

Who's Who on Multi-face Banknotes of Latin America



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I remember when I found my first multi-face note for my collection. It was a note from the Philippines of 10 pesos (P136, ND 1949). Since then, I have been interested in learning more about the people who appear on these multi-face notes and to share a little of the history of this type note in Latin America.

First, the story behind the Philippines note. On February 17, 1872, Fathers Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos and Jacinto Zamora, all Filipino priests, were executed by the Spanish colonial authorities on charges of subversion. The charges against Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora were their alleged complicity in an uprising of workers at the Cavite Naval Yard. The death of the priests awakened anger and resentment among the Filipino people. They challenged the Spanish authorities and demanded reforms. The martyrdom of the three priests apparently helped to inspire the organization of the Propaganda Movement, which aimed to seek reforms and inform people in Spain of the abuses of its colonial government in the Philippines.

The *ilustrados* (notable people) led the Filipinos' quest for reforms. Because of their education and newly acquired wealth, they felt more confident about voicing popular grievances. However, since the *ilustrados* themselves were the beneficiaries of the changes that the Spanish government had been slowly implementing, the group could not really push very hard for the reforms it wanted. The *ilustrados* did not succeed in easing the suffering of the Filipinos; but from this group arose another faction called "the intelligentsia." The intelligentsia also wanted reforms; but they were more systematic than the *ilustrados* and initiated the peaceful Propaganda Movement.

The Philippine Islands had become a Spanish colony during the 16th century; they were ceded to the US in 1898 following the Spanish-American War. In 1949, after the Japanese wartime occupation ended and the US had granted independence, the Central Bank of the Philippines issued an undated new set of banknotes (5 centavos-500 pesos) with Quirino and Cuaderno signatures (P125-141). The note of 10 pesos shows the three priests reunited at left and the seal of the Central Bank at right. The Urdaneta and Legaspi Monument in Manila and the Philippines' flag are at center on the back. Dimensions are 161 x 66 mm. The note was printed in England by Thomas de la Rue (TDLR).



Philippines 10 pesos of 1949 English series (P136) depicting priests Mariano Gomez, José Burgos and Jacinto Zamora who were executed by the Spanish colonial rulers.

This banknote is popularly known as "Gomburza," which is an acronym of the surnames of the priests Gómez, Burgos and Zamora, the three priests executed at Bagumbayan in Manila by the Spanish colonial authorities. Their execution left a profound effect on many Filipinos; José Rizal, the national hero, would dedicate his novel *El Filibusterismo* to their memory.

In Latin America several countries have issued multi-face notes, among them Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Mexico. Most recently, the Central Bank of Dominican Republic issued two notes with the images of the fathers of the country and the young martyrs from the era of the Trujillo dictatorship.

BRAZIL

Evolution of Races (P196, 196A; TBB B817, 818)

The Federative Republic of Brazil, which comprises half the continent of South America, was discovered and claimed for Portugal by Admiral Pedro Alvarez Cabral in 1500. Portugal established a settlement in 1532 and proclaimed the area a royal colony in 1549.

For thousands of years before the coming of Europeans to the Americas, Brazil's Native American peoples lived in settlements along the rivers and on the coast or roamed the interior in hunting bands. Many of these Indians were expert hunters, farmers and fishermen. Their way of life was tailored to their environment, and they knew much about the habits of animals and the uses of plants. Most of these Indian peoples extracted poisons from plants and fish to use on the hunting darts they shot from blowguns; they also obtained drugs for medical and magical uses from the forest plants. Some groups of Indians were warlike, conducting raids on other tribes for revenge or to prove their bravery. A few practised cannibalistic rites, in which human flesh was eaten.

There were probably around four million Amazon Indians before the arrival of Europeans at the beginning of the 16th century. In the succeeding years, the Indian population was decimated by aggressive Portuguese settlers, epidemics of imported diseases, greedy rubber barons and, more recently, by land-grabbing speculators seeking to make the most of the Amazon basin's mineral wealth, timber and rich pastureland. Today, there are fewer than 100,000 Indians, whose future has become a very emotional issue. Should they be left to live as they have for thousands of years or be integrated into modern society? The latter option now seems inevitable, and hopefully it can be done without any further bloodshed.



