postal markings in New Spain.

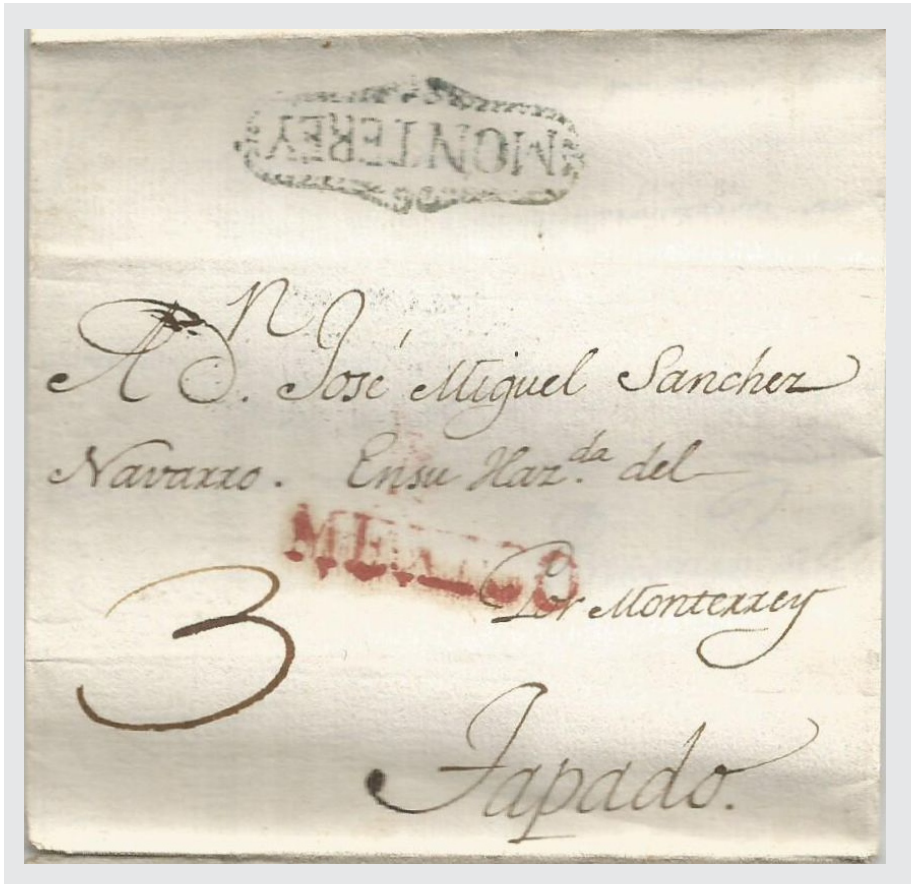


5.1. Postmarks of Origin (Cont.)

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, instances of a second, distinct townmark began to appear; these were added in **transit** and were generally handstamped to clarify or attest the route followed, perhaps due to a change in the regular delivery route requiring a special transfer.

Date: 30/Nov/1799.
Rate: “3r” (Single Letter; Inner Provinces).
Route: Mexico - San Miguel el Grande/fwd. - San Luis Potosí/fwd - Monterrey/fwd. - Monclova/fwd. - Hda. del Tapado ~ 268 leagues (1,082 km).
Postmarks: Large linear **MEXICO**, used from 1799 to 1806/ Fancy Frame **MONTERREY** transit mark, used from 1785 to 1821.
Other: Endorsed “**POR MONTERREY**”.

Folded letter with a possibly unique marking combination, illustrating the rate and route from the capital to the Inner Provinces. Hacienda del Tapado lies near Primero de Mayo (Escobedo, Coahuila), about 43 km northeast of Monclova. It is not certain if the piece also transited through Monclova to reach its destination.



Date: 15/Jul/1807.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Orizaba - Puebla/fwd. - Mexico ~ 63 leagues (265 km).
Postmarks: Linear **ORIZABA**, used from 1798 to 1815/ Cartouche **S. ANDRES**, used in 1897.

Folded letter handstamped with a black **ORIZABA**, indicating origin, and a **S. ANDRÉS** (Chalchicomula) in writing ink, added in transit at this small town in the Puebla Intendancy.

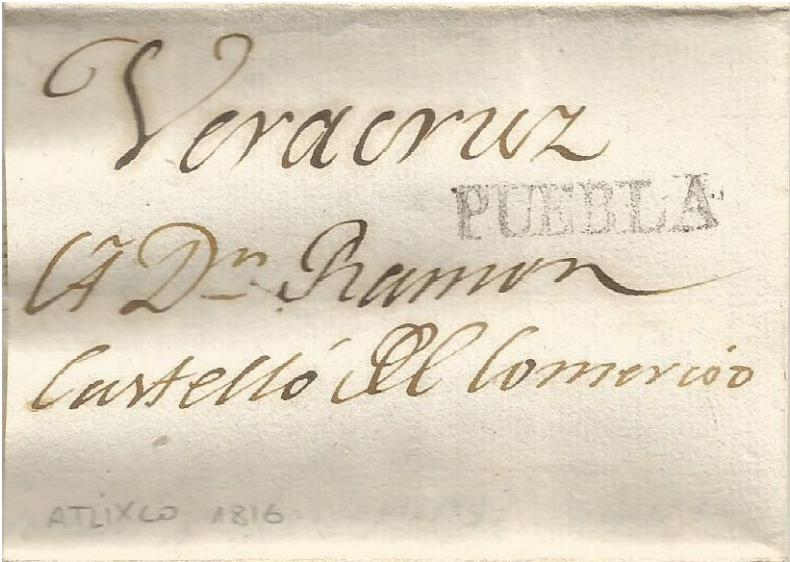


ONLY SURVIVING LETTER BEARING THE S. ANDRES POSTMARK



Date: 14/Oct/1810.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Pinotepa del Rey - Oaxaca/fwd. - Orizaba/fwd - Puebla ~ 125 leguas (600 km).
Postmarks: Crowned **PINOTEPA/ DEL REI**, used in 1810/ Two-line **XAMIL/TEPEC**, used in 1810.

Folded letter docketed at Santa María Cortijo, Oaxaca, but posted at nearby Pinotepa del Rey (today Pinotepa Nacional), with a transit marking added at Jamiltepec.



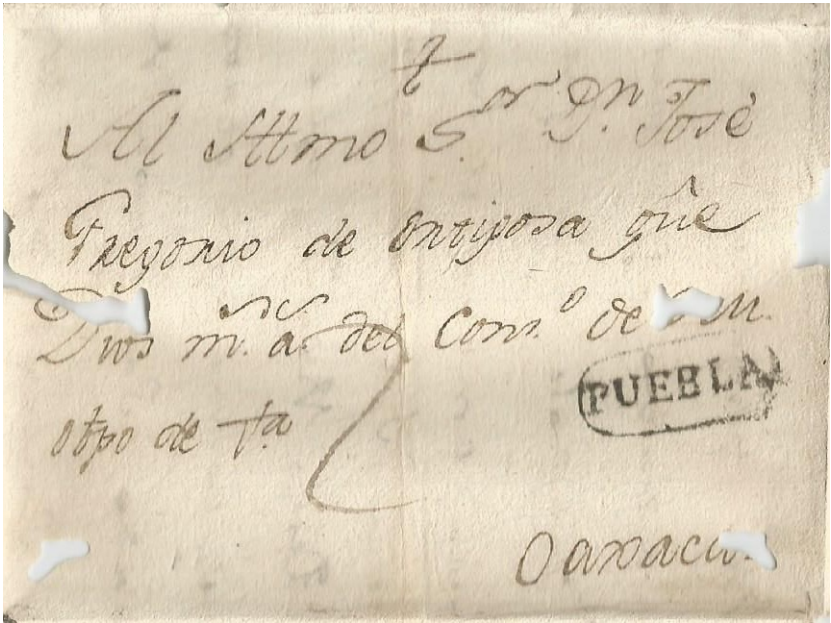
Date: 15/Apr/1816.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Atlixco - Puebla/fwd. - Veracruz ~ 72 leagues (302 km).
Postmarks: Linear **PUEBLA** (smaller, thicker letters), used from 1805 to 1820.

Transit postmarks can sometimes stand alone when the place of origin did not apply (or did not have) its own townmark. In this case, the piece was posted at Atlixco, which had its own post office but no postmark available yet.

TWO SURVIVING LETTERS

5.2. Postal Rates of 1766.

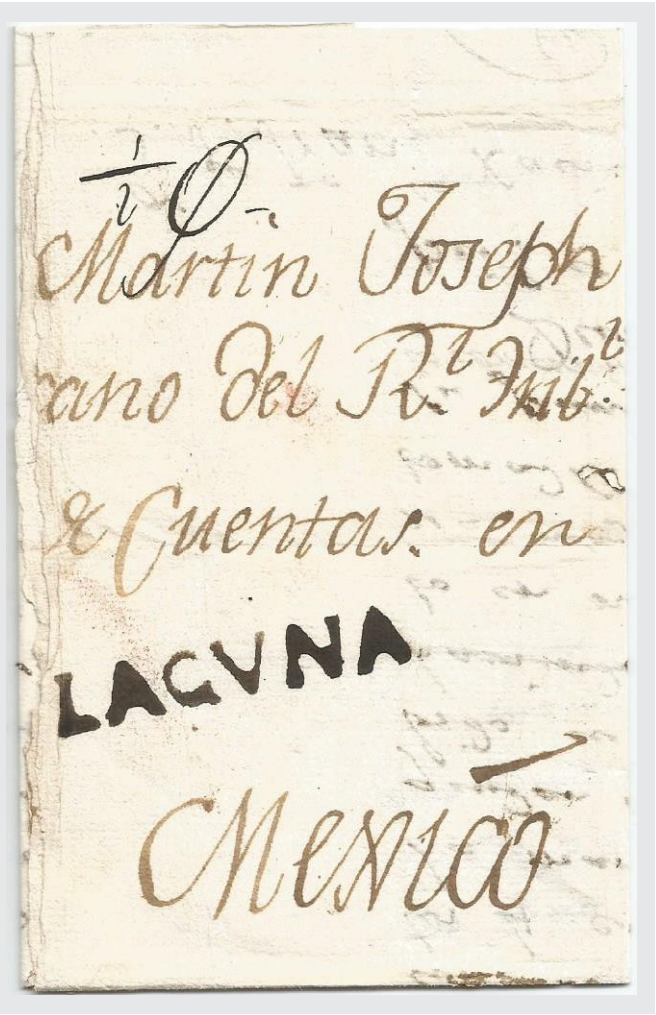
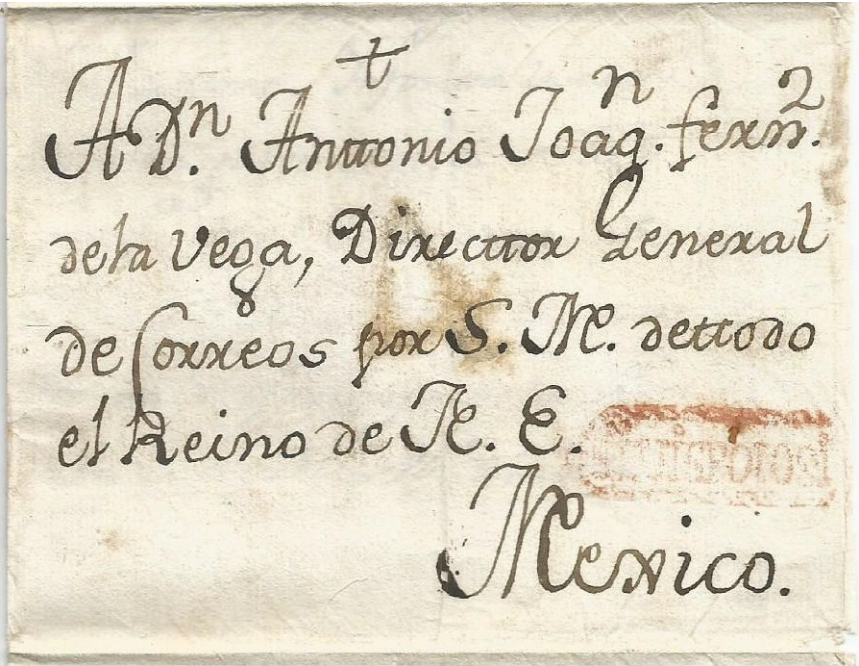
Date: 28/Feb/1784.
Rate: “2r” Single letter.
Route: Puebla - Oaxaca
~ 70 leagues (339 km).
Postmark: Small oval PUEBLA,
used from 1790 to 1792.



Date: 26/Feb/1790.
Rate: “2r” Single letter.
Route: Laguna - Veracruz/fwd. - Mexico
~ 193 leagues (935 km).
Postmark: Linear LAGVNA, used in 1790.

Wrapper bearing a rather unusual notation in New Spain, consisting of a handwritten “½ Ø” indicating weight instead of rate.

EX-CAMINO
ONLY SURVIVING EXAMPLE



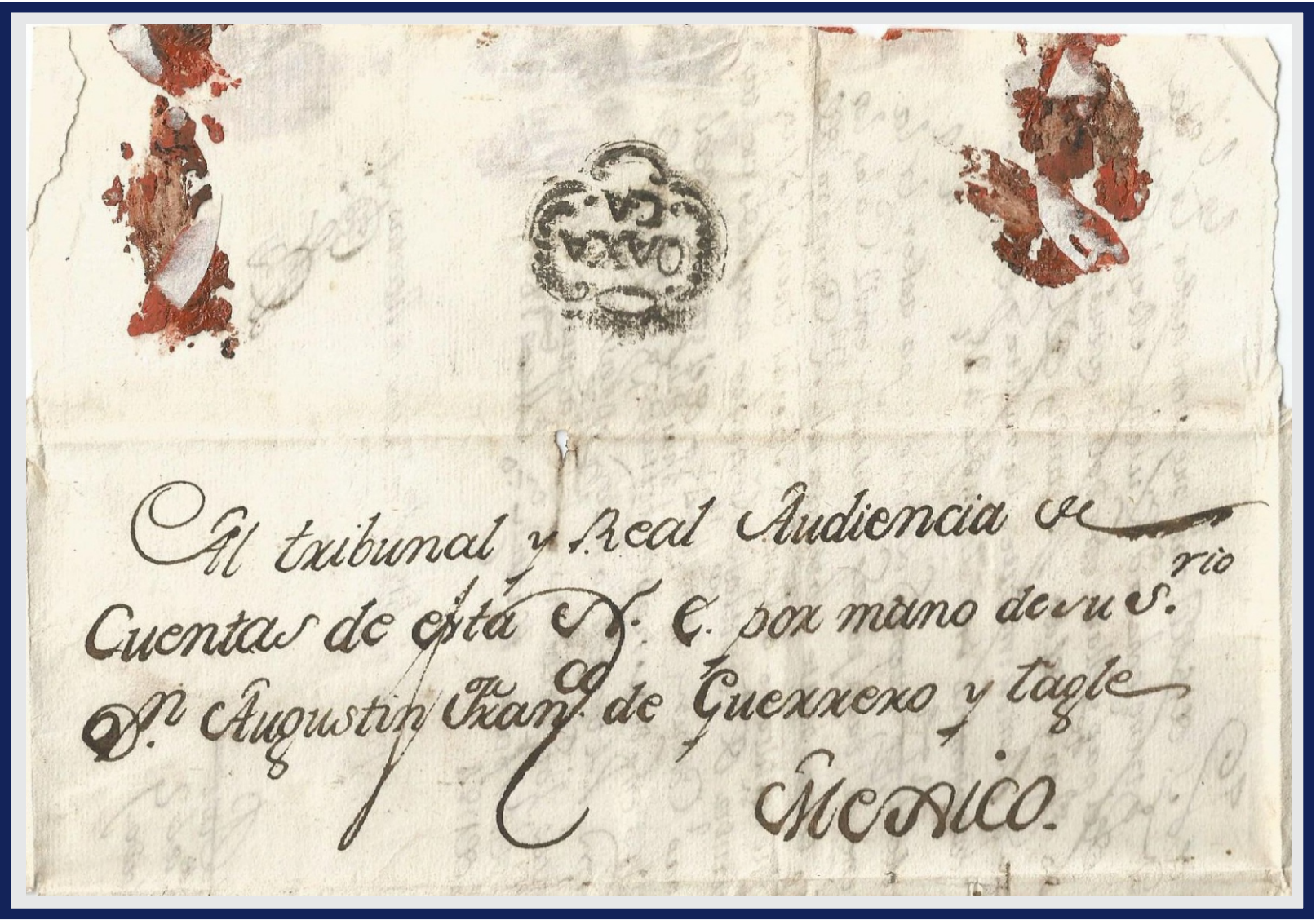
Date: 13/Dic/1781.
Rate: “4r” Double letter.
Route: San Luis Potosi - Mexico
~ 86 leagues (417 km).
Postmark: Serrated frame S. LUIS POTOSI,
used in 1781.

Wrapper addressed to Antonio Vega, General Postmaster of New Spain. Despite containing official postal matters, it was charged as an ordinary letter.

ONLY TWO KNOWN

The initial postal rates set by the **Administración General de Correos (Renta Real)** in 1766 remained in effect, with slight changes, until the major reforms of 1812–1814. Most letters were sent unpaid, with the amount due required marked visibly on the cover; **however, this regulation was sometimes ignored.**

POSTAL RATES OF 1766 (Reales de plata) - Basic Rates			
Single letter of up to ½	Double of up to 1 oz	Triple of up to 1½ oz	Lettersheet of up to 2 oz
2 rs.	4 rs.	6 rs.	8 rs.
Note: Letters weighing more than 2 oz were charged 4 rs. for each additional oz; for example, a 3 oz letter paid 12 rs.			



Date: 18/Jul/1784.
Rate: “12r” (3-oz. letter).
Route: Oaxaca - Orizaba/fwd. - Mexico ~ 95 leagues (460 km).
Postmark: Crowned OAXACA, used from 1783 to 1786..

5.3. Postal Rates of 1773.

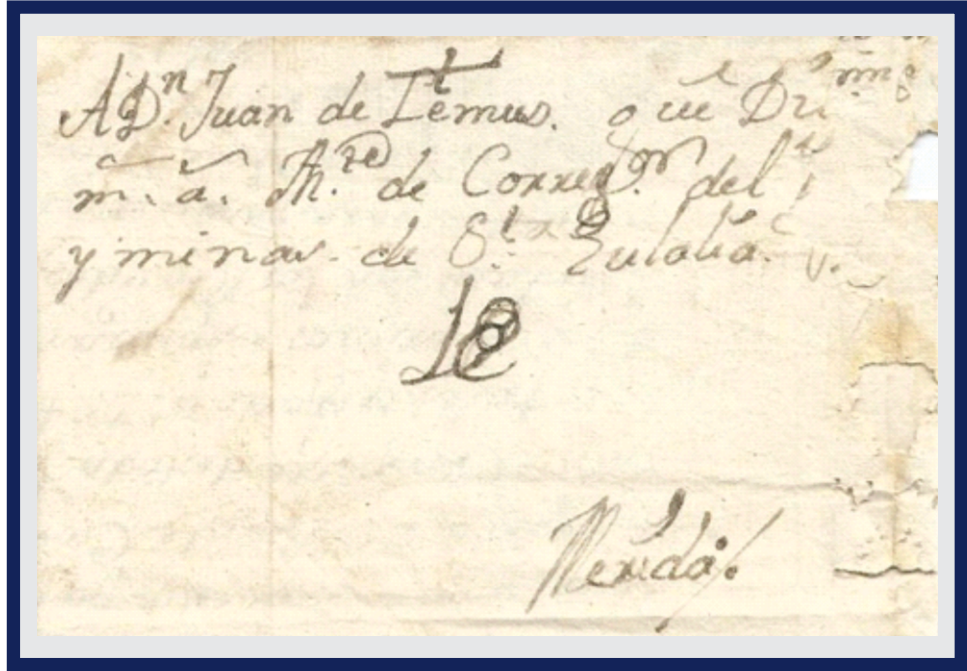
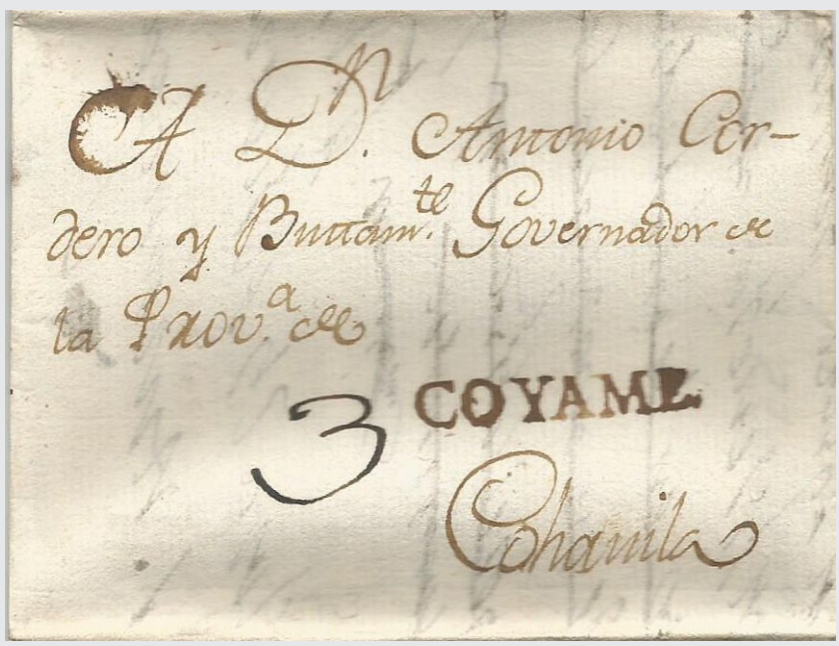
In 1773, general postmaster **Domingo Antonio López** organized a formal mail service for **Sonora, Sinaloa**, and the **Californias**, its main route running from Guadalajara to the coastal Pacific NW. It had its own rates, reflecting the provinces’ remoteness. In 1779, **Teodoro de Croix**, commanding general of the **Inner Provinces**, organized a new monthly direct northern route from **Sonora to Texas**, which also observed these higher rates.

FORERUNNER

Date: 3/Jul/1773.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Chihuahua - Santa Eulalia ~ 5 leagues (20 km).

Folded letter originating in **San Felipe** (present-day Chihuahua), to the nearby town of Sta. Eulalia de Mérida. It lacks any postal markings, as it was sent shortly before the organization of a formal mail system in the region.

EARLIEST KNOWN LETTER OF CHIHUAHUA



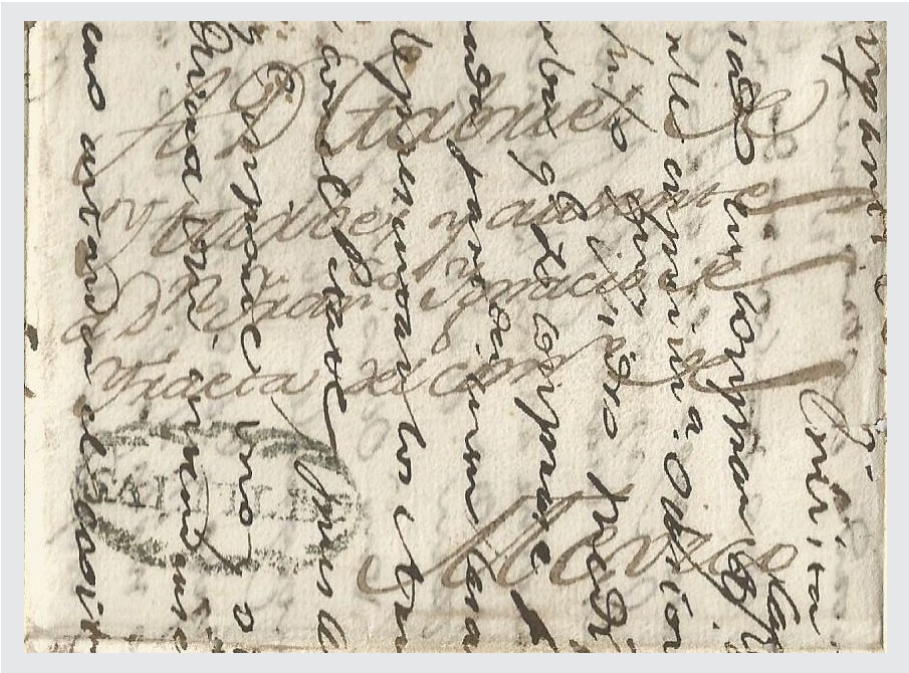
Date: 23/Mar/1803.
Rate: “3r” (Single letter).
Route: Santiago de Coyame - Chihuahua/fwd. - Monclova ~ 331 leagues (1598 km).
Postmark: Linear COYAME. used in 1803.

ONLY ONE KNOWN

Date: c. 1791.
Rate: “3r” Single letter.
Route: Saltillo - S. Luis Potosí/fwd. - Mexico ~ 175 leagues (845 km).
Postmark: Fancy Oval SALTILLO, used in 1791.

Wrapper reused for a note that completely defaced the front; it is dated 25/May/1791, allowing the postmark’s period of use to be estimated, making it the **earliest known from Saltillo**.

ONLY ONE KNOWN



POSTAL RATES OF 1773 (Reales de plata) - Basic Rates			
Single letter of up to 1/2 oz	Double of up to 3/4 oz	Triple of up to 1 oz	Lettersheet of up to 1 1/4 oz
3 rs.	5 rs.	7 rs.	8 rs.
Note: Lettersheets weighing 2–8 oz were charged 4 rs. per additional ounce; 2 oz cost 11 rs., 3 oz 15 rs., etc.			

