



BANCO DE MÉXICO

History of counterfeiting in Mexico

TABLE OF CONTENTS

History of counterfeiting in Mexico 3

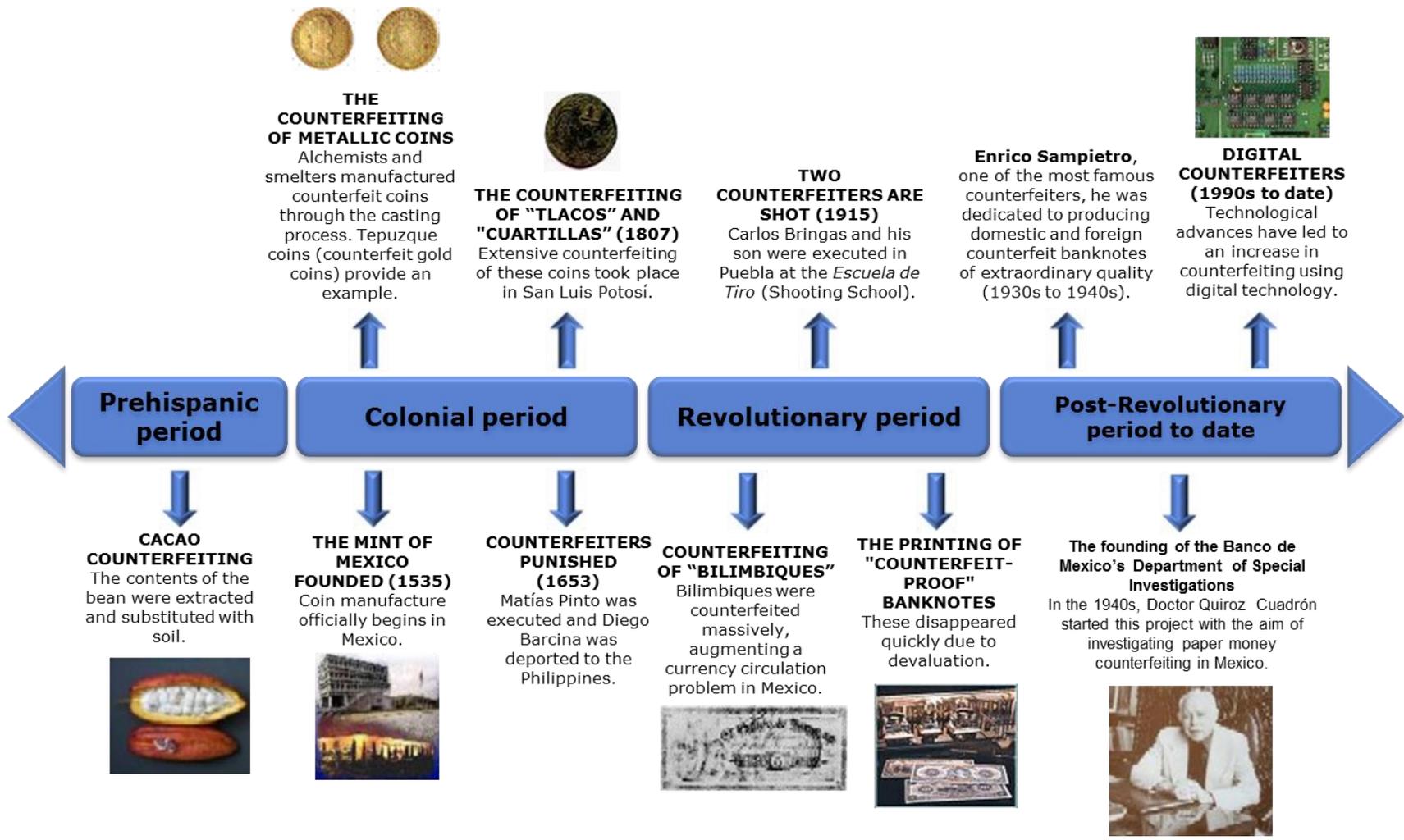
 Enrico Sampietro 4

 Creation of Banco de México’s Special Investigations Department 5

 Attorney General’s Office (known in Spanish as FGR) – entrusted to deal with counterfeiting crimes 6

 Agreements 6

History of counterfeiting in Mexico



Enrico Sampietro

The first counterfeiting of banknotes issued by Banco de México dates back to October 1934, when a considerable amount of circulating counterfeit 20-dollar banknotes was discovered in Mexico City. After a thorough investigation, the internationally famous counterfeiter and highly skillful artist Alfredo Héctor Donadieu, alias “Enrico Sampietro”, was arrested.