The Brazil 500 cruzeiros commemorative note of 1972 depicted five faces of different racial groups representing modern Brazil. This later variety (P196A) issued in 1979 is similar except that the watermark area on the left is covered with vertical lines rather than left blank as in the original note.

In 1972, Banco do Brasil issued a commemorative note in celebration of the 150th Anniversary of Brazilian independence from Portugal. This 500 cruzeiros note features the portrait of five men, which represent modern Brazil and the quest for independence. The dates 1822-1972 are at left as the watermark. Five different historical maps of Brazil are on the back. Dimensions are 171 x 79 mm. This note, in circulation until 1980, was printed by Casa da Moeda do Brasil.

DOMINICAN REP.

Juan P. Duarte, Matías R. Mella and Francisco Sanchez (P167, 171, 175, 177, 184)

In 1822, Jean Pierre Boyer, president of Haiti (formerly Saint Domingue) and the Haitian army occupied Santo Domingo just after the colonist had succeeded in evicting the Spanish rulers. Boyer ruled Haiti and Santo Domingo for the next 21 years and introduced the *Code Rural* – a French-based legal system. Despite attempts to encourage progress, both former colonies declined in prosperity. The university in the city of Santo Domingo was closed, and unused public schools and churches fell into disrepair.

Juan Pablo Duarte (1813-1876) returned home in 1833, after seven years of study in Europe. He was unlike the typical Dominican *caudillo*; he was principled, an idealist, ascetic in his habits, and a genuine nationalist. In 1838, Duarte organized a secret society called *La Trinitaria* (the trinity, after the three-part revolutionary slogan “God, Fatherland and Liberty”), whose aim was to release Dominicans from Haitian domination. The society spread in small groups throughout the land, and the members worked to overthrow the Haitian regime.



Dominican Republic 100 pesos oro of 2003 (P167) honoring independence heroes Juan P. Duarte, Matías R. Mella and Francisco Sanchez.

Francisco del Rosario Sanchez (1817-1861) was a politician and one of the founding fathers of the Dominican Republic. He was the son of Afro-Dominican parents, Narciso Sánchez and Olaya Del Rosario, who were not married at the time of his birth. Sanchez traveled to the United States and Europe as a young man. His vision of the cause was the typical republican goal of the Age of Enlightenment. Duarte, till then leader of the independence struggle, was exiled to Venezuela in 1843, during the last and most crucial stage of the struggle. Then Sánchez became the central presence in the Dominican revolt. This is why he is considered the “real” founding father of the Dominican Republic by many authors.

Matías Ramón Mella (1816-1864), is also regarded as a national hero in the Dominican Republic. He contributed significantly during the 1844 Dominican War of Independence against Haiti, and was involved in the storming of St. Giles Fort by Dominican forces. At the time of the *Grito de Capotillo* on August 16, 1863 – which marked the start of a struggle against reimposed Spanish rule – the already ailing Mella served as vice president of the Republic government of the Restoration. He held this office until his death on June 4, 1864. He is entombed in a beautiful mausoleum, *Altar de la Patria*, at the *Puerta del Conde* (Count’s Gate) alongside Duarte and Sanchez. The Order of Merit of Duarte, Sanchez and Mella is partially named in their honor.

In 2000, Banco Central de la República Dominicana issued a new note of 100 pesos oro (P167), depicting J.P. Duarte, R. Mella and F. R. Sanchez at right. Juan P. Duarte appears also as the watermark. *Puerta del Conde* is at left on the back. It was printed in Canada by British American Bank Note Company. The same note printed by De La Rue was issue in 2001 (P171) and 2006 (P177). In 2002, a commemorative note for the 55th anniversary of the Central Bank with similar design (P175) was put into circulation but with some colors a little different. It was printed in London by De La Rue.

In 2010, a similar design but redenominated in pesos dominicanos was issued (P184). These notes are dated 2010, signed by Héctor Valdez Albizu and Vicente Bengoa, have the printer imprint of OBERTHUR technologies, and feature a new screen trap background pattern. Dimensions are 156 x 67 mm.

Mirabal Sisters (P178)

The Mirabal sisters (Patria, Minerva and Antonia) grew up in an upper class environment in Dominican Republic. All married and raised families. Their father was a successful businessman. When Rafael Trujillo came to power in 1930, their family lost almost all of its fortune. They believed that Trujillo would plunge their country into economic chaos.