Date: 8/May/1801.
Rate: “3r” (Single letter).
Route: Rosario - Durango/fwd. - San Luis Potosí/fwd. Monclova ~ 331 leagues (1598 km).
Postmark: Linear ROSARIO., used in 1801.
Other: Endorsed “Por Durango”.

Although the route established by Croix was shorter, it ran only monthly; the letter’s contents were likely urgent and could not await the next departure so it was routed via Durango.

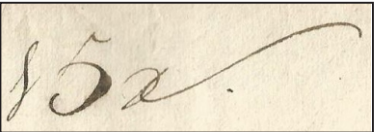


TWO ITEMS KNOWN



Date: c. 1810. **Rate:** “15r” (3-oz lettersheet).
Route: Arizpe - Chihuahua ~ 145 leguas (700 km).
Postmark: Linear ARISPE, used in red ink from 1810 to 1820.

Wrapper with unknown date of posting, however, its rate places it prior to 1812. It was conveyed via the western leg of the “de Croix Route”.



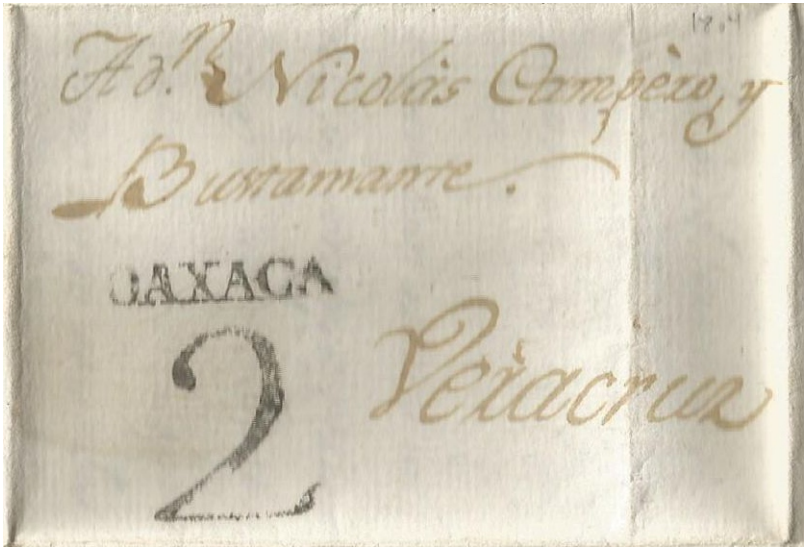
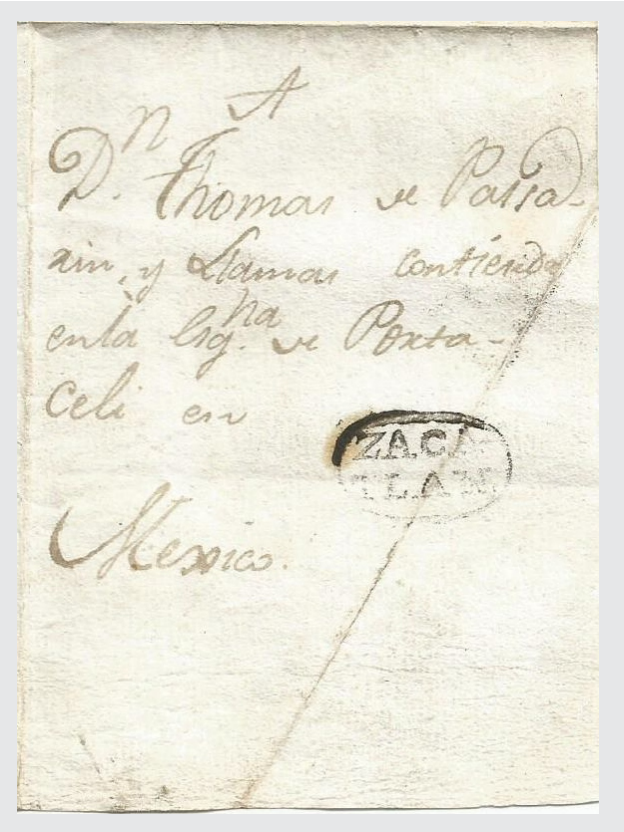
5.4. Postal Rates of 1779.

During 1779, the **double-letter** weight limit was lowered from 1 oz to ¾ oz, so letters between ¾ and 1 oz now fell into the triple-weight category and paid 6r instead of 4r. Effectively, this raised charges without altering the long-standing increments.

POSTAL RATES OF 1779 (Reales de plata) - Basic Rates			
Single letter of up to ½ oz	Double of up to ¾ oz	Triple of up to 1½ oz	Lettersheet of up to 2 oz
2 rs.	4 rs.	6 rs.	8 rs.

Date: 15/Mar/1799.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Zacatlan - Puebla/fwd. - Mexico ~ 48 leagues (200 km).
Postmark: Oval ZACA/TLAN, used in 1799.

EX-CAMINO
SOLE KNOWN LETTER



Date: 31/Ene/1804.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Oaxaca - Orizaba/fwd. - Veracruz ~ 106 leagues (445 km).
Postmark: Linear OAXACA, used from 1804 to 1811.

Folded letter, the recepcion note is dated 7/Feb, a transit of seven days.

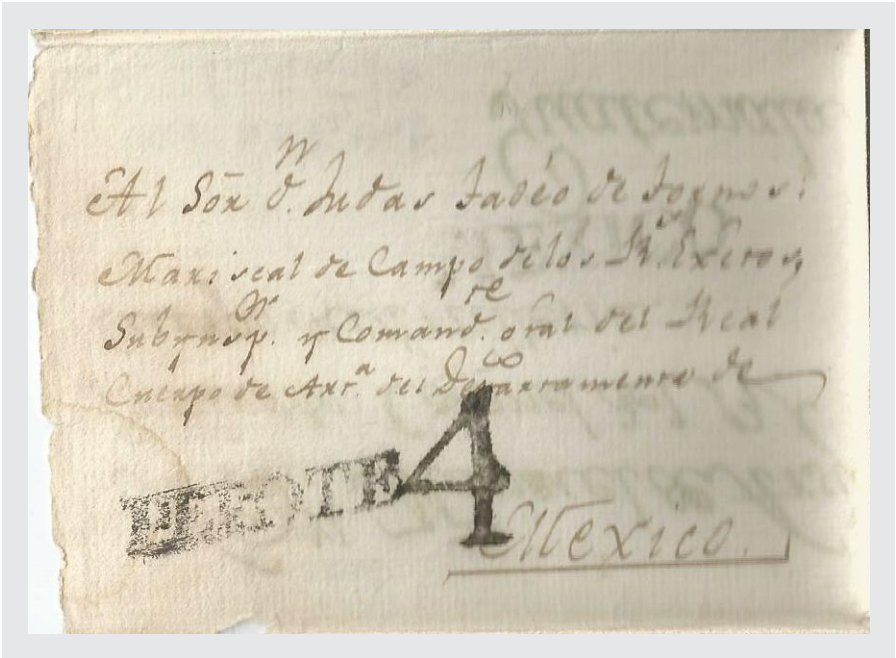
Date: c. 1810.
Rate: “4r” (Double letter).
Route: Perote - Mexico ~ 57 leagues (240 km).
Postmark: Linear PEROTE in italics, used from 1807 to 1810.

The reverse was later reused as a wrapper for a letter sent from Mexico to Guatemala (see below). It bears the linear thick MEXICO postmark, used 1809-1821.

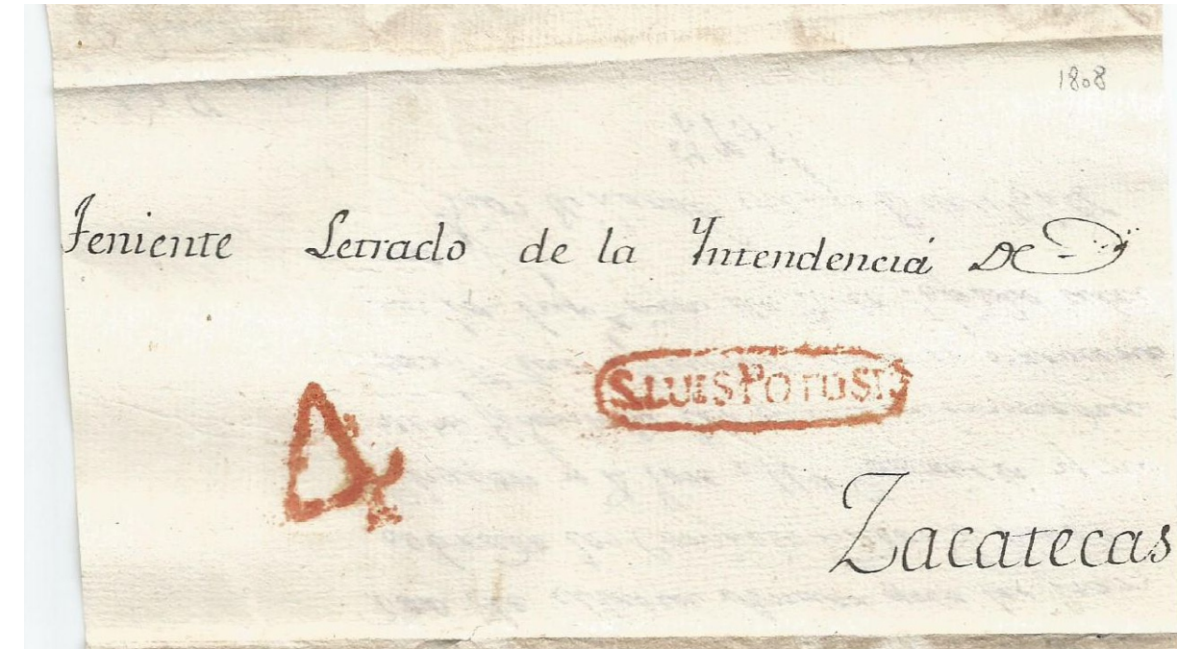


Date: 20/Dec/1810.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Sisal - Mérida~ 17 leagues (73 km).
Postmark: Linear SISAL used in blue ink from 1809 to 1810.

Folded letter with contents docketed in Havana, but bearing a postmark indicating it was posted at the Port of Sisal.

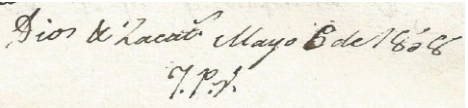


TWO LETTERS KNOWN



Date: 6/May/1808.
Rate: “4r” (Double letter).
Route: San Luis Potosi - Zacatecas ~ 45 leagues (190 km).
Postmark: Ornate frame S. LUIS POTOSÍ, used in red ink from 1799 to 1814.

Wrapper with a reception note on the reverse dated 6/May (see right). The posting date is unknown.

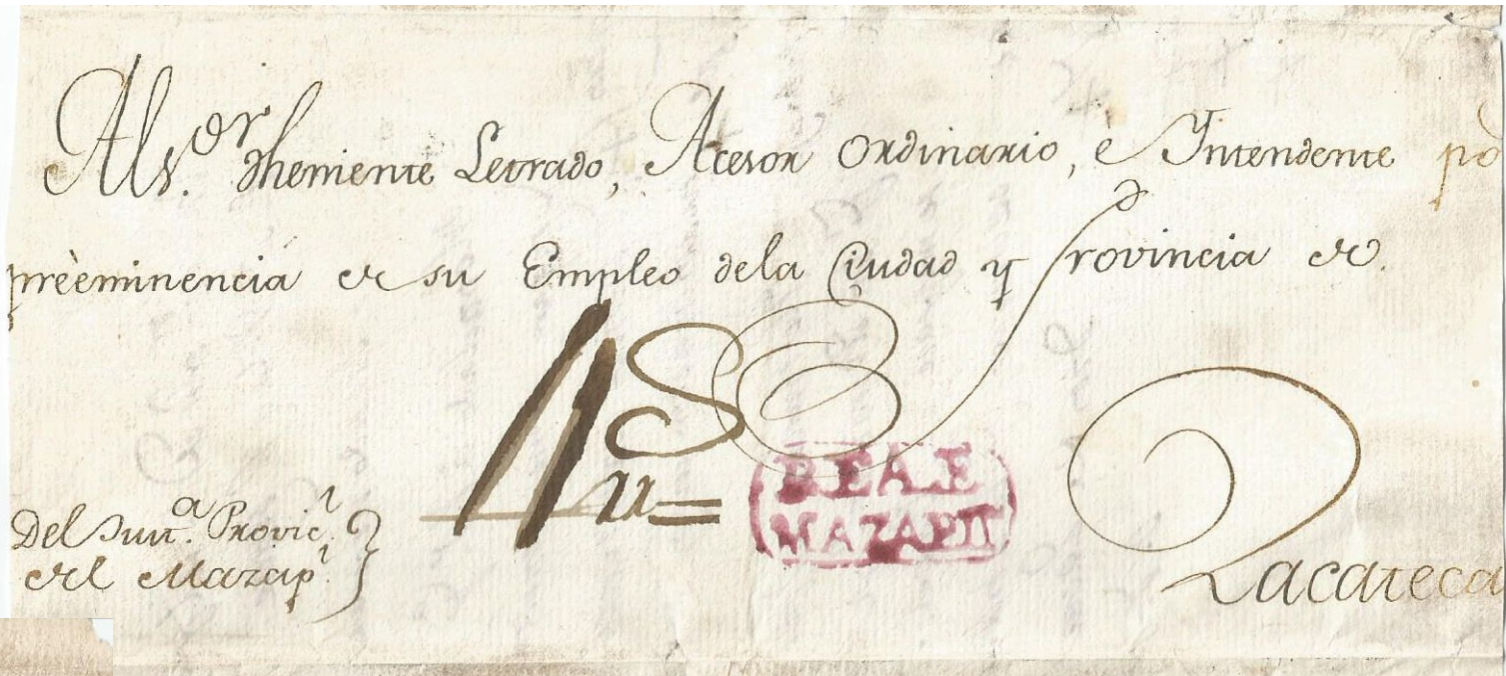


5.4. Postal Rates of 1779 (Cont.)

Date: c. 1808.
Rate: “4r” (Double letter).
Route: Mazapil - Fresnillo/fwd. - Zacatecas ~ 57 leagues (275 km).
Postmark: Oval REAL DE/ MAZAPIL, used from 1808 to 1811.

The reverse was later reused for a note dated 16/Aug/1808, allowing the original posting date to be approximated.

EX-CAMINO



Date: c. 1806.
Rate: “6r” (Triple letter).
Route: Juchipila - Villanueva/fwd. - Zacatecas ~ 29 leagues (120 km).
Postmark: Oval V. NUEVA, used in 1806.

Front docketed in **Juchipila** but posted at **Villanueva**, about 60 km away.

EX-CAMINO

Date: c. 1803.
Rate: “6r” (Triple letter).
Route: Jerez - Zacatecas ~ 13 leagues (54 km).
Postmark: Ornate frame VILLA/ DE XEREZ, used from 1801 to 1803.

The reverse was later reused for a note docketed at Zacatecas on 21/Jun/1803, placing the original posting no later than that date.

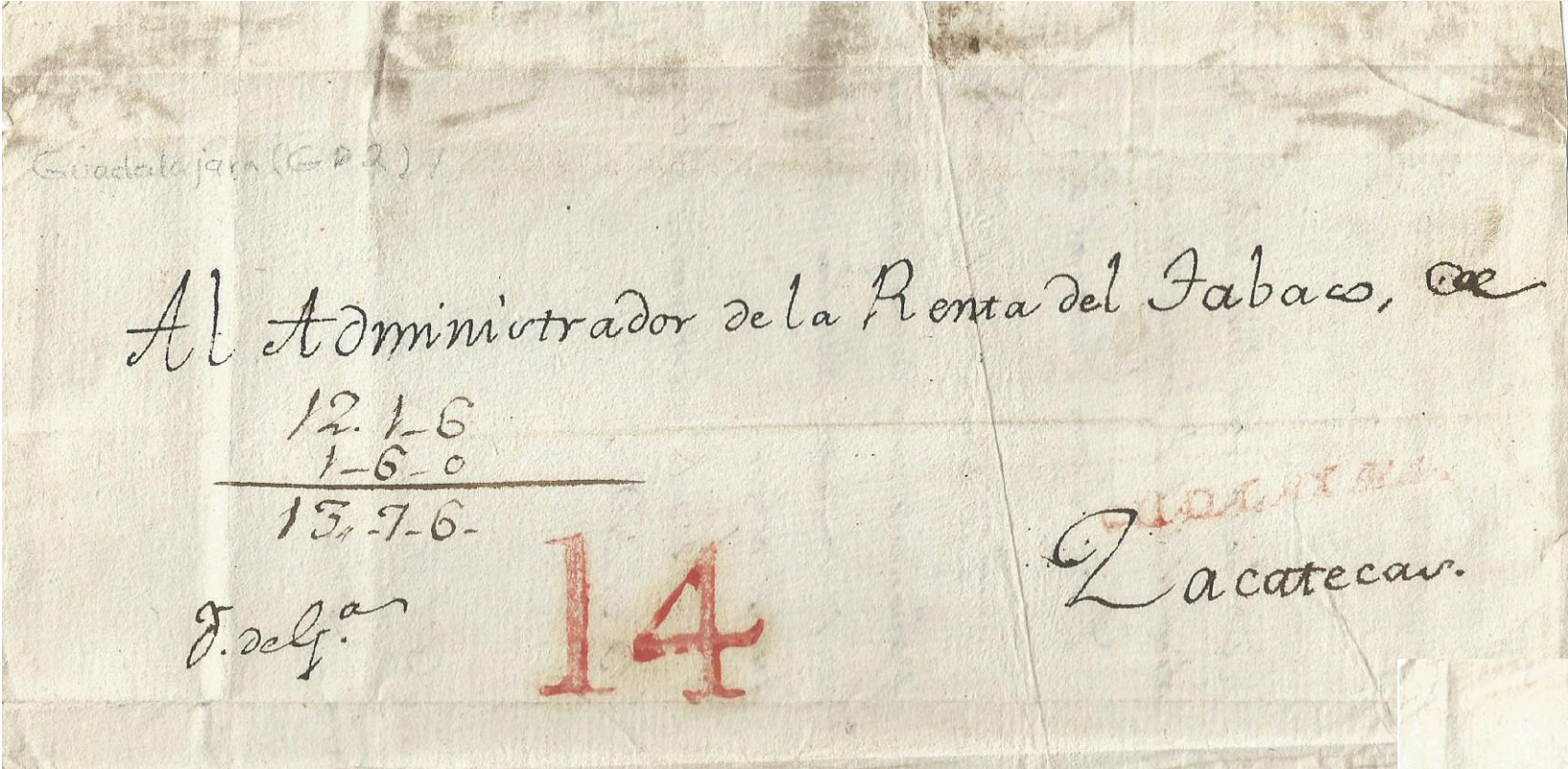
TWO KNOWN EXAMPLES OF THE VILLA/ DE XEREZ POSTMARK



5.5. Rates for Excess Weight.

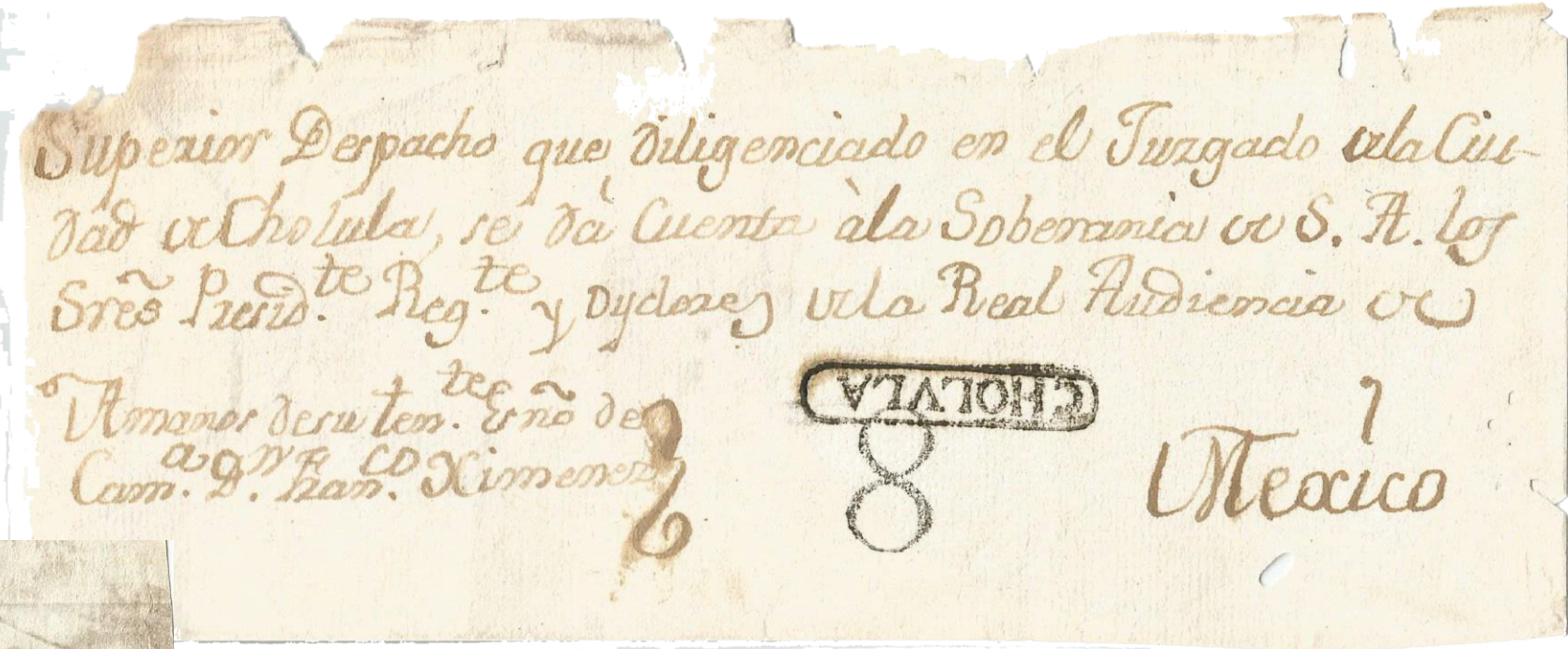
The reckoning of rates for large shipments within the core area of New Spain remained unchanged under the 1766 and 1779 regulations. Charges began at **8 rs.** for 2 oz and **10 rs.** for 2½ oz; for items weighing more than 3 oz, the rate was calculated as shown in the table below.

POSTAL RATES OF 1766 (<i>Reales de plata</i>) - Rates for Excess Weight				
Range of Weight	3 to 10 OZ.	11 to 20 OZ.	21 to 40 OZ.	Over 40 OZ.
Each extra ounce	4 rs.	2 rs.	1 r.	½ r.

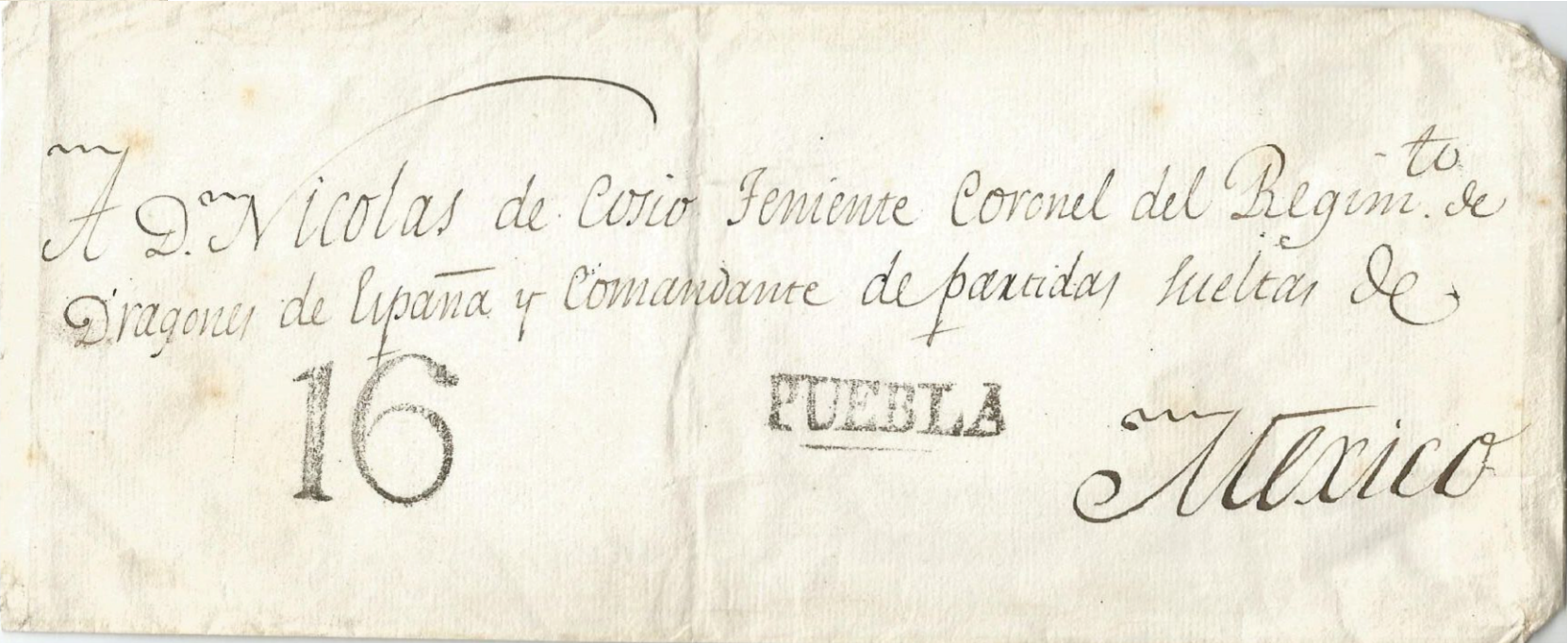


Date: 31/Jan/1807.
Rate: “14r” (3½-oz lettersheet).
Route: Guadalajara - Zacatecas
~ 82 leagues (339 km).
Postmark: Linear *GUADALAXARA* in italics, used in red ink from 1801 to 1810.