Héctor Donadieu is recalled as one of the world’s major counterfeiters.

During the 30s and 40s, Sampietro was involved in counterfeiting Mexican and foreign banknotes of extraordinary quality thanks to his artistic skills. He served sentence in the Lecumberri prison for 13 years.

While in prison, he joined a “Cristero” group known as “La Causa de la Fe” (The Cause of Faith), headed by Jesuit priest José Aurelio Jiménez, who considered counterfeiting as a way for punishing a heretical and anticlerical state, and offered Sampietro protection and help to escape from jail in exchange for counterfeiting banknotes for his cause. On July 20, 1938, Sampietro escaped from prison and his whereabouts were unknown for several years.



Pencil drawings done by Enrico Sampietro

By mid-1941, the first counterfeiting of Banco de México’s 50-peso banknotes took place.

An investigation was conducted by Dr. Alfonso Quiroz Cuarón who after analyzing the counterfeiting method used, determined that the author could be no other than Sampietro himself since he had used the same technique to counterfeit dollars in Cuba.



Fake 50-peso banknote manufactured by Enrico Sampietro

Sampietro also counterfeited 20-peso and 100-peso banknotes. He was finally apprehended again and confessed that the counterfeiting was done for the group headed by José Aurelio Jiménez.

After completing his sentence in 1961, Sampietro was deported to France, his native country.

Creation of Banco de México's Special Investigations Department

In 1941, Eduardo Villaseñor, Banco de México's governor at the time, acknowledged that in response to the increasing demand of both domestic and foreign counterfeit currency in those days, there was a need for having an area specialized in preventing counterfeiting and use of counterfeit currency. Dr. Alfonso Quiroz Cuarón, a world renowned criminologist, was appointed head of Banco de México's Special Investigations Department. With the creation of this area, the investigation on domestic and foreign currency counterfeiting consolidated.



Years later, Carlos Novoa, successor of Eduardo Villaseñor, expanded and fully equipped the Special Investigations Department. Later on, during the governorship of Rodrigo Gómez, the department gained more relevance when it was established as the International Criminal Police Organization's (INTERPOL) representative branch in Mexico to address all counterfeiting/ counterfeit currency use and other crimes related to the banking system. The department was officially designated as INTERPOL's representative in Mexico in March 1955 and up to 1994, when the Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR) became Mexico's exclusive representative of INTERPOL in this field.

Attorney General's Office (known in Spanish as FGR) – entrusted to deal with counterfeiting crimes

Today, the government's authority in charge of investigating and punishing currency counterfeiting crimes is the Attorney General's Office (known in Spanish as FGR).

Counterfeiting crimes are investigated by the Prosecutor's Office Specialized in Currency Counterfeiting and Alteration (Fiscalía Especializada en Investigación de Falsificación y Alteración de Moneda, FEIFAM), which was created in October 2012 inside the then Attorney General's Office (PGR). The decision to create this office was taken on the grounds of having a body specialized in currency counterfeiting investigations. The first case solved by the FEIFAM was the so called "Siervo de la Nación" (Servant of the Nation), involving a considerable amount of high-quality counterfeit 50-peso banknotes. The case concluded with the apprehension of several criminals, including the material author, his collaborators, and the person financing the counterfeiting. A significant amount of inputs, machinery and finished pieces was also secured. Nowadays, the FEIFAM continues to fight counterfeiting crimes hand in hand with Banco de México and the Federal Police.

As set by the Monetary Law of the United Mexican States, Banco de México provides technical assistance on currency authentication through the central bank's Currency Counterfeiting Subdivision of the Directorate General of Currency Issuance. This area is also involved in systematizing information and providing support to the government authorities when conducting investigations on currency counterfeiting.

Agreements

Banco de México has established agreements with other domestic authorities to prevent and fight currency counterfeiting crimes. These agreements have led to the detention of several counterfeiting groups:

- Agreement with the Attorney General's Office in 2001, ratified in November 2011.
- Agreement with the Ministry of the Interior, signed in July 2014. Banco de México works directly with the National Security Commission and the Federal Police, which are both part of the Ministry.
- Agreement with the head authorities of state public security, signed on December 10, 2015.



BANCO DE MÉXICO

www.banxico.org.mx