Minerva, influenced by her uncle, became the most involved in the anti-Trujillo movement. She studied law and became a lawyer, but when she rejected Trujillo’s romantic advances, he ordered that she was not to receive her degree. Her sisters later joined her in anti-Trujillo activities, and they eventually formed a group of opponents to the Trujillo regime, popularly known in Spanish as *Las Mariposas* (The Butterflies).

Dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1933-61) was by any definition a megalomaniac. Within years of taking power he had built a personality cult in which he adorned himself with titles such as ‘The Benefactor’ or, more simply, *‘El Jefe’* (The Boss). In the numismatic history of the Dominican Republic, some notes were issued for circulation bearing his image and others were commemoratives for important events. In 1956, Trujillo’s portrait appeared on a 20 pesos (P79) with the slogan alluding to the Trujillo era, bearing the phrase *“Year of the Benefactor of the Fatherland.”* (After his assassination in 1961, most copies of this note were destroyed, making it a very rare item today.)

Two of the Mirabal sisters were incarcerated and tortured on several occasions. The sisters’ husbands were jailed at La Victoria Penitentiary in Santo Domingo. On November 25, 1960, Trujillo sent men to intercept the Mirabal sisters after the three women had visited their husbands in prison. The unarmed sisters were led into a sugarcane field, then beaten and strangled to death. Their car was later driven off a mountain known as *La Cumbre*, between the cities of Santiago and Puerto Plata.



The 2007 200 pesos oro note of Dominican Republic honoring the Mirabal sisters – Patria, Minerva and Antonia – who were martyred in the struggle against the long-time dictator Trujillo.

The deaths of the Mirabal sisters caused general outrage throughout their native country. The resultant publicity of the deaths caused the Dominican Republic to become more interested in the Mirabal sisters and their cause. This public support and awareness contributed to Trujillo’s assassination six months later in May 1961. The Mirabal sisters were buried in *Ojo de Agua*, an area outside the city of Salcedo. Today, this home has been turned into a museum in their honor and is open to the public.

Banco Central de la República Dominicana (BCRD) issued a note of 200 pesos in 2007 (P178) showing the Mirabal sisters with a butterfly among them and vertical serial number at right. Juan P. Duarte is the watermark. A view of the *Monumento a las Hermanas Mirabal* (Monument to the Mirabal sisters) in front of their museum and the Dominican flag are at left on the back. Dimensions are 156 x 67 mm.

On October 1, 2012, the BCRD issued a 200 peso note with portions of the design changed in color from gray to green to avoid confusion with the existing 50 peso note. The new note (PNew) is like P178, but dated 2009. It has the same signature combination, and the denomination spelled out as ‘pesos oro.’ Both notes were printed in London by De La Rue.

GUATEMALA

Hurtado, Valverde and Alcántara (P120)

The music of Guatemala is very diverse. Guatemala’s national instrument is the marimba, an idiophone from the family of the xylophones, which is played all over the country, even the remotest corners. The most famous marimba performers in Guatemala are Sebastián Hurtado, Mariano Valverde and Germán Alcántara.

Sebastian Hurtado (1827-1913) was born in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. He was one of the founders of the Hurtado Brothers and their Royal Marimba Band and toured several countries in Central America, Mexico and the United States in the early 20th century. He received several awards and recorded most his repertoire. In 1894, Hurtado invented the chromatic marimba, which contained two rows of keys instead of one.

Mariano Valverde (1884-1956) also was born in Quetzaltenango. He studied at the Instituto Varones del Occidente and received private music lessons, after moving to the Conservatorio Nacional de Guatemala. He became a piano virtuoso and prominent director of marimba. He traveled with the Hurtado Brothers’ band through the US. Valverde wrote more than 100 compositions, one of them *“Noche de Luna entre Ruinas”* (Moonlight among the ruins), written after the earthquakes in December 1917, became one of the significant waltzes in Guatemala.

Germán Alcántara (1863-1910) was born in Guatemala City and he learned under the tutelage of Vicente Andrino, Emilio Dressner and Lorenzo Morales. Alcántara was a notable performer of the harp and marimba, being a member of the *Banda Marcial de Guatemala* for many years. He served as the head of the *Banda de Antigua Guatemala*, and also served as director of the Conservatorio Nacional. Several of his works became part of Guatemala’s popular musical heritage as a part of the repertoire of the leading marimbas and orchestras of Guatemala during the early 20th century.