Date: c. 1812.
Rate: “16r” (4-oz lettersheet).
Route: Puebla - Mexico
~ 22 leagues (92 km).
Postmark: Large oval **PUEBLA**, used between 1798 and 1815.



Date: c. 1802.
Rate: “8r” (2-oz lettersheet).
Route: Cholula - Puebla/fwd. - México ~ 20 leagues (84 km).
Postmark: Oval **CHOLVLA**, used from 1790 to 1802.



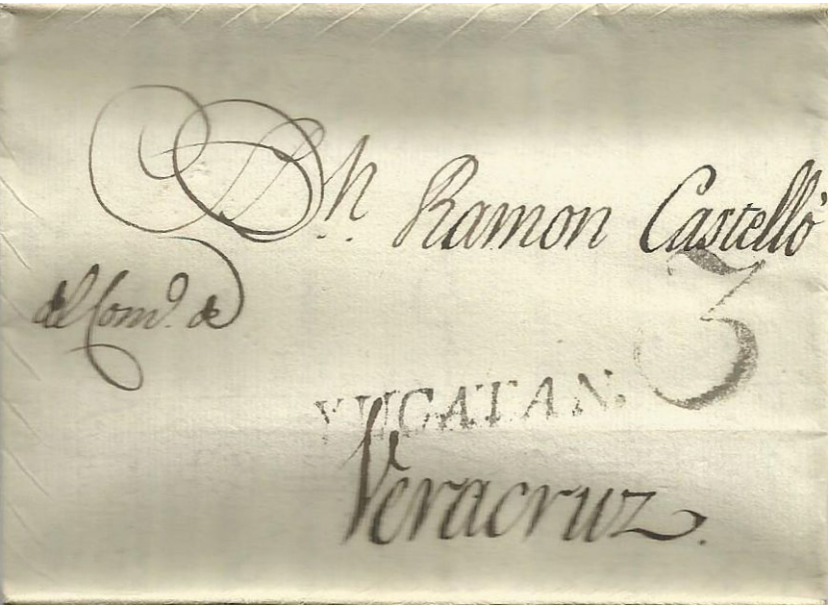
5.6. Rates of 1812/ 1814: Zone 1.

On **February 27, 1812**, Viceroy Francisco Xavier Venegas decreed new mail rates for New Spain, later ratified by King Ferdinand VII on **August 1, 1814**. Fees were divided into three zones depending on place of origin, implicitly reflecting weight and distance. **Zone 1** covered Yucatán, Tabasco, Guatemala, Nueva Vizcaya, Coahuila, Sonora and the Californias.



Date: c. 1820.
Rate: Single letter.
Route: Durango - San Miguel el Grande/fwd. - San Luis Potosí ~ 201 leagues (842 km).
Postmark: Rectangular **DURANGO**, used from 1784 to 1820.

Example of the single-letter rate assessed in Durango, then the capital of the intendency of Nueva Vizcaya.



POSTAL RATES OF 1812/ 1814 (Reales de plata) - Basic Rates				
	Single letter of up to ¼ oz	Double of up to ½ oz	Triple of up to ¾ oz	Lettersheet of up to 1 oz
Zone 1	3 rs.	4 rs.	6 rs.	8 rs.

Date: 24/Jul/1820.
Rate: Single letter.
Route: Campeche - Veracruz (coastal shipment).
Postmark: Linear **YUCATAN.**, used from 1803 to 1820.

Folded letter illustrating the application of the first rate under the 1812 arrangement in the **Captaincy General of Yucatán**. Postmarks reading **YUCATAN** were used in both the port of Campeche and the city of Mérida.



Date: c. 1812.
Rate: “3r” (Single letter).
Route: Monterrey - Saltillo/fwd. - Monclova ~ 49 leagues (238 km).
Postmark: Fancy **MONTEREY**, used in red ink from 1785 to 1821.

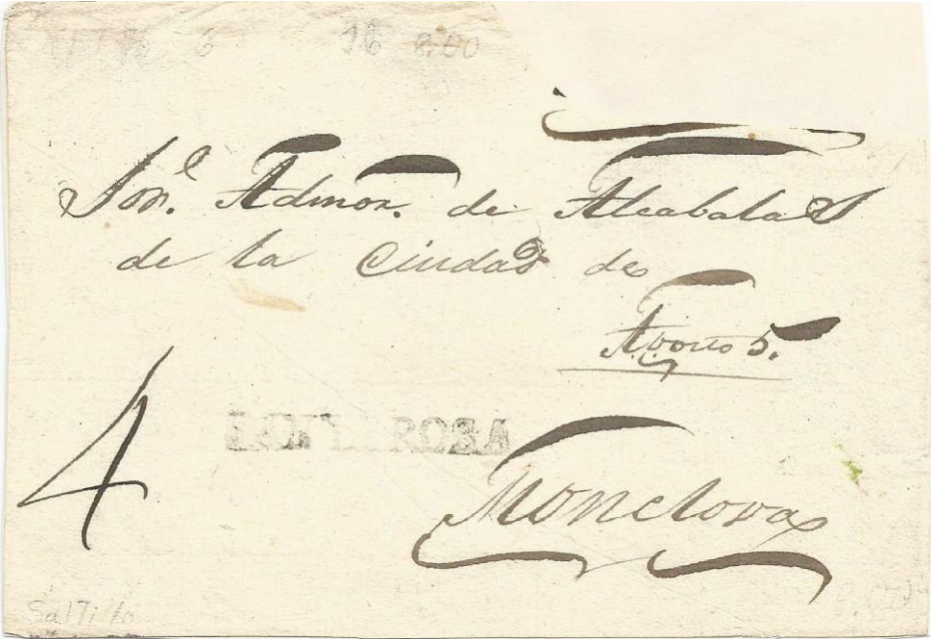
Date: c. 1820.
Rate: “3r” (Single letter).
Route: San Bartolomé - Durango ~ 69 leagues (289 km).
Postmark: Two-line **S./ BUENAVENTURA**, used from 1820 to 1825.

TWO LETTERS DOCUMENTED



Date: 5/Aug/c. 1820
Rate: “4r” (Double letter).
Route: Santa Rosa - Monclova ~ 35 leagues (140 km).
Postmark: Linear **SANTA ROSA**, used in 1820.

Santa Rosa was connected to the postal network in 1779 with the establishment of the **Croix route**; today it is known as Múzquiz, in the state of Coahuila.



Date: 3/Dec/1814.
Rate: “6r” (Triple letter).
Route: San Bartolomé - Durango ~ 125 leagues (525 km).
Postmark: Two-line **VALLE DE S./ BARTOLOMÉ**, used in 1814.



5.6. Rates of 1812/ 1814: Zone 2.

The rate for **Zone 2** applied to the core intendancies of New Spain: Veracruz, Oaxaca, Puebla, México, Valladolid, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas, and Guadalajara. The **third rate** covered overseas mail to Spain and South America (*see the Outgoign Maritime Mail chapter of this exhibit*).

POSTAL RATES OF 1812/ 1814 (Reales de plata) - Basic Rates				
	Single letter of up to ¼ oz	Double of up to ½ oz	Triple of up to ¾ oz	Lettersheet of up to 1 oz
Zone 2	2 rs.	3 rs.	4 rs.	6 rs.



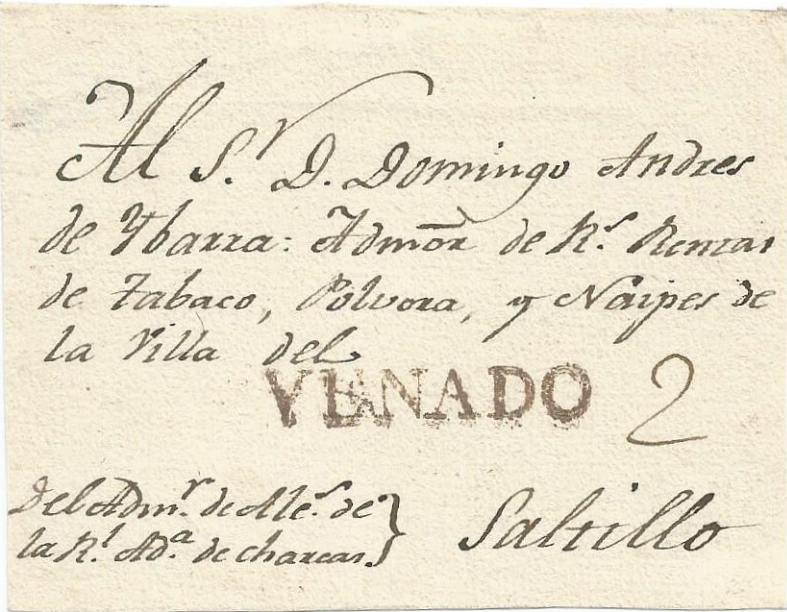
Date: 29/Jan/1816.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Tuxpan - Veracruz (via coastal boat)
Postmark: Linear TUSPAN, used in 1816.
Other: Endorsement **Goleta Candelaria**”.

When this letter was posted **Tuxpan** was a small port with only seasonal overland routes, so maritime transport was effectively its only connection.



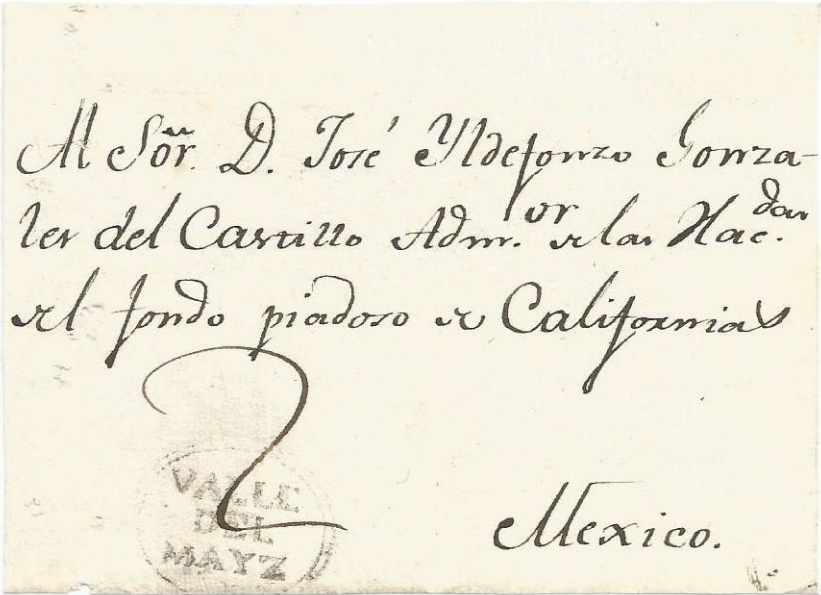
Date: 29/Mar/1816.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Jalapa - Veracruz ~ 26 leagues (107 km).
Postmark: Linear XALAPA, used 1804-1818.

Folded letter with a reception note dated 16/Apr, an unusually long transit of 18 days. Although Jalapa was linked to Veracruz by an overland route, the ongoing War of Independence made postal conveyance highly unreliable.



Date: c. 1812.
Rate: “2r” Single letter.
Route: Venado - Saltillo ~ 75 leagues (364 km).
Postmark: Linear VENADO, used from 1810 to 1823.

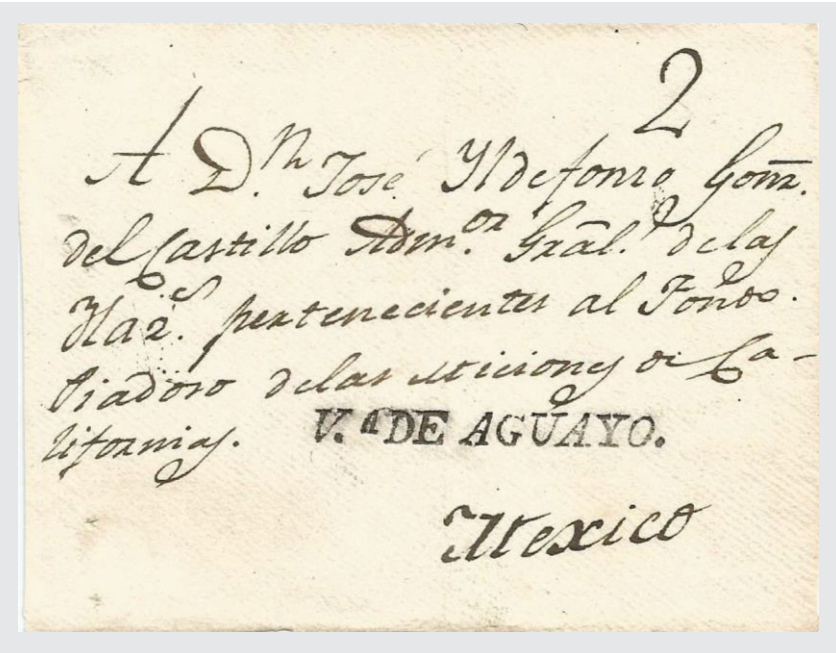
Example of a letter posted at a **Zone 2** town and delivered to a **Zone 1** locality (Saltillo). **The rate was assessed solely by origin**, irrespective of destination.



Date: c. 1812.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Villa de Aguayo - San Luis Potosí/fwd. - San Miguel el Grande/fwd.- Mexico ~ 226 leagues (946 km).
Postmark: Linear V.A DE AGUAYO., used from 1810 to 1821.

Although posted at Aguayo (now Ciudad Victoria) geographically in the province of **Nuevo Santander**, the territory was fiscally dependent on the Intendancy of San Luis Potosí; accordingly, its mail was charged the **Zone 2 rate**.

EX-CAMINO



Date: 5/Sep/1818.
Rate: “3r” (Double letter).
Route: Altamira - Tampico/fwd. - Veracruz/fwd. - Mexico/fwd. - Aguascalientes ~ 316 leagues (1,324 km)
Postmark: Oval ALTAMIRA, used from 1818 to 1822.

Folded letter with a rare mixed route: coastal shipping from Tampico to Veracruz, then regular inland handling to Aguascalientes.

EX-CAMINO

5.6. Rates of 1812/ 1814: Zone 2 (Cont.)

Date: 21/Nov/1818.
Rate: “3r” (Double letter).
Route: Pachuca - Mexico/fwd. - Veracruz ~ 80 leagues (386 km).
Postmark: Linear PACHUCA, used from 1783 to 1818.



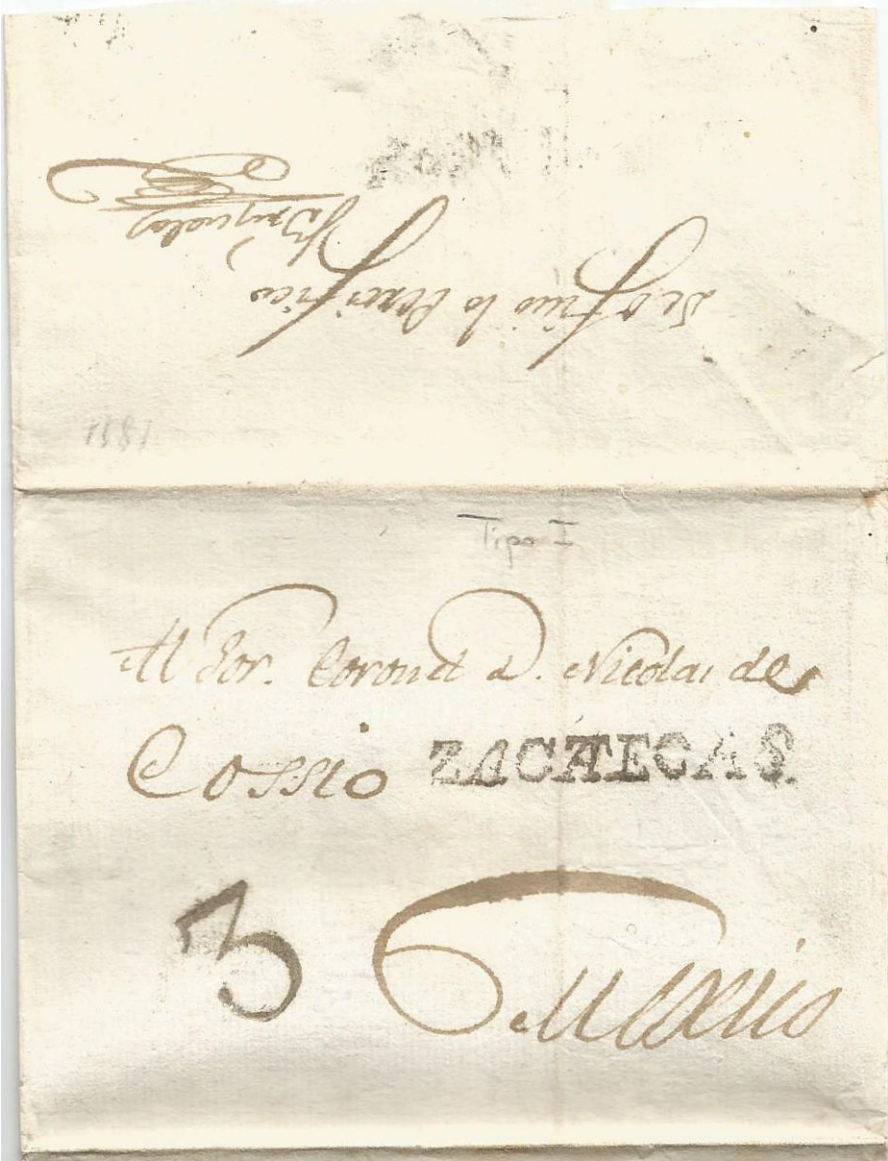
Date: c. 1820.
Rate: “3r” (Double letter).
Route: Jalapa - Mexico ~ 60 leagues (251 km).
Postmark: Large linear XALAPA, used 1778-1822.



Date: c. 1813.
Rate: “3r” (Double letter).
Route: Zacatecas - Mexico ~ 126 leagues (526 km).
Postmark: Linear ZACATECAS., used from 1805 to 1821.
Other: Endorsed “De oficio lo certifico”.

Despite the official endorsement, since 1800 most official mail from tribunals and other government institutions had been deprived of any franking privilege.

EX-CAMINO



Date: c. 1818.
Rate: “3r” (Double letter).
Route: Aguascalientes - Mexico ~ 103 leagues (499 km).
Postmark: Linear AGUASCALIENTES, used from 1816 to 1820.

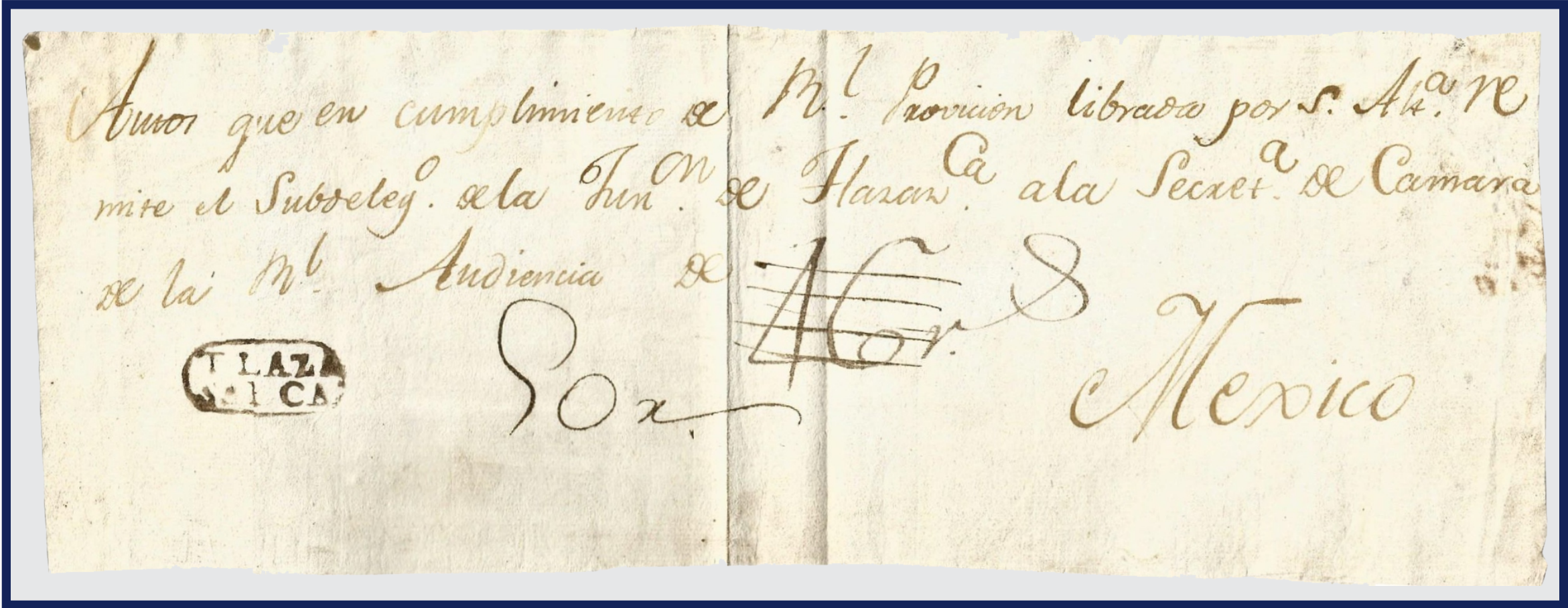
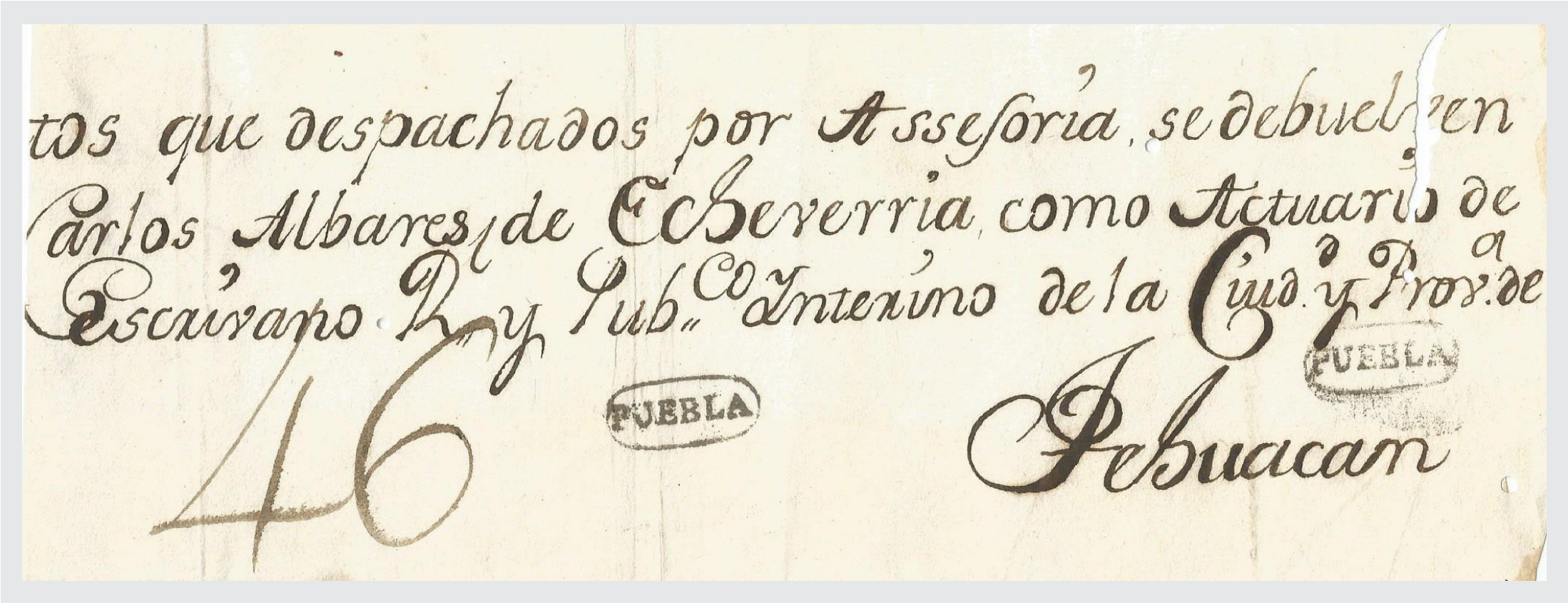


Date: c. 1820.
Rate: “6r” Lettersheet of one ounce.
Route: Actopan - Pachuca/fwd. - Mexico ~ 29 leagues (120 km).
Postmark: Linear ACTOPAM, used from 1820 to 1821.

EX-CAMINO

5.5. Rates for Excess Weight (Cont.)

Date: c. 1785.
Rate: “46r” (13 oz. shipment).
Route: Puebla - Orizaba/fwd. -
Tehuacán de las Granadas
~ 37 leagues (133 km).
Postmark: Oval PUEBLA, used
from 1782 to 1792.



Date: c. 1800.
Rate: “50r” (15 oz. shipment).
Route: Tlazazalca -
Patzcuaro/fwd. -
Valladolid/fwd. - Mexico
~ 76 leagues (318 km).
Postmark: Oval
TLAZA/SALCA, used in 1800.

Front bearing a palimpsest:
“46r.” corrected to a
handwritten “50 r.”, the
assessed rate for 15 oz.

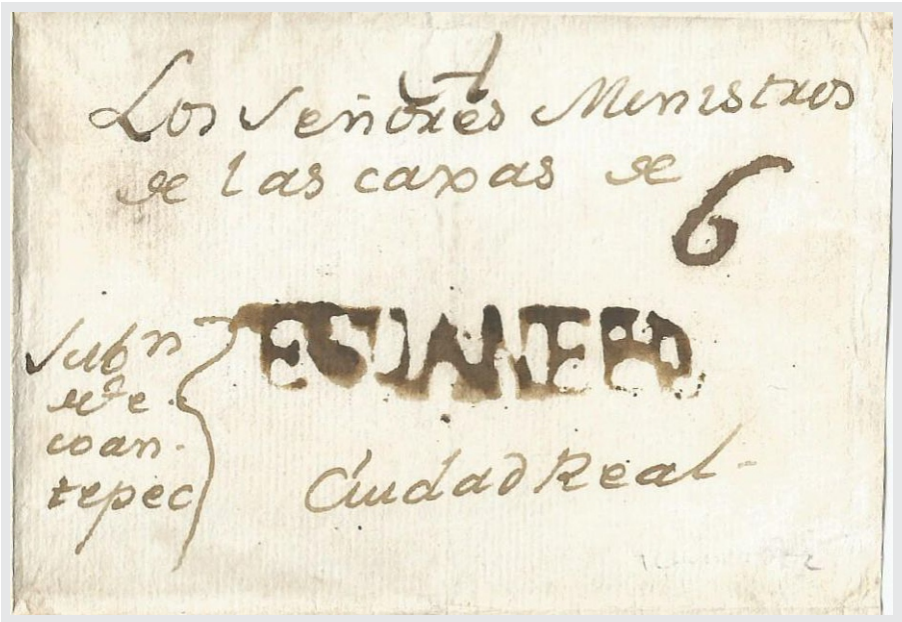
**ONLY SURVIVING
EXAMPLE OF THE
TLAZA/SALCA
POSTMARK**



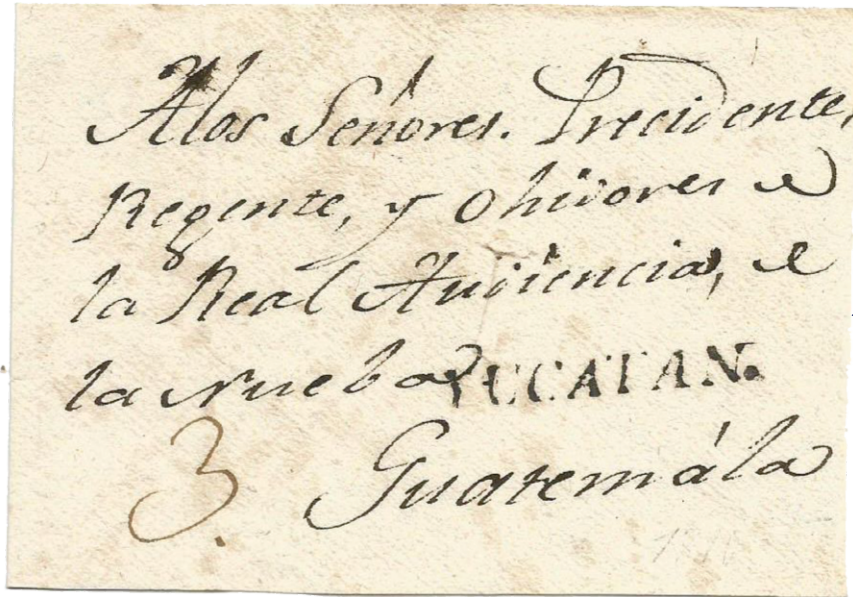
5.7. Outgoing mail to Guatemala by land.

Date: c. 1794.
Rate: “6r” (Triple letter; 1794 rates).
Route: Tehuantepec - Tuxtla - Ciudad Real ~ 86 leagues (359 km).
Postmark: Large linear TEHUANTEPEQ, used in 1794.

Early item rated according to the 1794 rates for outbound mail from New Spain to Guatemala.



TWO PIECES KNOWN



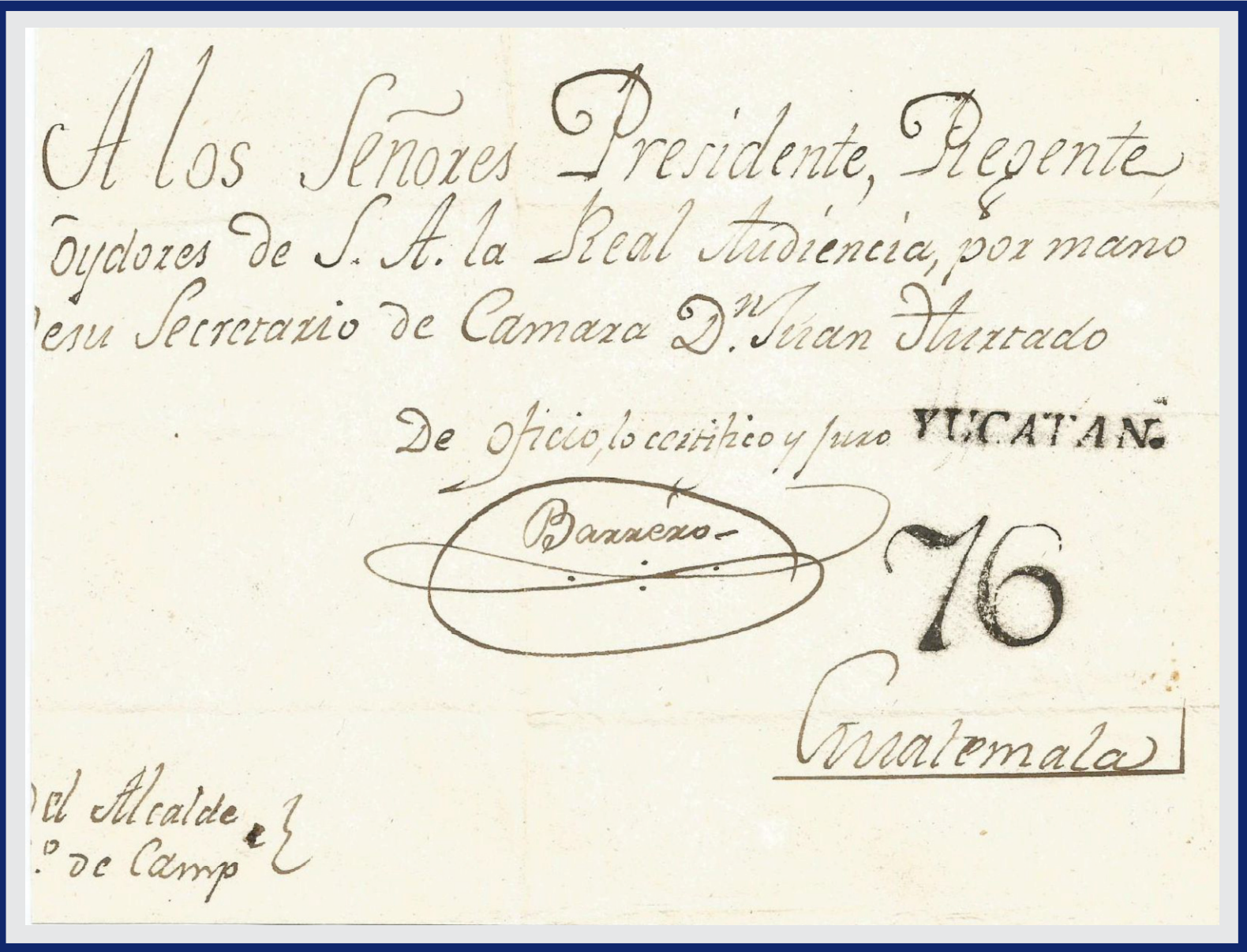
Date: c. 1805.
Rate: “3r” (Single letter; 1794 rates).
Route: Campeche - Tabasco/fwd. - Ciudad Real/fwd. - Guatemala ~ 143.5 leguas (693 km).
Postmark: Linear YUCATAN., used from 1803 to 1820.

Date: c. 1816.
Rate: “6r” (Triple letter; 1812 rates).
Route: Tabasco - Ciudad Real/fwd. - Guatemala ~ 118 leagues (494 km).
Postmark: Two-Line V.A HERMOSA/ DE TABASCO, used from 1807 to 1816.



During the colonial period, **Chiapas** was an integral part of the **Kingdom of Guatemala** and therefore fell under its *Administración Principal de Correos* (independent of Mexico’s), with its own rates. Likewise, correspondence originating in Mexico and addressed to that territory was regulated by a differential rate first decreed in 1794 and revised in 1812.

POSTAL RATES FOR OUTGOING MAIL TO GUATEMALA (Rs. de plata) - Basic Rates				
Rate	Single up to ¼ oz	Double of up to ½ oz	Triple of up to ¾ oz	Lettersheet of 1 oz
1794	2 rs.	4 rs.	6 rs.	8 rs.
1812	3 rs.	4 rs.	6 rs.	8 rs.



Date: c. 1820.
Rate: “76r” (18-oz shipment; 1812 rates).
Route: Campeche - Tabasco/fwd. - Ciudad Real/fwd. - Guatemala ~ 143.5 leguas (693 km).
Postmark: Linear YUCATAN., used from 1803 to 1820.

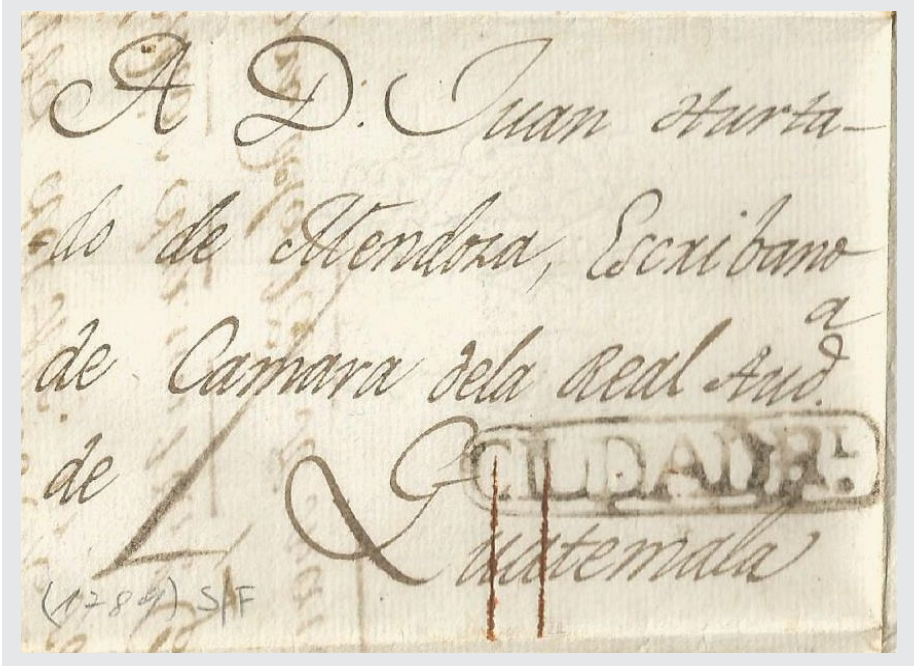


5.7. Local and outbound mail from Chiapas.

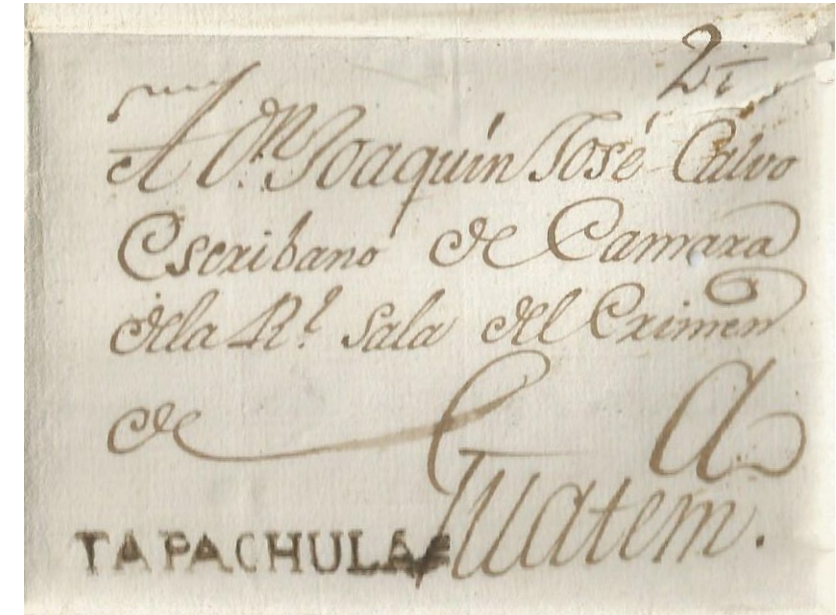
Most surviving letters from **Chiapas** were sent within the intendancy or elsewhere in the **Kingdom of Guatemala**. After its creation in **1768**, the General Postal Administration of Guatemala used New Spain’s rates, then adopted its own on two occasions: the **General Rate of 1796** and the **1807 uprating**. Under the **1814 ordinances**, Chiapas (along with the rest of Guatemala) was included in **Zone 1**.

DOMESTIC RATES OF GUATEMALA (Rs.de plata) - Basic Rates					
Rate	Single of less than ½ oz	Double of up to ½ oz	Triple of up to ¾ oz	Lettersheet of up to 1 oz	Each additional oz
1796	2 rs.	4 rs.	6 rs.	8 rs.	3 rs.
1807	4 rs	5 rs.	7 rs.	10 rs.	3½ rs.

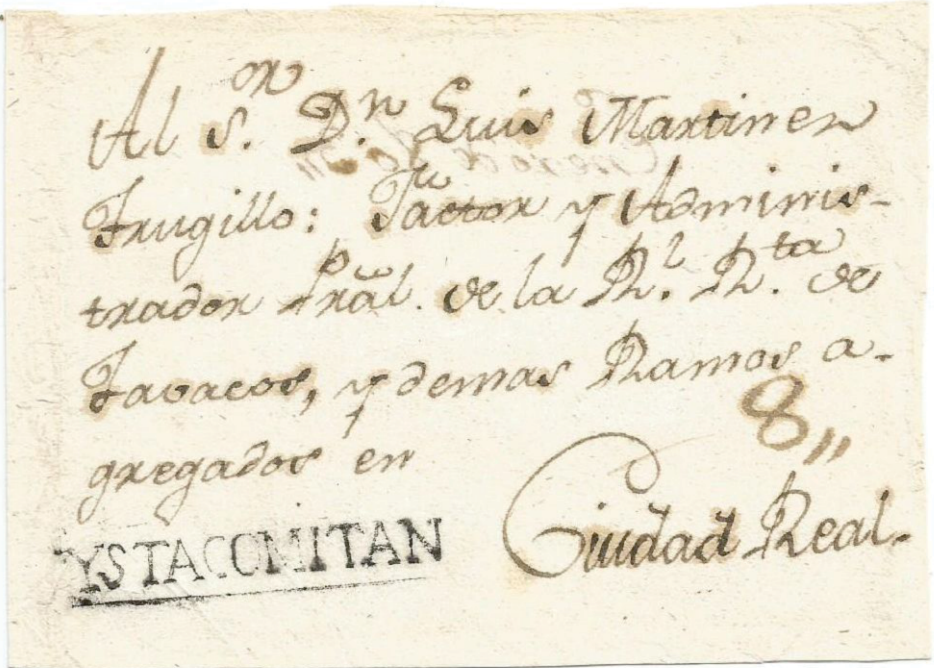
Date: c. 1789.
Rate: “4r” (Double letter; 1768 rates).
Route: Ciudad Real - Guatemala
~ 97 leagues (406 km).
Postmark: Oval **CIUDAD RL.**, used from 1789 to 1798.



Date: c. 1795.
Rate: “18r” (6 oz; 1768 rates).
Route: Tapachula - Guatemala
~ 46 leagues (192 km).
Postmark: Oval **TAPACHULA-** used in 1795.
Other: Endorsed “De oficio”.

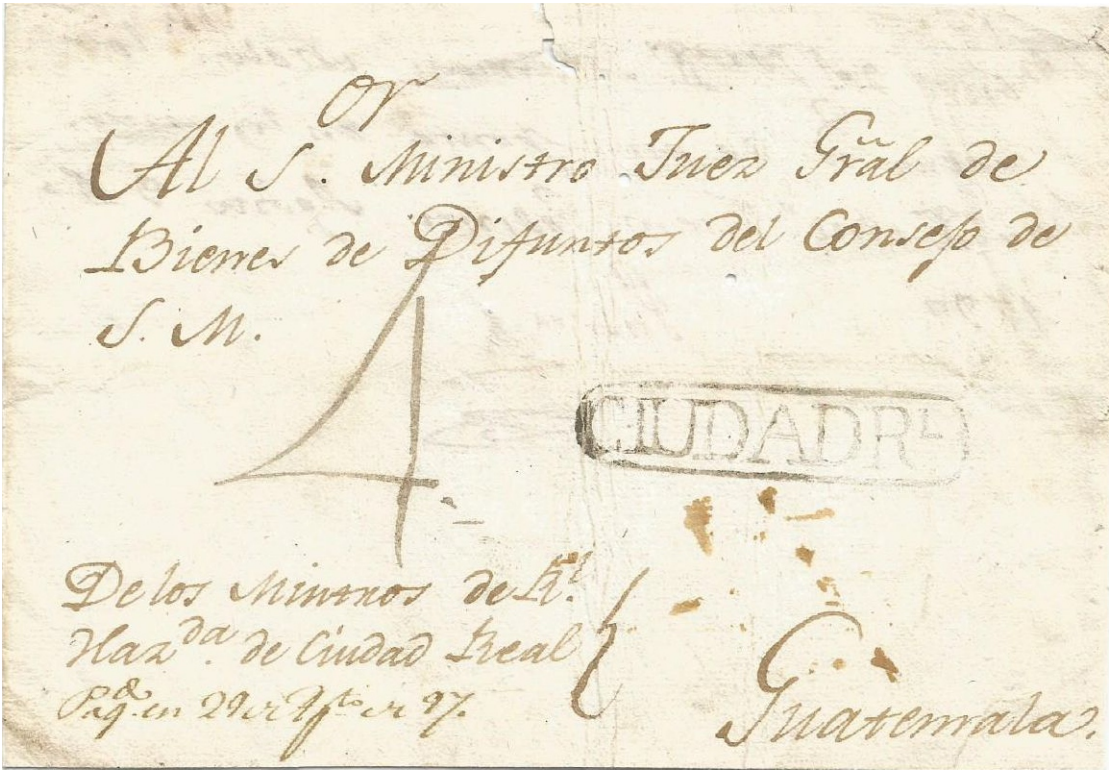


Date: c. 1804.
Rate: “2r” (Single Letter; 1796 rates).
Route: Tapachula - Guatemala ~ 46 leagues (192 km).
Postmark: Linear **TAPACHULA-**, used 1804-1815.



Date: Jan/1803.
Rate: “8r” (1-oz; 1796 rates).
Route: Ystacomitán - Ciudad Real ~ 38 leagues (161 km).
Postmark: Linear **YSTACOMITAN**, used 1800-1821.

EX-CAMINO



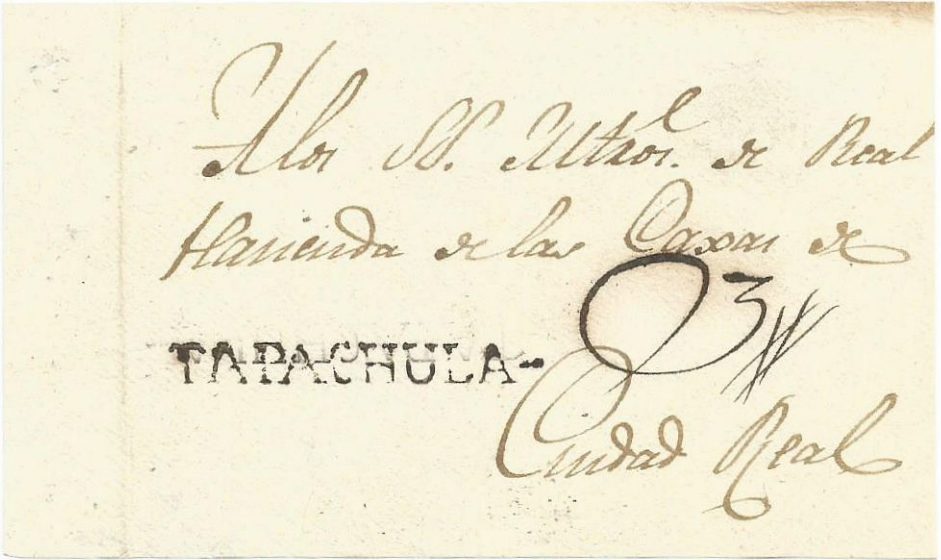
Date: ca. 1798.
Rate: “4r” (Double letter; 1796 rates).
Route: Ciudad Real - Guatemala ~ 35 leagues (140 km).
Postmark: Oval **CIUDAD RL.**, used from 1795 to 1798.

EX-CAMINO

5.7. Local and outbound mail from Chiapas (Cont.)



Date: c. 1800
Rate: “20r” (5-oz parcel; 1796 rates).
Route: Tuxtla - Ciudad Real/fwd. - Guatemala ~ 121 leagues (508 km).
Postmark: Fancy Oval TUXTLA, used 1788-1814.

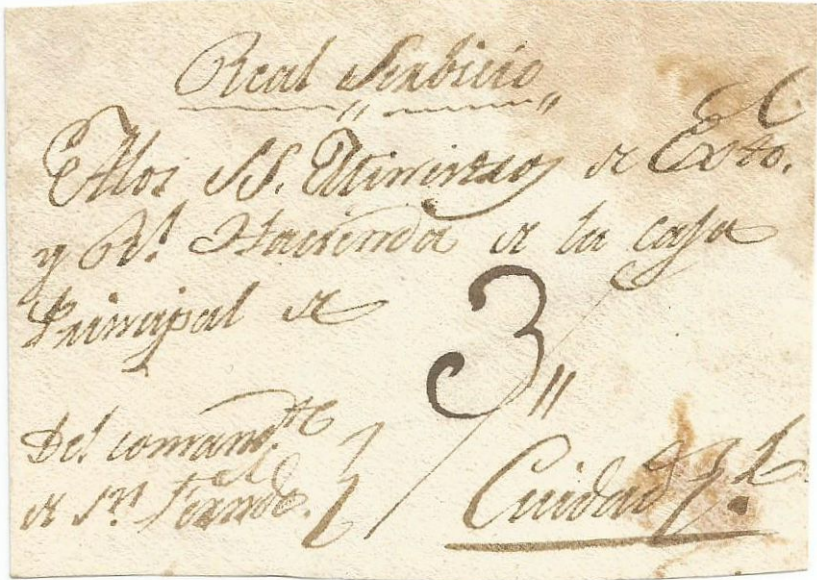
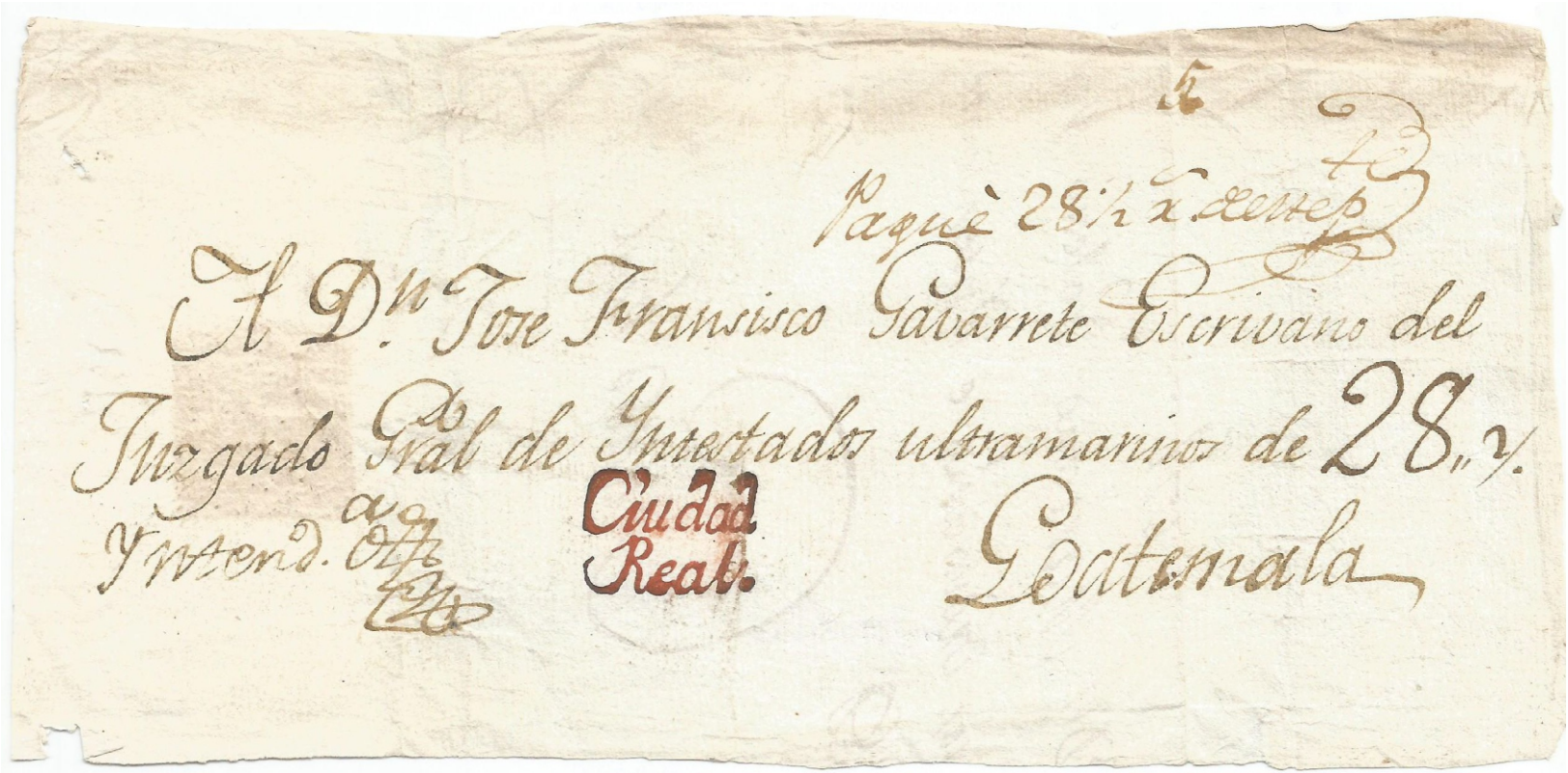


Date: c. 1814.
Rate: “3r” (Single letter; 1814 rates).
Route: Tapachula - Quetzaltenango/fwd. - Ciudad Real ~ 109 leagues (456 km).
Postmark: Linear TAPACHULA-, used from 1804 to 1815.

Front demonstrating that the 1814 rates were applied in the Chiapas Intendancy.

Date: c. 1808.
Rate: “28½r” (9-oz weight; 1807 rates).
Route: Ciudad Real - Guatemala ~ 125 leagues (525 km).
Postmark: Two-line CIUDAD/ REAL, used from 1803 to 1810

Front rated under the half-real-per-ounce surcharge introduced by the Guatemalan postmaster Miguel Francisco Arteaga.



MILITARY MAIL

Date: c. 1815.
Rate: “3r” (Single letter; 1814 rates).
Route: San Fernando de Guadalupe - Cd. Real ~ 45 leagues (188km).
Other: Endorsed “Real Servicio”.

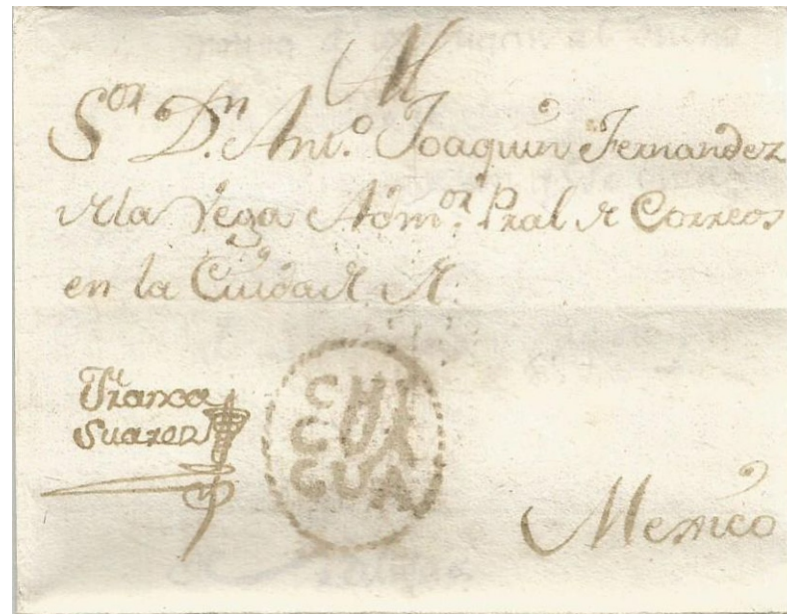
Front posted in a small town founded in 1793 (today’s Salto del Agua). It bears no postmarks, and none are recorded from this place in the colonial period.



Real Renta: Prepaid Mail.

6.1 Postmasters's Paraphs (*Medias Firmas*).

After 1766, new regulations let the public send prepaid letters (*francas*), identified by a *media firma* (paraph) on the cover combining the word FRANCA with the origin postmaster's short signature, certifying that no further postage was due. Eventually, for lareger post offices, postal marks replicating the signature were authorized to expedite the process.



TWO LETTERS KNOWN WITH THE SUÁREZ PARAPH

Date: 8/May/1783.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Tajimaroa - Tlalpujahua/fwd. - Mexico ~ 41 leagues (199 km).
Postmark: Oval FRANCA/LEXARZA used in 1783.

A rare case in which the piece was not marked with the postmark of origin, bearing only the paraph of the local postmaster, **Juan José Martínez de Lejarza**.

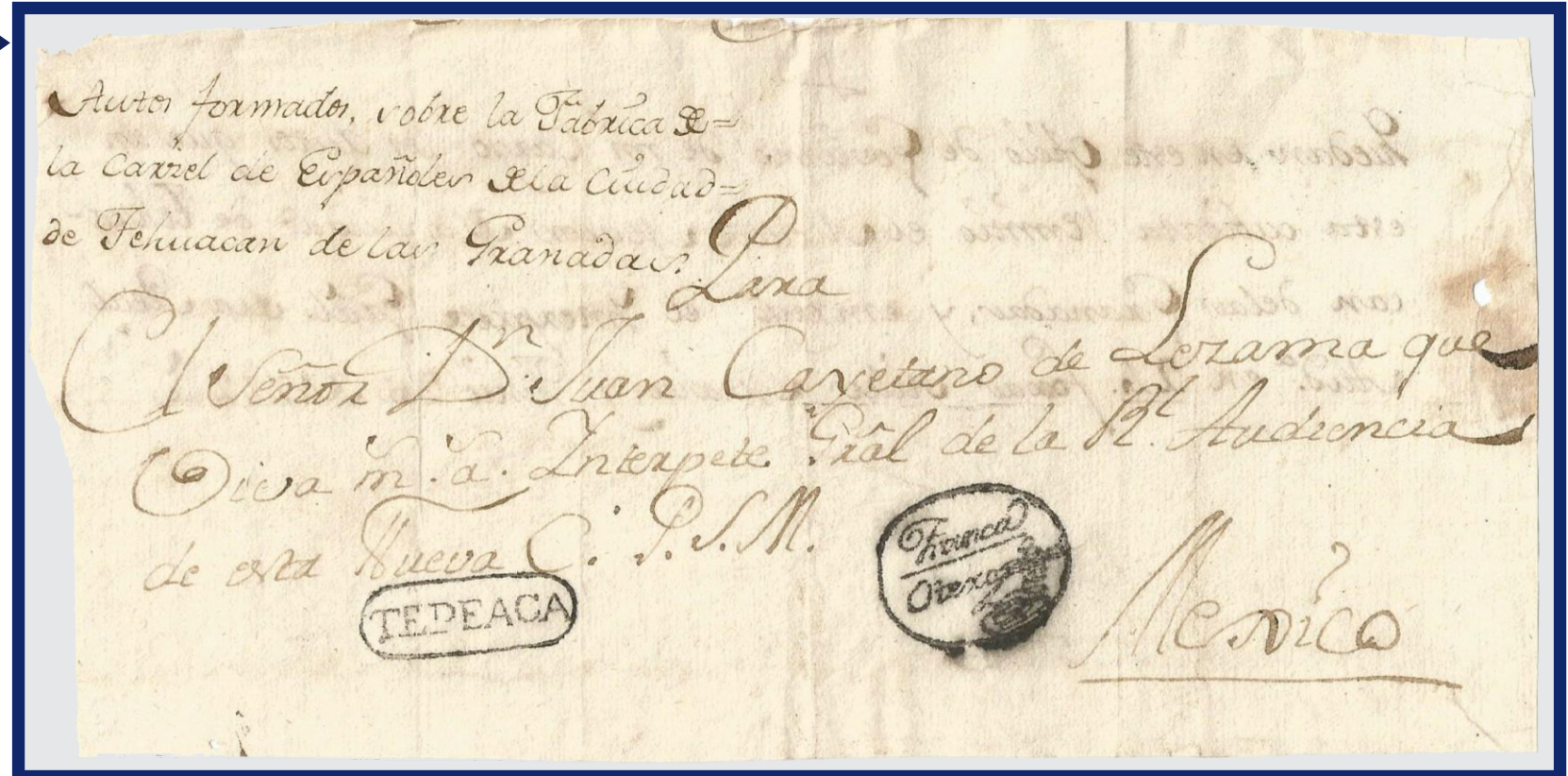


ONLY ONE KNOWN

Date: 26/Jun/1782.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Tepeaca - Puebla/fwd. - Mexico ~ 28 leagues (135 km).
Postmark: Oval TEPEACA used in 1782/ Oval FRANCA/OTERO used in 1782.

Piece bearing one of the earliest known handstamped paraphs, that of **Nicolás Álvarez de Otero**, Postmaster of Tepeaca.

ONLY ONE KNOWN



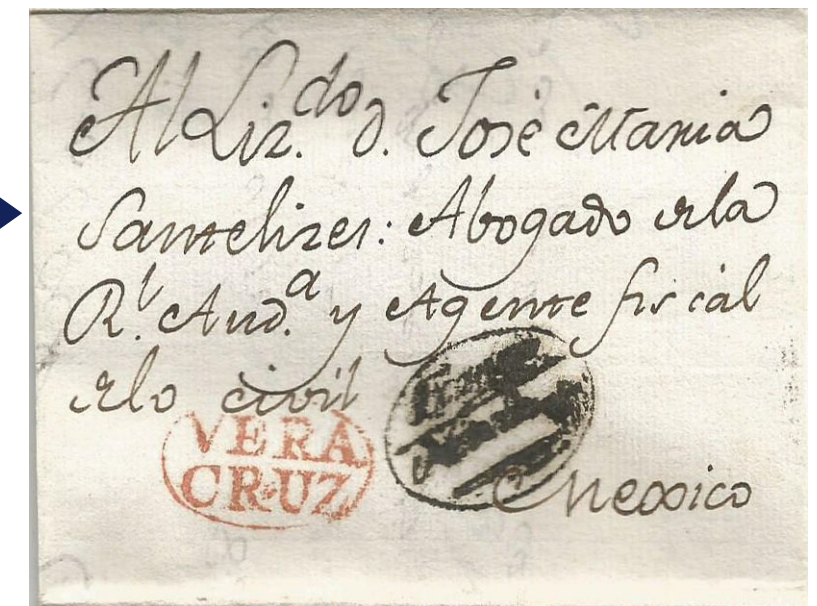
Date: 1791. **Rate:** Unknown.
Route: Veracruz - Mexico ~ 70 leagues (293 km).
Postmark: Oval VERA/ CRUZ, used from 1790 to 1801/ Oval FRANCA/ NIEVES known used in 1791.

Wrapper bearing the paraph of **Vicente Nieves**, Postmaster of Veracruz from 1779 to 1798.

ONLY KNOWN EXAMPLE OF THE NIEVES PARAPH.



ONLY KNOWN PIECE WITH THE ARELLANO PARAPH



Date: 1796. **Rate:** Unknown.
Route: Tulancingo - Pachuca/fwd. - Mexico ~ 36 leagues (140 km).
Postmark: Oval TULAN-/CINGO, used from 1796 to 1821/ Oval FRANCA/ ARELLANO, used in 1796.
Other: Endorsed FRANCA.

Wrapper bearing the paraph of **Juan Marcelino de Arellano**, Postmaster of Tulancingo.

6.1 Postmasters's Paraphs (Cont.)

Date: 1805.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter):
Route: Fresnillo - Zacatecas ~ 12 leagues (61 km).
Postmark: Oval **FRES-/NILLO**, used 1801-1811/ Oval **FRANCO/ LEDESMA** used 1801-1805.

Only three paraphs are known in red ink; one is that of **Juan de Ledesma y Sotomayor**,



TWO ITEMS WITH THE LEDESMA PARAPH



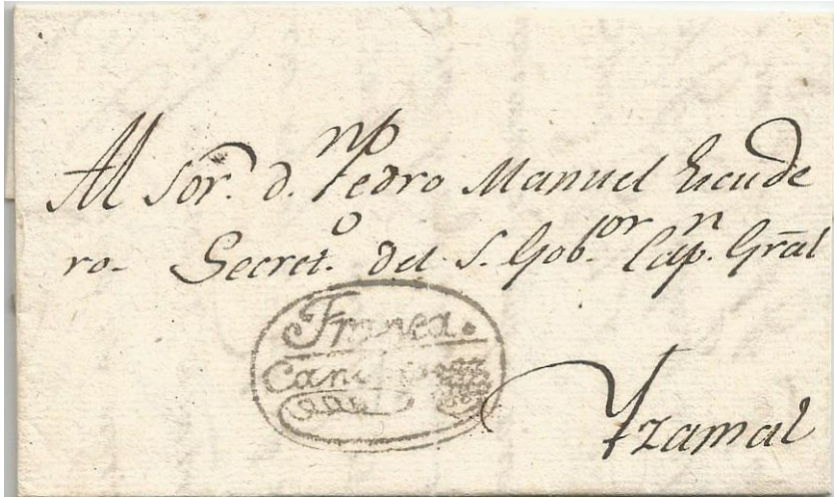
Date: 5/Jan/1811.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Córdoba - Orizaba ~ 6 leagues (25 km).
Postmark: Oval **FRANCA/ CARRILLO**, used in 1811.

Letter with the paraph of **Manuel José Carrillo**, postmaster of Córdoba.

ONLY ONE KNOWN

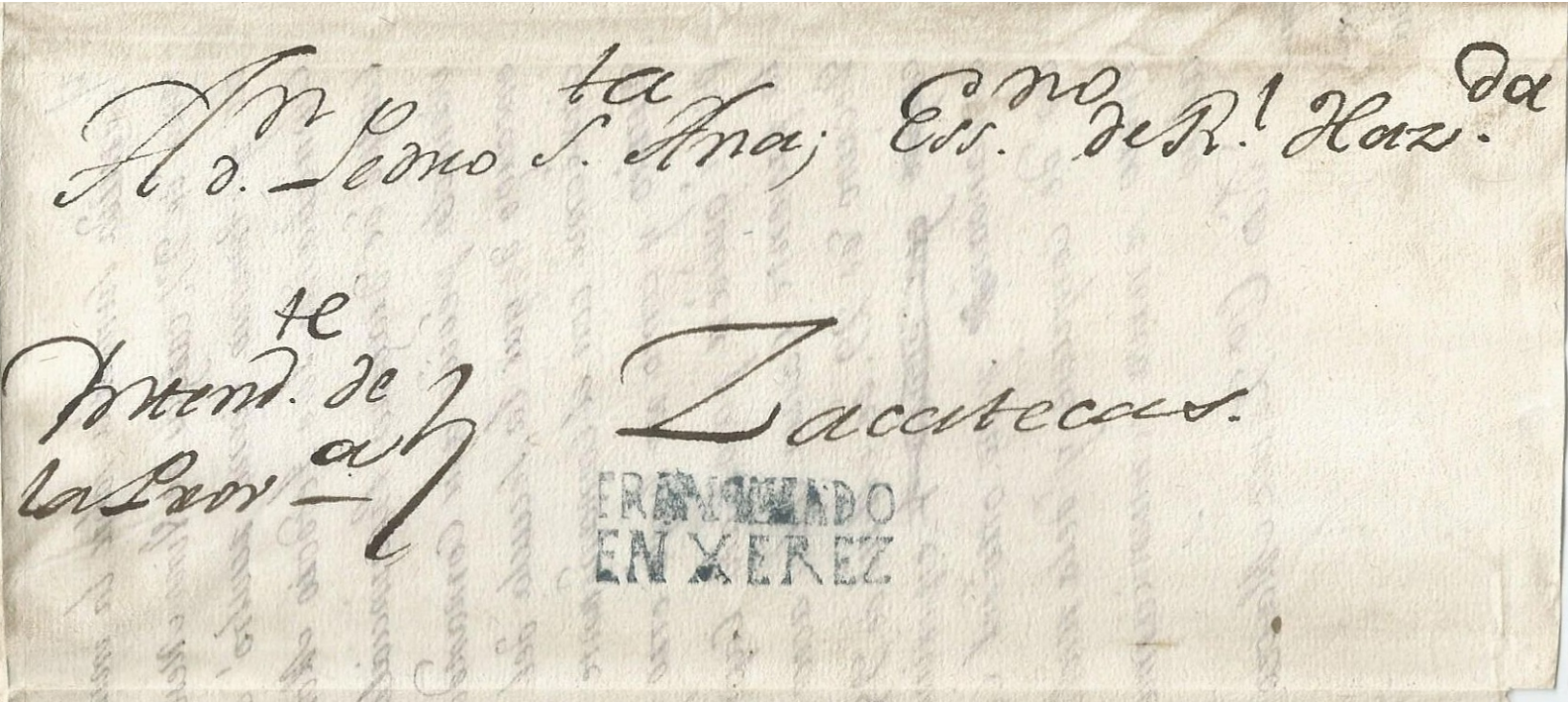
Date: 29/Nov/1814.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Campeche - Mérida/fwd. - Izamal ~ 59 leagues (249 km).
Postmark: Oval **FRANCA/ CANOBAS**, used from 1814 to 1817.

Folded letter bearing the paraph of **Antonio Cánovas Fajardo**, postmaster of Campeche from 1789 to 1817



6.2. Prepaid markings.

By the 19th century, paraphs were gradually replaced with simple prepaid markings, which became the norm, with devices shifting from postmasters' surnames to legends like **FRANCO**, **FRANQUEADO EN** or **FRANQUEADA EN** plus the town name.



Date: 15/Mar/1800.
Rate: “8r” 2-oz lettersheet.
Route: Jerez - Zacatecas ~ 11 leagues (54 km).
Postmark: Two-line **FRANQUEADO/ EN XEREZ**, used in 1800.

Wrapper of judicial file.

EX-CAMINO

ONLY KNOWN EXAMPLE OF THE XEREZ PREPAID MARK.

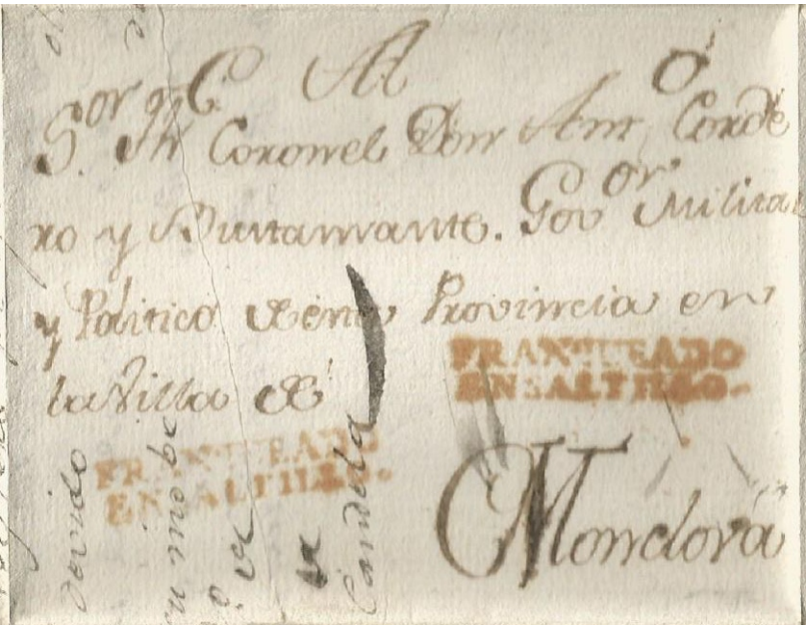
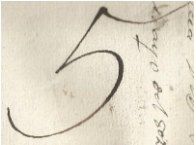


Date: 24/Apr/1802. **Rate:** “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Monterrey - Cadereyta ~ 9.5 leagues (40 km).
Postmark: Fancy **MONTERREY** used 1785-1821/ Two-line **FRANQ EN/MONTEREI**, used 1802- 1820.

Folded letter showing a rare instance of a townmark and the prepaid marking applied side by side on the front.

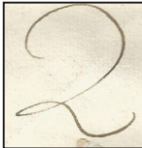
Date: c. 1802.
Rate: “5r” (Double letter; Inner Provinces rate).
Route: Saltillo - Monclova ~ 41 leagues (197 km).
Postmark: Two-line **FRANQUEADO EN/ SALTILLO**, used between 1800 and 1834.

Folded letter with a double strike of the local prepaid mark.

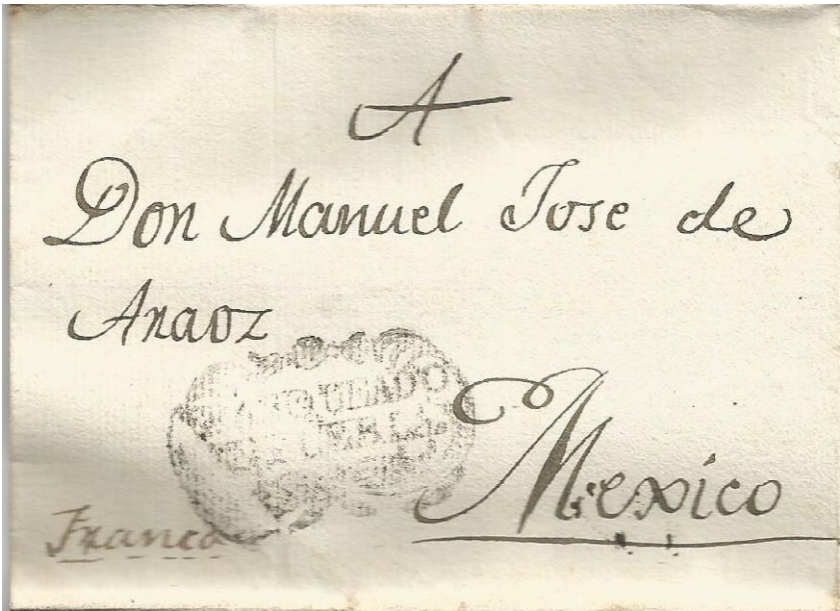


6.2 Prepaid markings (Cont.)

Date: 7/Jan/1807.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter).
Route: Puebla - Mexico
~ 22 leagues (92 km).
Postmark: Fancy oval
FRANQUEADO/ EN
PUEBLA, used 1802-1807.
Other: Endorsed **FRANCA**.



TWO KNOWN PIECES

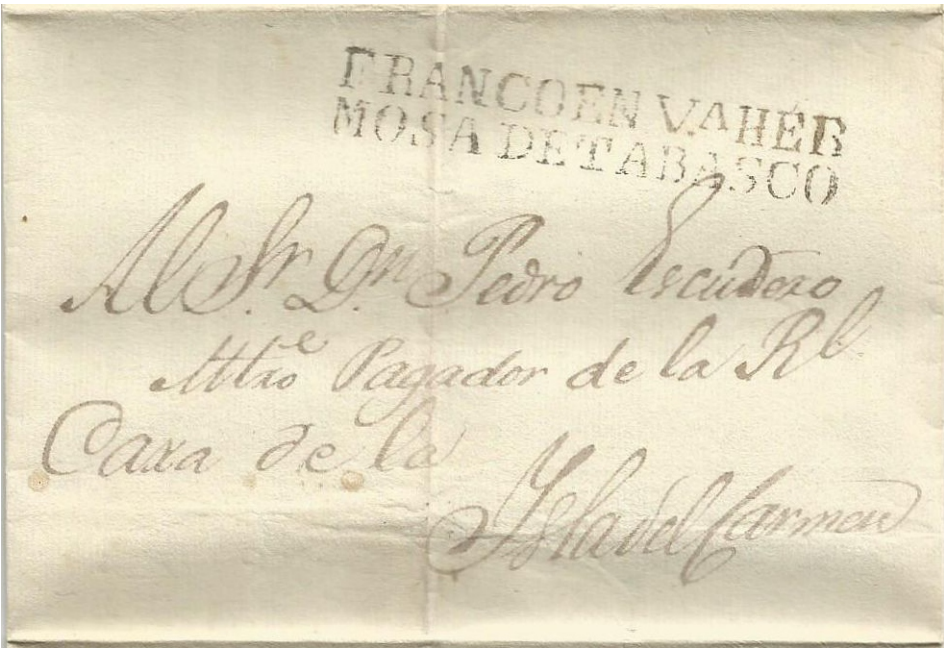


Date: c. 1800.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Teotihuacán - Mexico
~ 10 leagues (49 km).
Postmark: Oval **TEUTI/**
HUACAN, and Box
FRAN/CA used in 1800.

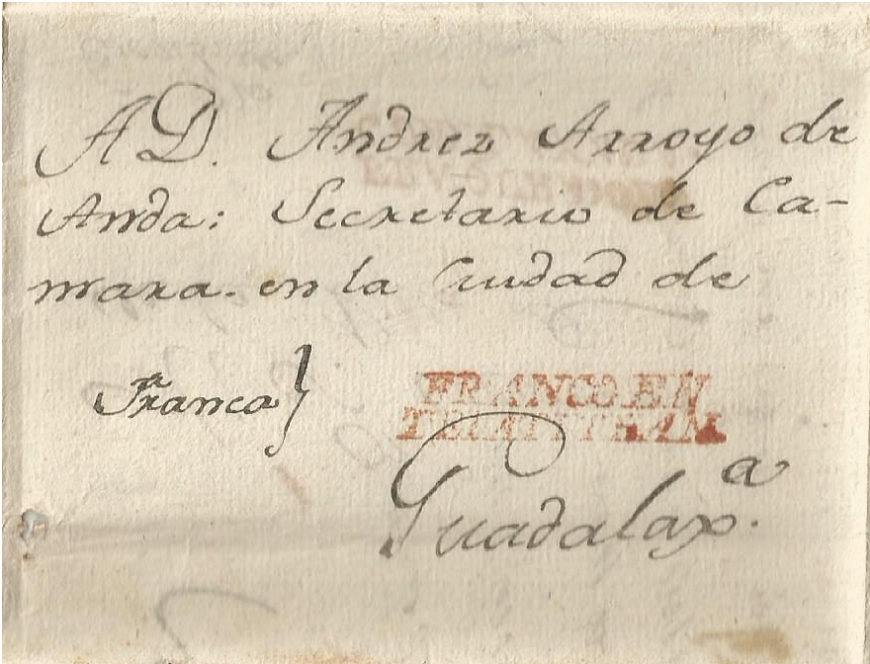
Wrapper bearing one of the few known standalone **FRANCA** colonial handstamps (with no town or postmaster’s name).



ONLY KNOWN COLONIAL LETTER OF S. JUAN TEOTIHUACÁN



Date: 8/Jan/1820.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Tabasco - Campeche - Isla del Carmen (via coastal boat).
Postmark: Two-line **FRANCO EN VA. HER/ MOSA DE TABASCO**, used 1810-1820.



SOLE RECORDED LETTER

Date: c. 1801.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Tepatitlán - Guadalajara ~ 15 leagues (74 km).
Postmark: Two-line **FRANCO EN/ TEPATITLAN**, used from 1801 to 1811.
Other: Endorsed **FRANCA**.

Reverse: Reused on Aug. 18, 1801, for a letter from Guadalajara to Monclova, bearing a **FRANQUEADO EN GUADALAXARA** mark, used 1797-1821.

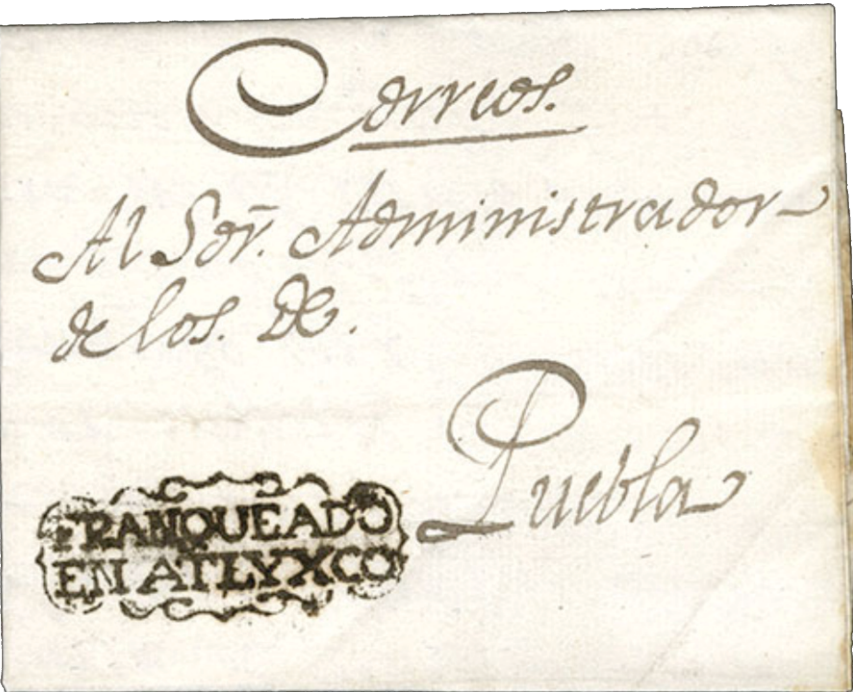


Date: c. 1802.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Ciudad Real - Comitán/fwd-Guatemala ~ 78 leagues (374 km).
Postmark: Rectangular two-line **FRANQUEADO/ CIUDAD REAL**, used from 1802 to 1816.

Front showing an ornate prepaid postmark from a town in Chiapas.

Date: 25/Oct/1806.
Rate: Franking privilege.
Route: Atlixco - Puebla
~ 7 leagues (31 km).
Postmark: Fancy frame **FRANQUEADO/ EN ATLYXCO**, used from 1806 to 1821.
Other: Endorsed **CORREOS**.

Folded letter containing an internal exchange between postal clerks.





Real Renta: Certified Mail.

Certified mail offered an added guarantee of delivery. In Mexico, the fee was fixed at **2 pesos**, prepaid by the sender, and included postage on single letters; heavier items also paid the ordinary rate. In Veracruz, certification was charged at **5, 10, or 20 reales**, according to weight. SURVIVAL OF CERTIFIED FRONTS IS EXCEEDINGLY RARE SINCE THEY WERE FILED AT THE ISSUING POST OFFICE AND EVENTUALLY DESTROYED FOLLOWING ESTABLISHED P.O. REGULATIONS.

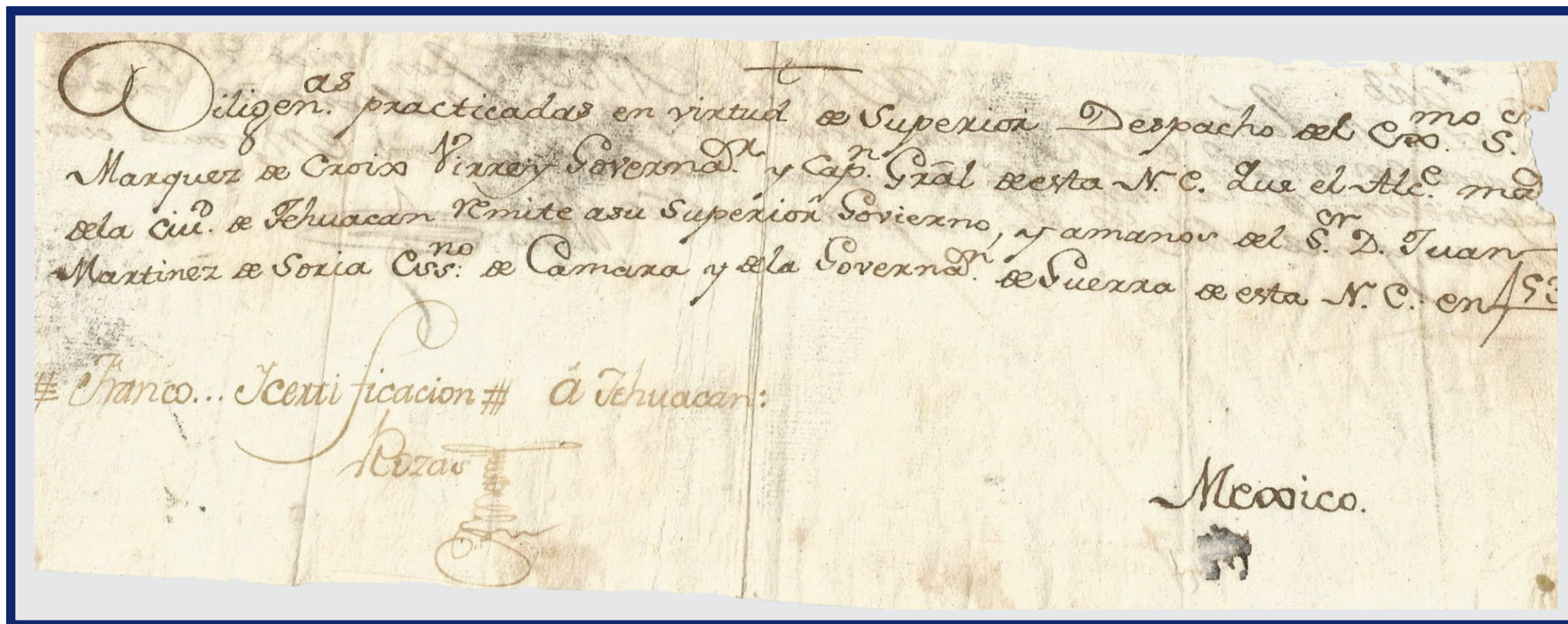
FORERUNNER

Date: 24/Jul/1769.

Rate: Certification + postage.

Route: Tehuacán - Puebla - Mexico ~ 53 leagues (255 km).

Front with no handstamped postmarks due to its early date. Instead, it bears the handwritten “**FRANCO Y CERTIFICACIÓN A TEHUACÁN**” and the signature of **Juan Álvarez Rosas**, postmaster of Tehuacán, the earliest recorded examples in New Spain of a certification marking and a paraph, respectively.



EARLIEST KNOWN CERTIFIED ITEM OF THE AMERICAS



Date: 21/Jul/1777.

Rate: “19r” (Certified single letter; Inner Provinces rates).

Route: Chihuahua - Durango/fwd. - Guanajuato/fwd. - Guadalajara ~ 242 leagues (1,169 km).

Postmark: Oval CHI/GUA/GUA used from 1777 to 1782.

Besides the postmark, all markings are handwritten: the **FRANCA / SUÁREZ** paraph, the legend **CERTIFICACIÓN A CHIHUAHUA**, and cross-hatching at the corners. The legend “Pagó ambos derechos Dn. Joaquín Fernández 19 rs.” shows payment of **16 rs.** for certification and **3 rs.** for a single letter.

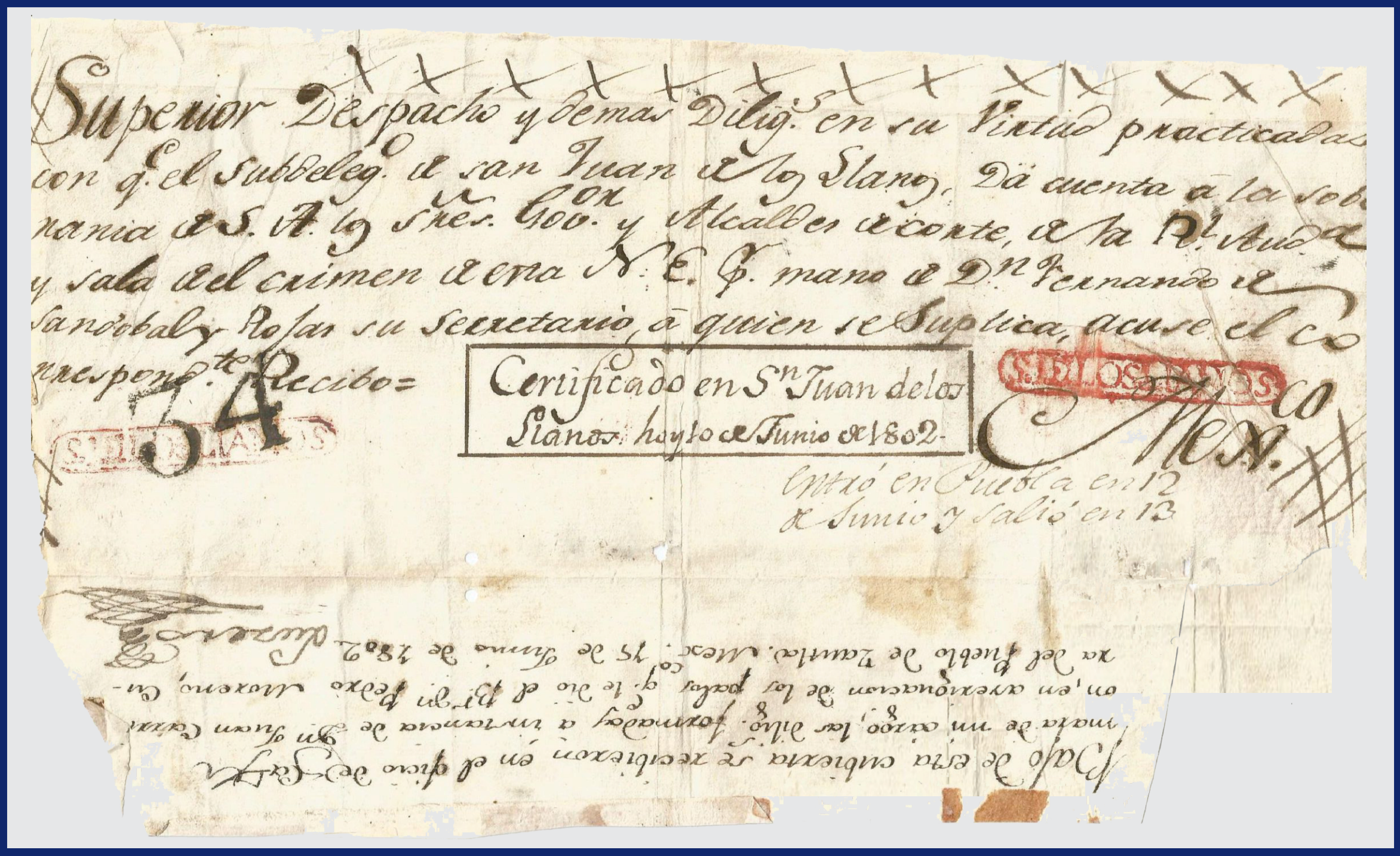
ONLY KNOWN CERTIFIED PIECE OF COLONIAL CHIHUAHUA



Date: 2/Oct/1790. **Rate:** 2 ps. Certification fee + Postage. **Route:** Cholula - Puebla - Mexico ~ 20 leagues (84 km). **Postmark:** Oval CHOLVLA used from 1790 to 1802/ Oval FRANCA/ CANCELA used in 1790.

Front with an outstanding combination of markings, including the **only recorded paraph** of **Bernabé Cancela y Jerpe**, postmaster of Cholula (1784–91). Handwritten “**CERTIFICAC.ON A CHOLULA / SALIÓ EN 2 DE OCTUBRE DE [17]90**”, featuring the posting date and the wording later standardized for these markings; Puebla transit note and the paraph of **Antonio J. Fernández de la Vega**, postmaster of Mexico (1780–90).

7- Real Renta: Certified Mail (Cont.)



Date: 10/Jun/1802.
Rate: “34r” (16r for certification plus 18r for a 4½ oz shipment).
Route: San Juan de los Llanos - Puebla/fwd. - Mexico ~48 leagues (205 km).
Postmark: Two strikes of oval **SAN JUAN DE LOS LLANOS** used from 1802 to 1817.
Other: Handwritten “**CERTIFICADO EN S. JUAN DE LOS / LLANOS, HOY 10 DE JUNIO DE 1802**”.

Front of a judicial plica sent from San Juan de los Llanos, then a tiny town with an estimated 740 inhabitants (today’s Ciudad Libres, Puebla). It bears transit notations recording entry (12/Jun) and forwarding (13/Jun) in Puebla. On the reverse, it includes the acknowledgment of receipt dated 15/Jun, a transit of five days.

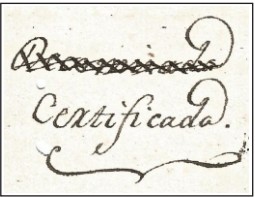
7- Real Renta: Certified Mail (Cont.)



DISCOVERY PIECE

Date: 27/Apr/1808.
Rate: Certification fee + postage.
Route: Orizaba - Puebla/fwd. - Tehuacán ~ 17 leagues (68 km).
Postmark: Two-line **CERTIFICACIÓN A ORIZABA/ SALIÓ EN** used in 1808; **FRANCA/ CALVO** used in 1808

Front with two previously unrecorded markings, including the paraph of **Francisco Xavier Calvo**, Postmaster of Orizaba (1808 -1819).



The reverse is endorsed **DECOMISADA** crossed out with **CERTIFICADA** added beneath, indicating a brief, likely mistaken interception in transit before delivery.



Date: 24/Sep/1818.
Rate: “101½ rs.” (Certified 5¼oz shipment (*); Guatemala rates).
Route: Comitán - Quetzaltenango/fwd. - Guatemala ~ 100 leagues (420 km).
Postmark: Rectangular **FRANQUEADO/ EN COMITÁN** used from 1805 to 1820.
Other: Handwritten marking “**Certificasión de Comitán sale en 24 de Septe. de 1818**” (sic).

(*) On the reverse, the postal clerk recorded the breakdown of the rate as follows: 58½ rs. for the certification and 43 rs. for postage, a most peculiar calculation of the correct applicable rates.

Date: 18/Jun/1817.
Rate: Certified fee + Postage.
Route: Mexico - Pachuca/fwd. - Tulancingo ~ 25 leagues (119 km).
Postmark: Two-line **FRANCO/ MÉXICO** used 1808-1817; **CERTIFICACIÓN A MÉXICO/ SALIÓ EN** used 1817- 1821/
R/ YNTENDENCIA / DE MÉXICO official seal used in 1817.
Other: CAVE outline marking.



The outline mark bears a **C-A-V-E** monogram that may read the Latin cave (or caue), “be careful,” emphasizing special handling.



Real Renta: Official Mail. 8.1 Real Servicio.

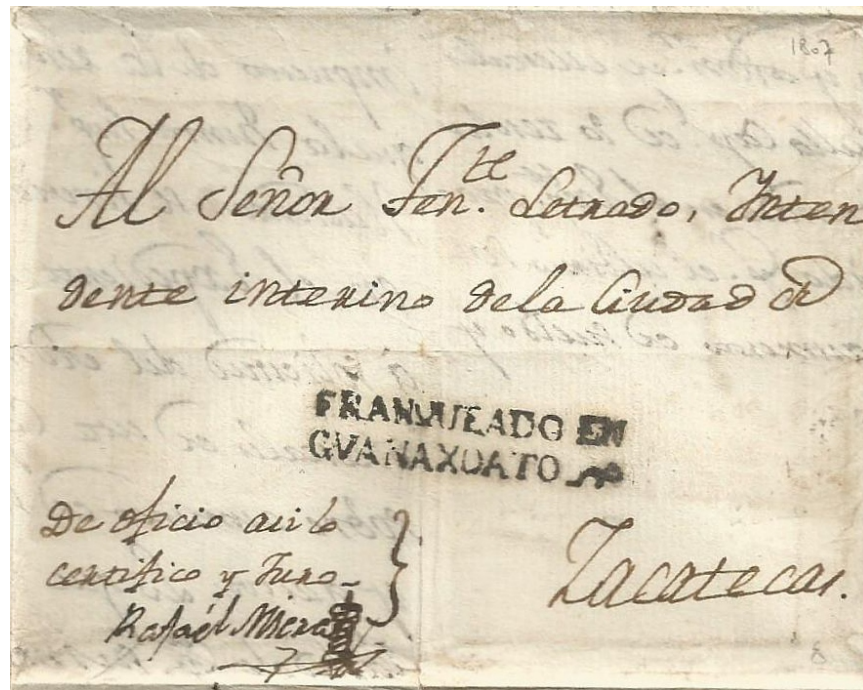
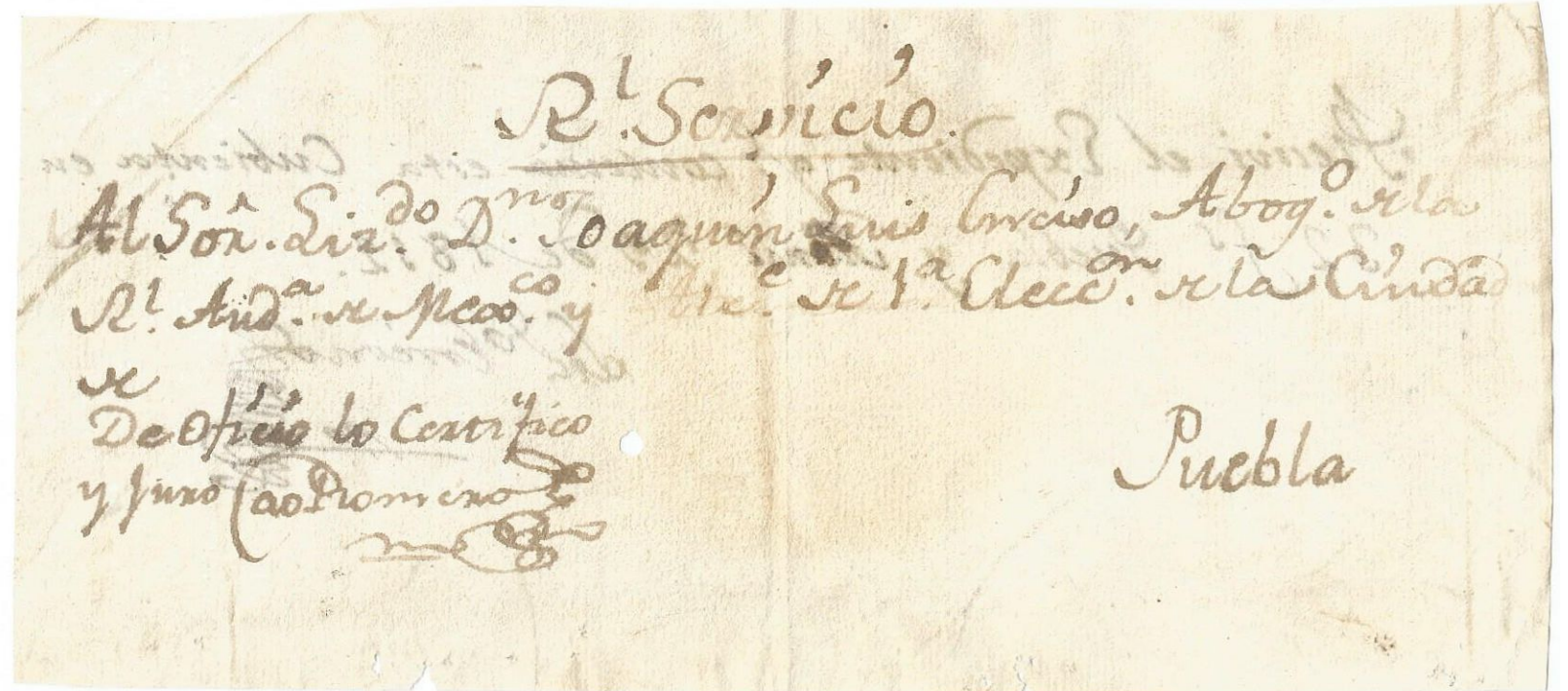
Official mail in New Spain was strictly limited to correspondence directly related to matters of state; however, abuses were frequent. Consequently, the franking privilege was progressively narrowed and procedurally tightened: viceroy **Bucareli's 1771 edict** required most government letters to pay postage and established fiscal accounts for later reimbursement; viceroy **Mayorga's 1782** order enforced the pay then reimburse procedure for judicial mail; and **Title XIX** of the **1794 Real Ordenanza** further clarified formalities, including the use of the **Sello Negro** and severe penalties for its misuse.

POSTAL FRANCHISE

Date: 8/Mar/1783.
Rate: Franking privilege.
Route: Oaxaca - Orizaba/fwd. - Mexico
~ 95 leagues (460km).
Postmark: Crowned **OAXACA** used
from 1783 to 1786.
Other: Endorsed "**Renta de Correos**".

Wrapper sent to the General Postmaster
of Mexico; it enjoyed franking privilege.

EX-CAMINO



Date: 24/Apr/1807.
Rate: "2r" (Single letter).
Route: Guanajuato - Zacatecas
~ 59 leagues (247 km).
Postmark: Two line
FRANQUEADO EN/
ZACATECAS used 1807- 1809.
Other: Endorsed "**De oficio, así**
lo certifico y juro".

2

Date: c. 1812.
Rate: Franking privilege.
Route: Unknown (likely Mexico-Puebla).
Others: Endorsements "**R. Servicio**" and **De oficio, lo certifico y juro**".

Front without postmarks, suggesting it was carried
outside regular mail channels (fuera de valija), a
privilege reserved for urgent official correspondence.

Date: c. 1814. **Rate:** Unknown.
Route: Tonalá (Chiapas) - Tuxtla/fwd. - Ciudad Real
~ 350 leagues (209 km).
Postmark: Linear **TONALÁ** used from 1812 to 1816.
Other: Legend "**De Ofo**" (for "**De oficio**").

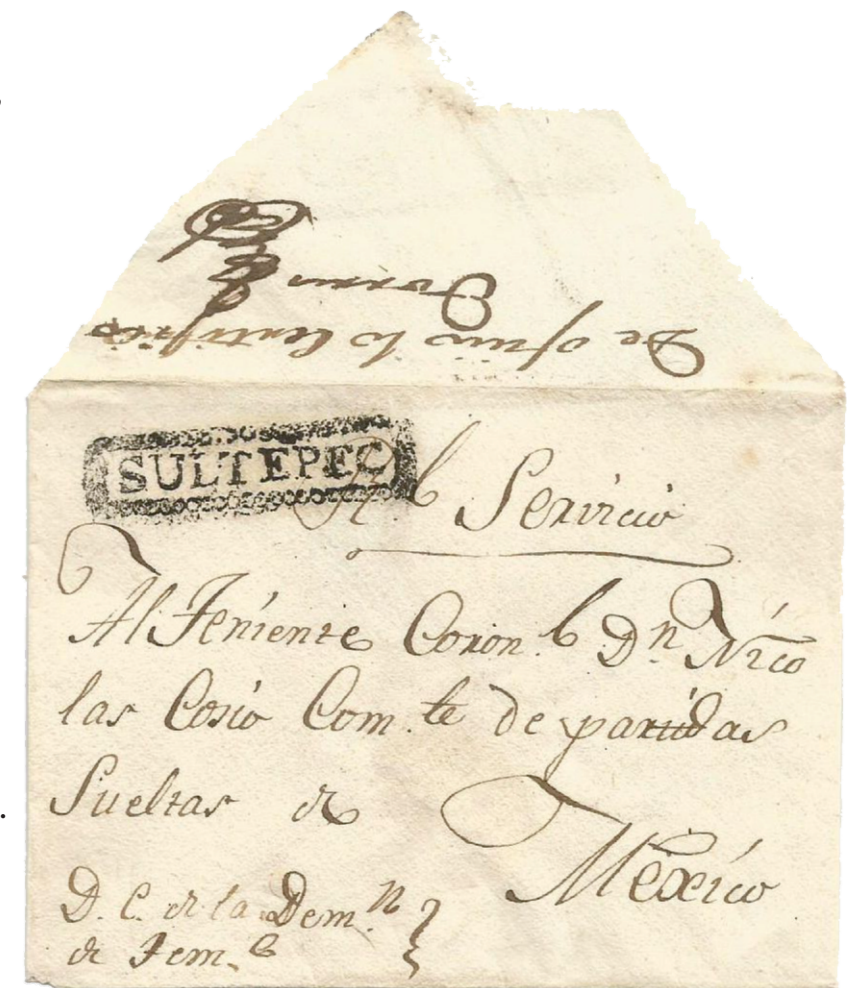
The Postal Administration of Guatemala used the same
formulas as that of Mexico to distinguish its official
correspondence.



Date: c. 1815.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Sultepec - Toluca/fwd. -
Mexico ~ 34 leagues (144 km).
Postmark: Fancy frame
SULTEPEC used 1815-1821.
Others: Endorsed "**Rl.**
Servicio" / "**De oficio, lo**
certificamos".

Wrapper fashioned as an envelope.

EX-CAMINO



8.2 Official Mail: Inner Provinces.

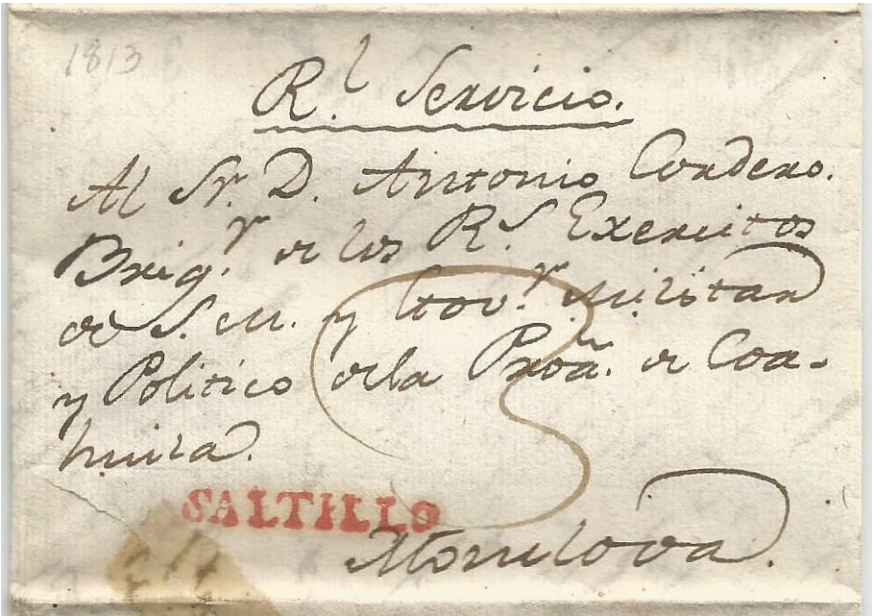
In the Inner Provinces, a decree of **October 12, 1780** by **Teodoro de Croix** adopted a system similar to that used in the rest of New Spain for official correspondence. Every office listed as eligible for the franchise was to pay the postage upon receipt, then obtain a certificate from the post administrator if the piece was strictly **de oficio** (endorsed “**Real Servicio**”), so the charge could be reimbursed through the appropriate treasury fund.



Date: c. 1801.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Parras - Saltillo/fwd. - Monclova ~ 53 leagues (258.5 km).
Postmark: Linear **PARRAS** used from 1801 to 1821; boxed **FRANCO**, in use between 1801 and 1804.
Other: Endorsed “**Real Servicio**”.

Date: c. 1813.
Rate: “3r” (Single letter; Inner Provinces).
Route: Saltillo - Monclova ~ 41 leagues (197 km).
Postmark: Linear **SALTILLO** used from 1805 to 1813.
Other: Endorsed “**Rl. Servicio**”.

The reverse of the paper was reused for a note docketed at Monclova and dated 8/May/1813.



Date: c. 1810.
Rate: Franking privilege.
Route: Paso del Norte - Chihuahua (Today: El Paso, Texas) ~ 87 leagues (365 km).
Postmark: Two line **FRANQUEADO/ EN NORTE**, used in 1810.
Other: Endorsed “**Real Serv.o**”.

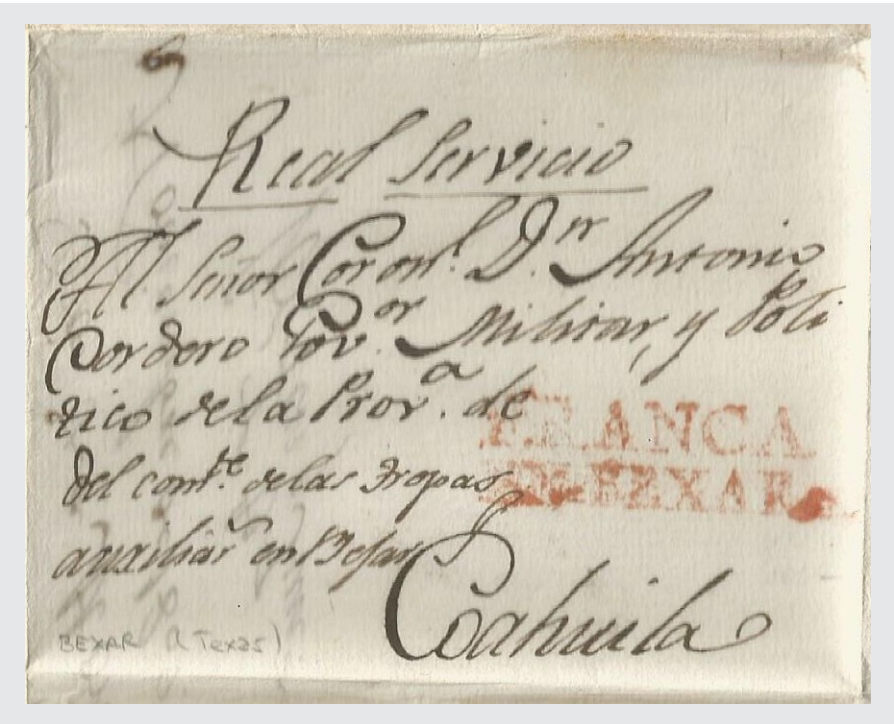
Military correspondence qualified for franking privilege under Teodoro de Croix’s 1780 decree.



ONLY ONE KNOWN

Date: 30/Mar/1802.
Rate: Franking privilege.
Route: San Bartolomé - Saltillo/fwd. - Monclova ~ 153 leagues (641 km).
Postmark: Two line **FRANCA EN EL V./ DE S. BARTOLOMÉ**, used from 1802 to 1821.
Other: Endorsed “**Real Servicio**”.

Besides the lack of a rate notation, the presence of the **aspa** (crossing) implies that no postage was charged.



Date: c. 1809. **Rate:** Unknown.
Route: Béxar - Río Grande/fwd. - Monclova ~ 98 leagues (471.5 km).
Postmark: Two line **FRANCA/ EN BEXAR**, used from 1809 to 1810.
Other: Endorsed “**Real Servicio**”.

Sent by the military commander of Béxar (present-day San Antonio, Texas). Colonial-era mail from Texas is extremely scarce.

ONE OF TWO PIECES RECORDED

8.3 Official Mail: *Sello Negro*.

The *Sello Negro* (“Black Seal”) was created by royal decree in **1716** and reformed by the *Real Ordenanza* of **1794**. Strictly reserved for matters of state, it functioned as a badge of authority and as the only true franking device used in the colonial period to exempt official letters from postage. Only three types from New Spain are known.



Type I:
El Virrey.



Type II:
Large wreath.



Type III:
Lesser wreath.



Date: 1791.
Rate: Franking privilege.
Route: Mexico - Cuernavaca
~ 18 leagues (86 km).
Postmark: Sello Negro type I “EL VIRREY” used in 1791/ Two-line **FRANQUEADO/ EN MÉXICO**, used from 1791 to 1811.

Wrapper bearing both a prepaid marking and a *Sello Negro*. Sent by the Viceroy, Count of Revillagigedo.

EX-CAMINO

ONLY ONE KNOWN



Date: c. 1793.
Rate: “2r” Single letter.
Route: Mexico - Zacatecas
~ 127 leagues (613 km).
Postmark: Sello Negro type II “Large wreath” used 1793-1819/ Two-line **FRANQUEADO/ EN MÉXICO**, used 1793-1811.

Wrapper with a rare mix: prepaid mark, *Sello Negro*, and a “2” on the back, showing it lacked franking privilege and was treated as *de oficio* (postage paid, later reimbursed).

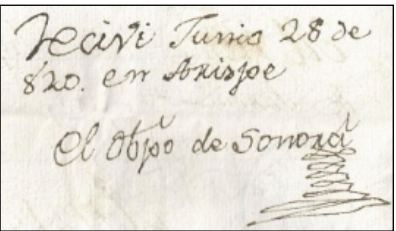
Date: c. 1819.
Rate: Franking privilege.
Route: Mexico - Zacatecas
~ 127 leagues (613 km).
Postmark: Sello Negro type II “Large wreath” used 1793-1819/ Two line **FRANCO/ EN MÉXICO**, used 1809-1819.

Wrapper showing another mixed use of a Black Seal with a franking mark; the seal transfer reveals notable die wear after over twenty-five years in use.



Date: 1820.
Rate: Franking privilege.
Route: Mexico - Chihuahua/fwd. - Arizpe ~ 439 leagues (2,120 km).
Postmark: Sello Negro type III “Lesser wreath” used 1812-1820.
Other: Endorsed “*Executivo*”.

Wrapper sent by the executive officer (viceroys) to the Bishop of Sonora, whose reception note, dated 28/Jun/1820, appears on the reverse.



8.4 Official Mail:
Sellos de Oficio.

By resolution of 7/**Jan/1791**, the *Real Hacienda* ordered seals to be engraved for offices entitled to franking, most surviving examples sharing a common design with the name of the authority within a floral frame; by 1799 most franking privileges had been abolished, and the order of 9/**Jan/1800** mandated new seals bearing the royal arms for official correspondence as a means of ensuring proper postal accounting.

Date: 24/Oct/1801.
Rate: “3r” (Single letter; Inner Provinces).
Route: Mexico - San Miguel el G./fwd. - S. Luis Potosí/fwd. - Saltillo/fwd. - Monclova ~ 212 leagues (1,022 km).
Postmark: D. DEL/ TABACO used in 1801/ Two-line **FRANQUEADO/ EN MÉXICO**, used 1793-1807 in black.

The **TABACO** marking exemplifies the standard design used on most official seals (*sello de oficio*).



ONLY ONE KNOWN

Date: c. 1802. **Rate:** “3r” (Single letter; Inner Provinces).
Route: Chihuahua - Saltillo/fwd. - Monclova ~ 167 leagues (700 km).
Postmark: COMAND[ancia] D[e] PROVIN[cias] INTERN[as] D[e] N[ueva] E[spaña] used 1802-1804/ Two-line **FRANQUEADO EN/ CHIGUAGUA**, used 1802-1807.

Wrapper with an official mark closely matching the 1800 design, naming the issuing authority around the Royal arms.



ONE OF TWO KNOWN



ONLY ONE KNOWN

Date: 24/Oct/1801. **Rate:** Unknown.
Route: Mexico - Puebla/fwd. - Cholula ~ 26 leagues (125 km).
Postmark: SALA DEL CRIMEN used in 1811/ Two-line large **FRANCO/ EN MÉXICO**, used 1811-1821.

Judicial wrapper bearing the official seal of the Criminal Court of the *Real Audiencia* of Mexico.



TWO KNOWN EXAMPLES

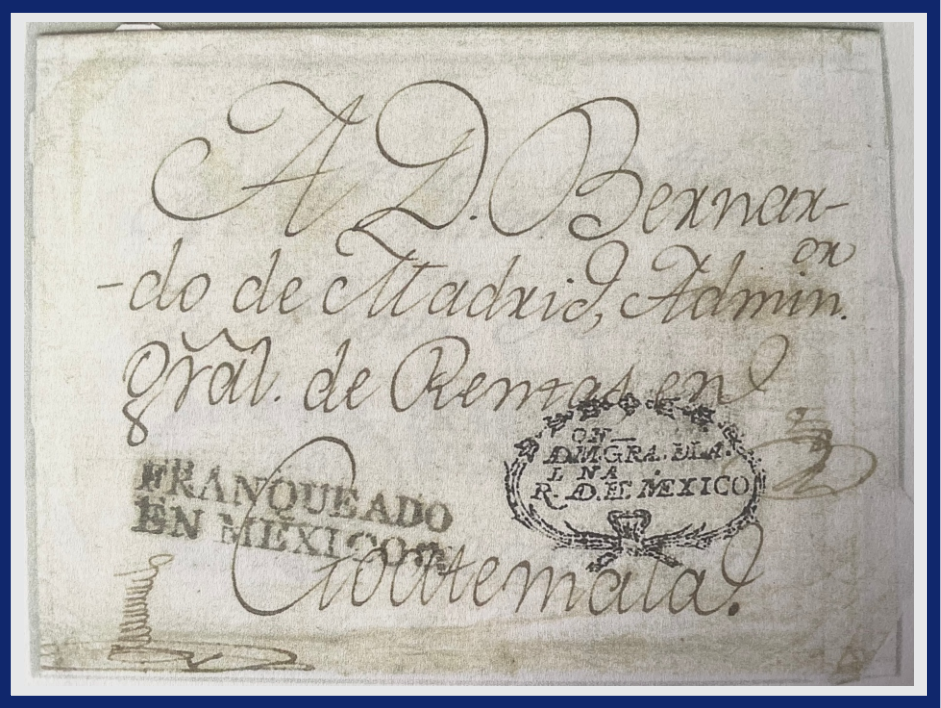
Date: c. 1810.
Rate: Single letter.
Route: Orizaba - Tehuacán - Teotitlán ~ 43 leagues (181 km).
Postmark: FACT. A/ DEL TAB.CO/ DE ORIZ.A official mark used 1810-1812/ Linear **ORIZAVA**, used 1798-1815.

Wrapper with another official mark of the tobacco monopoly; Orizaba was then one of the major tobacco producers in the New World.

INTERCOLONIAL
OFFICIAL MAIL

Date: c. 1810.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Mexico - Orizaba/fwd. - Oaxaca/fwd. - Guatemala ~ 260 leagues (1252 km).
Postmark: ADMÓN. GRAL. DE LA RL. AD. DE MÉXICO used in 1810/ Two-line large **FRANQUEADO/ EN MÉXICO** and six “dots”, used from 1797 to 1811.

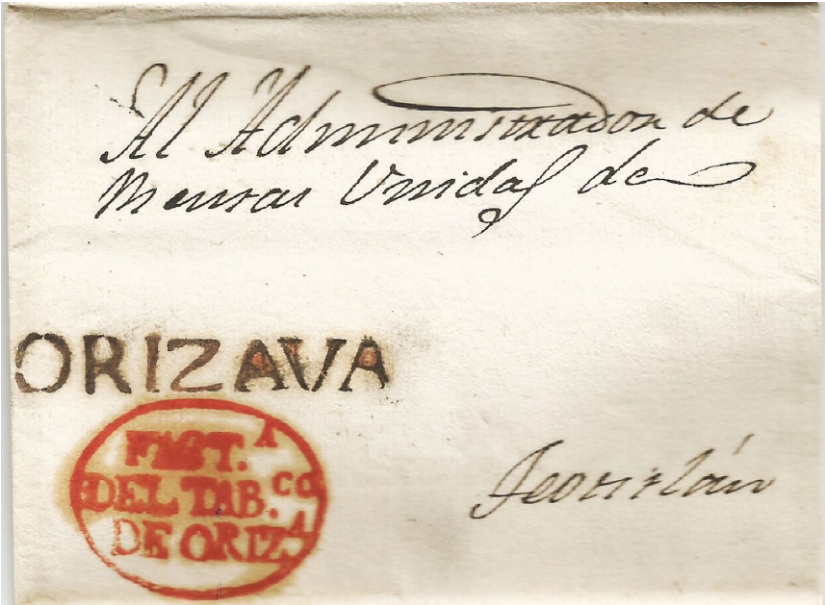
Front bearing the marking of the Royal Customs, the fiscal arm of the Consulate of Mexico City.



ONLY ONE KNOWN

Date: 1797. **Rate:** Unknown.
Route: Durango - Chihuahua ~ 130 leagues (630 km).
Postmark: RL./ INTENDENCIA/ DE DURANGO used 1797-1798/ Rectangular **DURANGO**, used 1784 - 1820 in red ink/ Oval **FRANCA/ ORTUÑO** used 1797-1798.

Rare item bearing an origin postmark, the paraph of Ignacio Ortuño, Durango’s postmaster, and an official mark.



9

Outgoing
Maritime Mail.

In **1764**, the Crown created a state-controlled maritime mail service. Initially, rates were uniform for letters from the American mainland, which were marked **YNDIAS**. The **1779** postal reform divided the empire into postal jurisdictions (**demarcaciones**) with distinct rates; the entire territory of New Spain fell under the one bearing its name, so its outgoing mail was accordingly struck **NUEVA ESPAÑA**. Owing to warfare, in 1802 the service passed to the Royal Navy, and in **1805** all rates were raised by one real.

Maritime rates for letters from New Spain to Spain			
Weight/ Year	1764	1779	1805
Single	4r (<½ oz)	6r (5 ad)	7r (5 ad)
Double	9r (½ oz)	12r (9 ad)	13r (9 ad)
Triple	12r (¾ oz)	18r (13 ad)	19r (13 ad)
Lettersheet	16r (1 oz)	24r (1 oz)	25r (1 oz)
1 ounce (oz)= 16 adarmes (ad). Paid in Reales de Vellón.			

**NUEVA
ESPAÑA.**
VERACRUZ
TYPE

**NUEVA
ESPAÑA**
VERACRUZ SEMI-
FRAMED TYPE

**NUEVA
ESPAÑA**
VERACRUZ DOTTED
FRAME TYPE

**NUEVA
ESPAÑA.**
MEXICO
TYPE

**NUEVA
ESPAÑA.**
CAMPECHE
TYPE

Date: 1/May/1798.
Rate: “6r” (Letter of up to 5 adarmes; 1779 rate).
Route: Veracruz/fwd. - Havana/fwd.- Valencia.
Postmark: **NUEVA/ ESPAÑA** (Veracruz semi-framed type), used in red ink 1794-1810. 
Other: Endorsed “Aviso”/ Crowned “V” reception marking of Valencia.



Date: ca. 1794.
Rate: “9r” (Letter of up to 7 adarmes; 1779 rate).
Route: Valladolid - Mexico/fwd. - Veracruz/fwd. - Coruña/fwd.- Madrid.
Postmark: Circular **VALLA/ DOLID** used in red ink from 1785 to 1801/**NUEVA/ ESPAÑA** (Veracruz type), used from 1785 to 1801.
Other: Endorsed “*Por la Coruña*”.

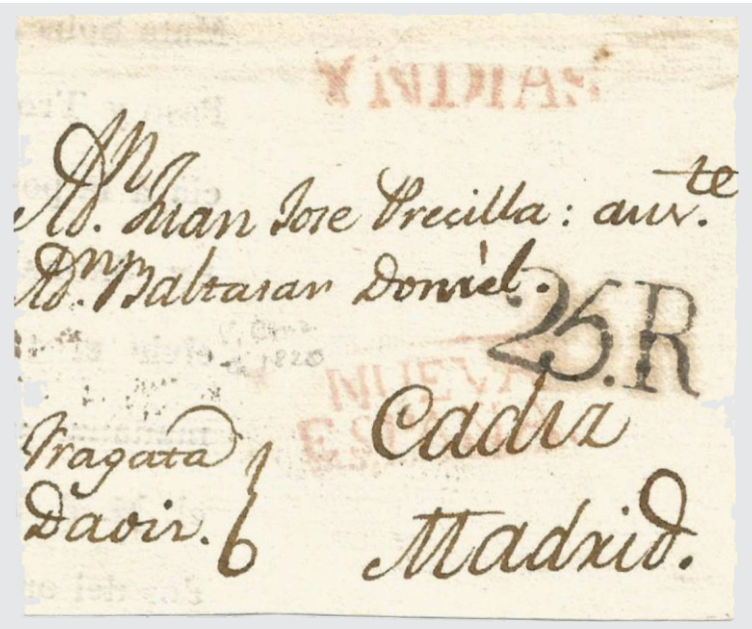
Wrapper; on the reverse it bears a crowned “M” marking and an early datestamp “AL 8” (8/Apr), both applied at Madrid.



Date: 2/Apr/1806.
Rate: “7r” (Letter of up to 5 adarmes; 1805 rate).
Route: Campeche - Veracruz/fwd. - Havana/fwd - Cádiz.
Postmark: **NUEVA/ ESPAÑA** (Campeche type) in black ink, used from 1806 to 1810.
Other: Endorsed “*Por Veracruz*”, to instruct the coastal route.

Date: c. 1820.
Rate: “25r” (1-oz package; 1805 rates).
Route: Veracruz - Havana/fwd. - Cádiz/fwd- Madrid.
Postmark: Linear **YNDIAS** used from 1781 to 1822/ **NUEVA/ ESPAÑA** (Veracruz dotted frame type), used in red ink from 1812 to 1820.
Other: Endorsed “*Fragata Davis*”.

Front with a rare mix of the **YNDIAS** marking (created by the 1764 regulations) and a *demarcación* postmark (adopted in 1779). 



DISINFECTED LETTER

Date: 26/Nov/1812.
Rate: “8r” (Letter of up to 5 adarmes; 1807 Catalonia rate).
Route: Veracruz/fwd. - Havana/fwd.- Cádiz/fwd. - Barcelona/fwd. - Calella.
Postmark: **NUEVA/ ESPAÑA** (Veracruz dotted frame type), used in red ink from 1812 to 1820.
Other: Endorsed “*Goleta Tránsito*” and “*Cataluña*” . 

From 1807, the rates to Catalonia were increased by one real. Clean vertical slits in the piece indicate disinfection on arrival; Spain maintained such procedures amid yellow fever outbreaks.



9. Outgoing Maritime mail (Cont).



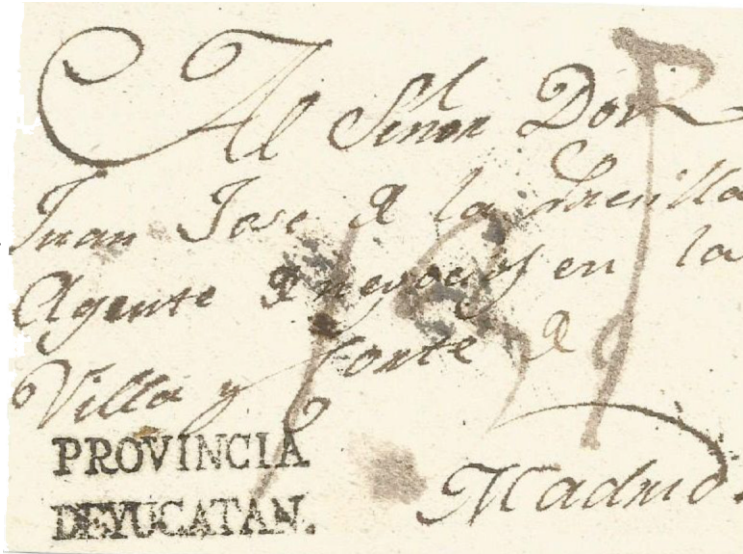
Date: 6/Nov/1809.
Rate: "7 r" (Letter of up to 5 ad; 1805 rate).
Route: Veracruz ... Cádiz.
Postmark: NUEVA/ ESPAÑA (Semi-framed Veracruz type). used in black ink from 1781 to 1812.
Other: Endorsed "*Frag.ta Ynglesa Lilly*" over crossed out "*Fragata Mahonesa*"

Folded letter whose altered endorsement reflects a last-minute change of vessel during the Peninsular War, which forced Spanish mail to be carried on British ships.

EARLIEST RECORDED LEGALLY FOREIGN-CARRIED LETTER FROM NEW SPAIN

Date: c. 1810.
Rate: "13r" (Letter of up to 9 ad; 1805 rates).
Route: Mérida - Veracruz - Havana/fwd. - Cádiz/fwd- Madrid.
Postmark: Two-line PROVINCIA/ DE YUCATÁN, used from 1800 to 1818.

Front illustrating a domestic maritime leg (Mérida to Veracruz, likely via Campeche) plus a transatlantic crossing.



CORREO ABONADO

Date: 29/Dec/1819.
Rate: "8r" (Letter of up to 5 ad;1807 Catalonia rate).
Route: Veracruz - Havana - Cádiz/fwd. - Barcelona/fwd. - Calella.
Postmark: NUEVA/ ESPAÑA (Dotted frame Veracruz type), used in red ink from 1812 to 1820.
Other: "*Berg. Correo Voluntario*".

Folded letter bearing an ABONO mark "A", used for deferred postage entered "on account" in the post office ledgers for later settlement. Originally rated 7r at Cádiz, it was uprated to 8r in Catalonia.



ONLY KNOWN INTERCOLONIAL LETTER SENT ACROSS ROYALIST AND INSURGENT LINES

INTERCOLONIAL MAIL

Date: 30/May/1821.
Rate: "4r" (Single letter from New Spain to Peru; 1814 rates).
Route: Monterrey - León/fwd. - San Blas/fwd. ... Paita/fwd. - Lima.
Postmark: Fancy frame MONTEREY, used in red ink from 1785 to 1821/ Rectangular LEON, used 1805-1821.

An extraordinary case of mail from the Inner Provinces to Perú in the final months of the independence wars. Endorsed "*Por San Blas / Payta / Perú*" as the intended route; wartime chaos likely diverted it, with only a León (Gto.) transit attested.



SMUGGLED MAIL

Date: 2/Aug/1804. **Rate:** 2¢ ship fee + 12½¢ (80–150 miles, single-rate inland postage).
Route: Campeche - Veracruz/fwd. - Baltimore/fwd - Philadelphia.

Folded letter with no New Spain postmarks (foreign correspondence was forbidden). Smuggled on the American ship Minerva, which ran aground near Savannah in Sep/1804; later forwarded to Baltimore, where it received SHIP, a 25/Jan datestamp, and 14½ cents due. It arrived to Philadelphia on 28/Jan, 179 days in transit.

ONLY DOCUMENTED LETTER FROM NEW SPAIN TO THE U.S.A.

10

Incoming
Maritime Mail.

From 1764 onward, letters arriving from Spain were to be struck with the **ESPAÑA** marking, either at dispatch or on arrival at Veracruz. The 1779 reform divided peninsular Spain into 26 *demarcaciones*, the American domains into eight, and added one for the Philippines, changes that theoretically produced many new markings. In practice, few survive; most recorded examples originate from Madrid, Coruña, and Cádiz. Postage dues on incoming letters from Spain remained unchanged until 1812 when the final colonial rate took effect.

Rates for incoming mail from Spain		
Weight/ Year	1764	1814
Single	3r (<½ oz)	4r (<½ oz)
Double	5r (½ oz)	6r (½ oz)
Triple	7r (¾ oz)	8r (¾ oz)
Lettersheet	10r (1 oz)	12r (1 oz)

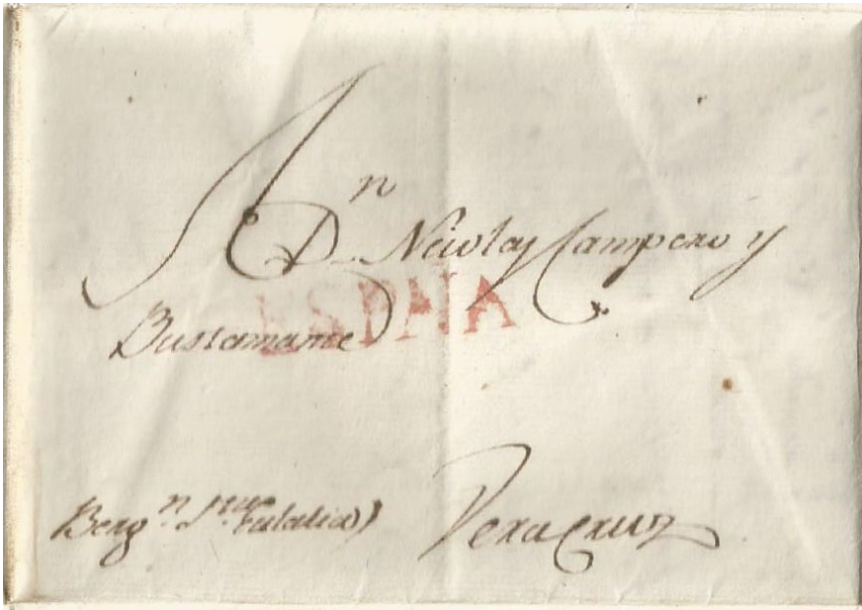
ESPAÑA
CORUÑA TYPE

ESPAÑA
CÁDIZ TYPE

ESPAÑA
VERACRUZ TYPE

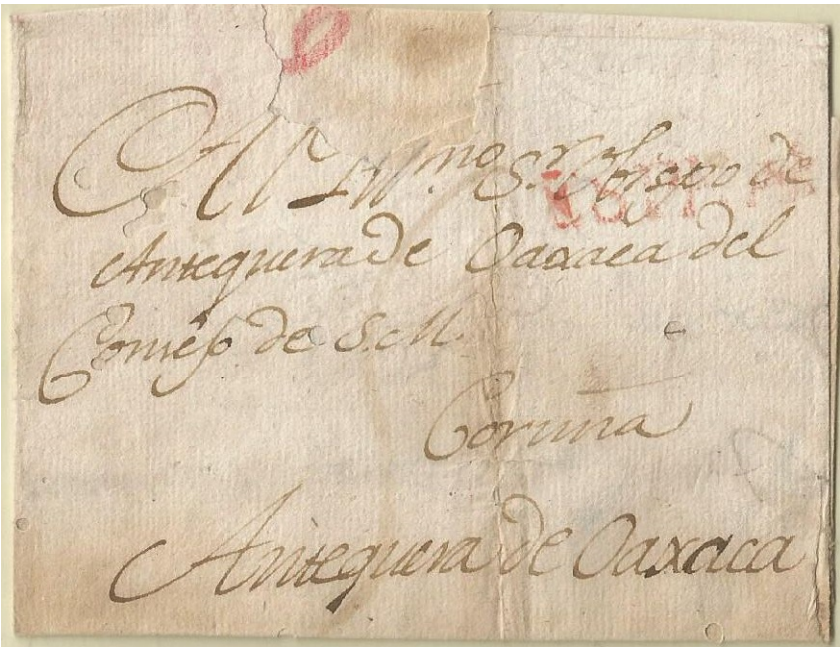
ESPAÑA
GUATEMALA TYPE

Date: 30/Sep/1819. **Rate:** Unknown.
Route: Barcelona - Cádiz/fwd. - Havana - Veracruz.
Postmark: Linear **ESPAÑA** (Cádiz Type) used 1764-1819.
Other: Endorsed “**Bergn. Sta. Eulalia**”.
Folded letter with no rate notations. Reception note dated 21/Nov, a transit of 52 days.



Date: 12/Oct/1807. **Rate:** “5r” Double letter (1764 rate).
Route: Cádiz - Havana/fwd. - Veracruz.

Postmark: Linear **ESPAÑA** (Veracruz Type) , used from 1795 to 1807. Rare example of two surviving letters sent under the same wrapper. The dispatch, originally assigned to the Portuguese frigate La Concepción, was delayed by a diplomatic rift between Spain and Portugal.



Date: c. 1790.
Rate: “5r” (Double letter; 1764 rates).
Route: Coruña - Havana - Veracruz/fwd. - Oaxaca.
Postmark: Linear **ESPAÑA** (Coruña Type) used 1764-1801.
Other: Endorsed “CORUÑA”

Wrapper with no surviving docketing; it was dispatched from Coruña.



PREPAID MARITIME
MAIL

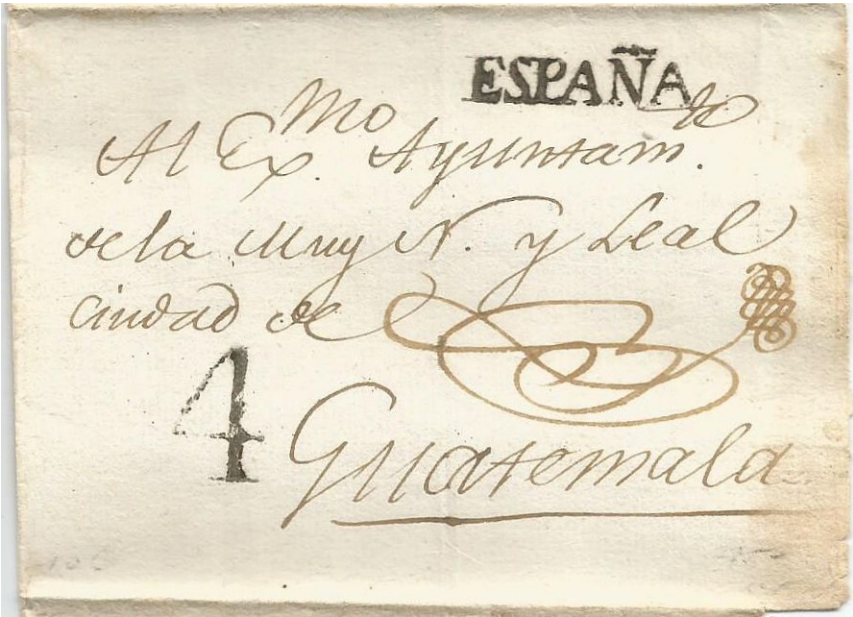
Date: 16/Apr/1798.
Rate: “60r” (reales de vellón) for a 2½-oz prepaid shipment from Spain.
Route: Cádiz ... Veracruz.
Postmark: Two-line **SE FRANQUEÓ/ EN CÁDIZ**.
Others: Signatures of the postmasters of Cádiz and Veracruz.

Cover that originally contained a ship's register, **the earliest reported delivery of this type of fiscal document to the Americas**.



Reverse: Wax seal of the “**Real Aduana de Cádiz – Comercio Libre de Yndias**”.

SOLE KNOWN PRE-1818
SHIP REGISTER COVER
TO NEW SPAIN



MARITIME MAIL IN
TRANSIT

Date: c. 1814.
Rate: “4r” Single letter (1814 rates). **Route:** Spain - Veracruz/fwd. - Guatemala.
Postmark: Linear **ESPAÑA** (Guatemala Type) used in 1814.

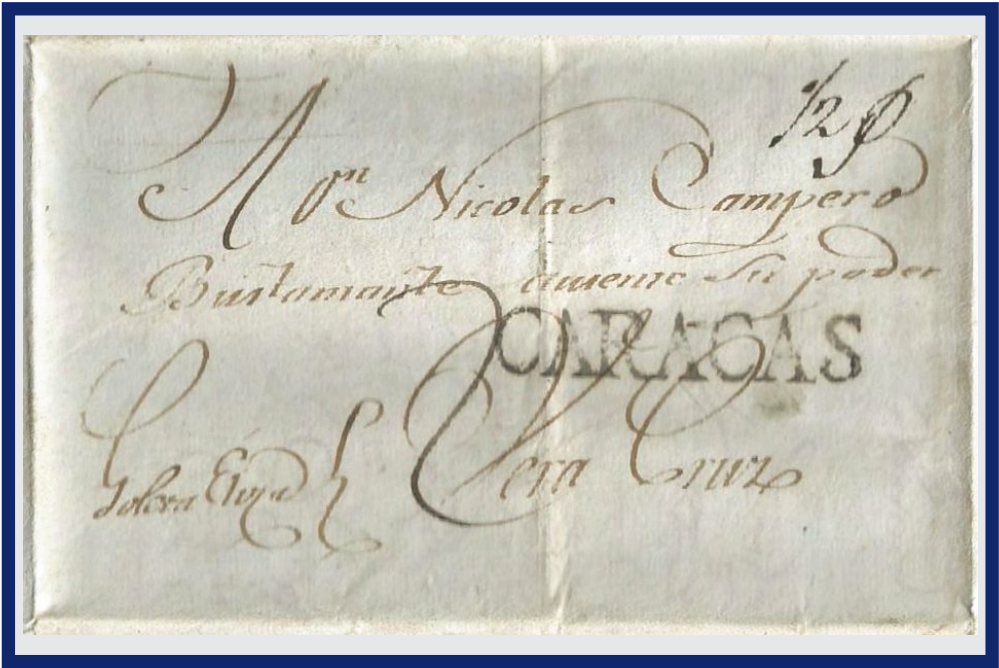
Mail for Guatemala originally transited through Mexico City; eventually, the re-routing was made in Orizaba (midway to Mexico City) saving several days in transit.



10. Incoming Maritime mail (Cont).

Intercolonial mail is scarce, with only **Havana** and **Guatemala** relatively common. Despite belonging to the same empire, correspondence between New Spain and the South American possessions was minimal, especially as the Crown dissuaded such contact and did not permit free trade among them until the late 18th c.

Rate	Caribbean Islands to New Spain		South America to New Spain	
Weight/ Year	1764	1814	1764	1814
Single	1/2r (<1/2 oz)	3r (<1/2 oz)	1r (<1/2 oz)	4r (<1/2 oz)
Double	1r (1/2 oz)	4r (1/2 oz)	2r (1/2 oz)	6r (1/2 oz)
Triple	1 1/2r (3/4 oz)	6r (3/4 oz)	3r (3/4 oz)	8r (3/4 oz)
Lettersheet	2r (1 oz)	8r (1 oz)	4r (1 oz)	12r (1 oz)
Paid in Reales de Plata.				



INTERCOLONIAL MAIL

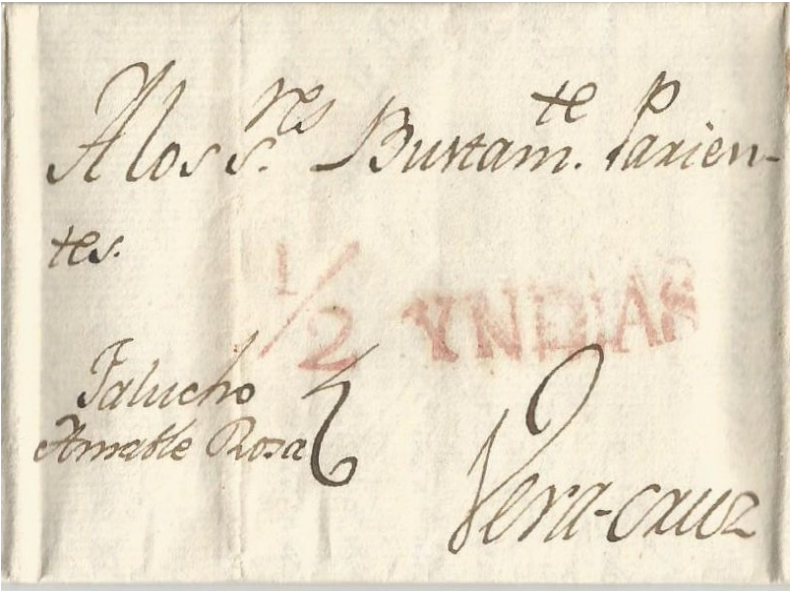
Date: 4/Jul/1803.
Rate: “2r” (Double letter from South America to New Spain; 1764 rate).
Route: Caracas - Maracaibo - Cartagena - Portobelo - Veracruz.
Postmark: Linear **CARCAS** (demarcación mark).
Others: Endorsed “*Goleta Elvia*”/ “1/2 O” (half oz.) notation.

Folded letter with weight assessment. It arrived on 15/Aug, a six-week transit.

INTERCOLONIAL MAIL

Date: 6/Ago/1801.
Rate: “1/2r”(Single letter from Cuba to New Spain;1764 Rates).
Route: Havana - Veracruz.
Postmark: Linear **YNDIAS** (Veracruz Type), used from 1769 to 1819.
Other: Endorsed “*Falucho Amable Rosa*”.

Although the YNDIAS postmark was usually applied to outbound mail from the Americas to Spain, in this case it was used on intercolonial correspondence.



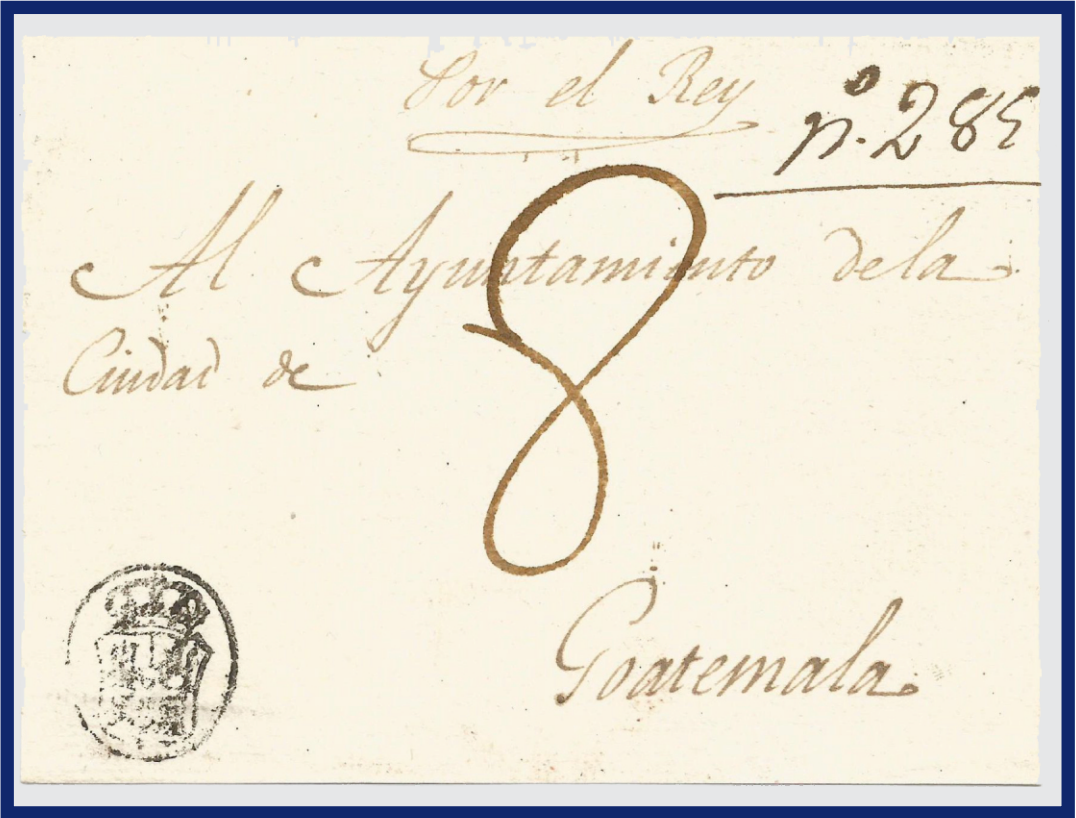
ONE OF THREE KNOWN LETTERS BETWEEN NEW SPAIN & SOUTH AMERICA

MARITIME MAIL IN TRANSIT/ SELLO NEGRO



Date: c. 1814.
Rate: “8r” (Triple letter from Spain; 1814 rates).
Route: Madrid ... Veracruz ... Guatemala.
Postmark: Sello Negro used in Madrid.
Other: Endorsed “**POR EL REY**”.

Front showing several official-mail features, including the absence of the “**ESPAÑA**” demarcación mark, which suggests no postage due—yet it was still rated on arrival, likely under the delayed-reimbursement system.



INTERCOLONIAL MAIL

Date: 14/Sep/1811.
Rate: “1/2r” (Single letter from Cuba to New Spain; 1764 Rates).
Route: Havana - Veracruz.

Folded with no rate marks, a common practice on single-weight letters. Reception on 14/Oct, a transit of one month.



11

Patriotic and Insurgent marks.

In 1808, **José I Bonaparte** usurped the Spanish throne. In Spanish America, letters were occasionally struck with “**VIVA FERNANDO VII**” patriotic marks; this practice was rare in New Spain. By **1810**, the power vacuum led to the War of Independence, during which insurgency cells used safe-conducts for communication; surviving items sent through these are extremely rare.



TWO DOCUMENTED LETTERS

Date: 23/Sep/1809.
Rate: “2r” (Single letter; 1794 rates).
Route: Tulancingo - Pachuca/fwd - Mexico/fwd. - Veracruz ~ 131 leagues (549 km).
Postmark: Oval two-line TULAN/ CINGO, used 1796-1821.
Other: Crowned Vf7 monogram, used in 1809.

Folded letter with a notably elaborate patriotic mark. It arrived on 2/Oct, transit of 9 days.

Date: 24/Oct/1809.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Guadalajara - Guanajuato/fwd. - Mexico/fwd. - Veracruz ~ 187 leagues (906 km).
Postmark: Linear GUADALAXARA., used 1797-1809.
Other: Patriotic V. F°. VII used in 1809.

Folded letter handstamped with the earliest known patriotic mark in New Spain (documented from Jan/1809). Reception note dated 6/Nov; 13-day transit.



UNIQUE PIECE

Date: 8/Jul/1809.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Linares - Monterrey ~ 27 leagues (130 km).
Postmark: Linear LINARES. used from 1800 to 1821.
Other: Oval V.F. VII patriotic marking, used in 1809.

Linares is one of the few and the northernmost post office in Spanish America to use this type of marking.



ONLY ONE KNOWN



SOLE RECORDED EXAMPLE

Date: 22/Apr/1812.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Loreto - San Blas/fwd. - Guadalajara ... Mexico ~ 477 leagues (2,000 km).
Postmark: Oval SAN BLAS, used from 1812 to 1815.
Other: Patriotic V. F. 7, used at San Blas in 1812.

Extremely rare letter from Loreto, Antigua California (now Baja California Sur), carried by sea to San Blas, where it was posted.

INSURGENT MAIL

Date: 15/Sep/1812.
Route: Zimapan - Unknown.
Other: Patriotic DEL GL. DEL NORTE/ VF7°, used in 1812.

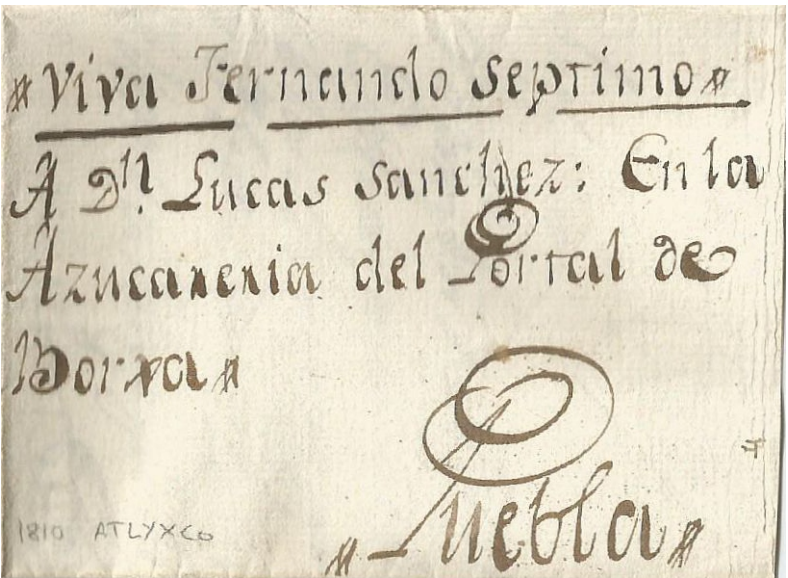
Folded letter bearing the sole known example of a patriotic+insurgent mark used in the Americas. It was associated with local insurgent leader Julián Villagrán. VF 7° is located in the central cartouche



ONLY ONE KNOWN

Date: 29/Jan/1810.
Rate: Unknown.
Route: Atlixco - Puebla ~ 8 leagues (35 km).
Other: Patriotic VIVA FERNANDO SÉPTIMO, used at Atlixco from 1810 to 1811.

Folded letter docketed at Hacienda del Rijo; posted in Atlixco. One of only two offices recorded with handwritten patriotic markings.





Post-Independence Spanish mail.

After Mexico's independence in 1821, **San Juan de Ulúa**, off Veracruz, remained under Spanish control, retaining a garrison (including a post office) to blockade the port. The island fortress surrendered and was evacuated on 23/Nov/1825.

Date: 3/Apr/1822.

Rate: Unknown.

Route: Veracruz - San Juan de Ulúa - Havana.

Postmark: Linear **S. J. DE ULUA**, used 1821-1823.

Other: Endorsed "**Bergantín Correo Aquiles**".

Smuggled from the besieged city of Veracruz; this route was used for Spain-bound letters.

THREE DOCUMENTED PIECES



THREE DOCUMENTED LETTERS

Date: 19/Jul/1823.

Rate: "5r" (Single letter; 1805 rates).

Route: Veracruz - San Juan de Ulúa - Havana - Cádiz/fwd. - Barcelona - Calella.

Postmark: Linear **S. J. DE ULUA**, used 1821-1823.

Other: Endorsed "**Bergantín Firme**".

Folded letter smuggled from Veracruz, rated as mail from the *Islas de Barlovento* to Spain, **indicating that former New Spain rates no longer applied.**



Date: 18/Dec/1822.

Rate: "8r" (Single letter; 1807 Catalonia rates).

Route: Veracruz - San Juan de Ulúa - Havana - Cádiz/fwd. - Barcelona - Calella.

Postmark: Linear **NUEBA ESPAÑA**, used from 1822 to 1827.

Other: Endorsed "**Fragata de los Alara**".

Folded letter bearing a rare *demarcación* mark with the erroneous spelling "**NUEBA**" likely applied in Barcelona.



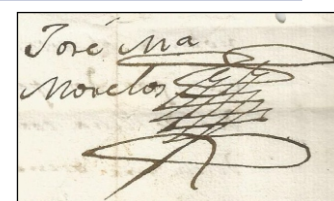
ONE OF MEXICO'S FINAL COLONIAL MAIL LETTERS

MORELOS' INSURGENT MAIL ▲

Date: 4/Feb/1812.

Route: Cuernavaca - Izúcar ~ 24 leagues (115 km).

Letter from insurgent leader **José María Morelos**, conveyed by a courier under his command. On the reverse, it bears the mark "**Pase**" (safe-conduct), endorsed with Morelos' short signature.



Reproduction of the full signature of Morelos inside the letter.