Guatemala issued its first-ever 200 quetzales note in 2009 to honor the three famous marimba players Sebastián Hurtado, Mariano Valverde and Germán Alcántara (P120).

The Central Bank of Guatemala issued a new note of 200 quetzales in 2009 (P120) bearing the portraits of Sebastián Hurtado, Mariano Valverde and Germán Alcántara on the front and also as the watermark. A marimba is behind them. A vertical serial number at right and a wave serial number below the coat

of arms is at center, with a Quetzal bird at upper left close to the denomination. On the back are notes from “*La Flor del Café*” by Alcántara, a chromatic marimba invented by Hurtado and an allegory to Valverde’s “*Noche de Luna entre Ruinas*” at center.

There are over 20 security features on the bill, ranging from special paper, UV ink, latent image, a security thread, a holographic patch and laser etching of the slightly curved serial number below the watermark area. The denomination of 200 quetzales is expressed in western and Maya style. The national bird, the Quetzal, is on both sides. This is first note with this denomination in Guatemala’s history and it was put into circulation in November 2009. It is the first multi-face note from Guatemala and was printed in Germany by Giesecke and Devrient.

MEXICO

Boy Heroes (P71, 77, 83, 87, 88)

The final battle of the Mexican-American War (1846-48) took place at the fortification of Mexico City known as Chapultepec castle. The castle, surrounded with land mines, was occupied by a military academy and defended by 1,000 soldiers, most of them young cadets. American General Winfield Scott ordered the castle stormed on September 13, 1847. The land mines failed to explode, and the invaders were able to scale the walls. The cadets joined in the struggle, choosing death over surrender.

For Mexicans, the US invasion of the “Halls of Montezuma” have been symbolized by the young cadets called the “*Niños Heroes*” (“Boy Heroes”). The cadets are immortalized in the street names of nearly every town. Statues depict their martyrdom throughout the republic, but none is more monumental than that at the foot of Chapultepec castle, where it said one cadet (Juan Francisco Escutia) hurled himself wrapped in the Mexican flag. The city capitulated on September 14, the day before the celebration of Hidalgo’s *Grito de Dolores*, Mexico’s Independence Day.

The war ended on February 2, 1848, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This treaty ceded to the United States the land that now comprises the states of California, Utah and Nevada, as well as parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming and Colorado. Mexico also renounced all rights to Texas. During the war 1,773 Americans were killed in action and 4,152 were wounded. Mexican casualty reports are incomplete, but it estimated that approximately 25,000 were killed or wounded between 1846-1848. The monument is an important patriotic site in Mexico. On March 5, 1947, nearly one hundred years after the battle, US President Harry S. Truman placed a wreath at the monument and stood for a moment of silence.



Mexico has honored the young cadets who gave their lives to defend the castle of Chapultepec during the Mexican-American War on several banknotes. This version (P88) is from 1985.

In 1980, Banco de Mexico issued a multicolor note of 5,000 pesos (P71) depicting the “*Niños Heroes*,” Francisco Marquez, Agustin Melgar, Fernando Montes de Oca, Vicente Suarez, Juan de la Barrera and Juan Francisco Escutia. A Mexican flag with the legend “*Batallón activo de San Blas*” is at center-right. One of the Heroic Teenage Soldiers is a watermark and there is narrow serial number. Chapultepec castle is at center on the back. The site of the hill was a sacred site for Aztecs, and the buildings atop it have served several purposes during its history including that of Military Academy, Imperial residence, Presidential home, observatory, and presently, the Museo Nacional de Historia. It is the only castle in North America that served as a royal residence – Mexican Emperor Maximilian I and his consort, Empress Carlota, during the Second Mexican Empire.

Keeping the same design but with S. A. (*Sociedad Anónima*) removed from the bank title, this banknote was issued with three different dates in 1983 – May 13, July 26 and December 12. In 1985, a similar design was put in circulation but with slight modifications. The design of “Boy Heroes” continued over the watermark. Chapultepec castle is on the back with the design slightly modified too. All these notes were printed by Banco de México. Dimensions are 155 x 67 mm.

Conclusion

Recently, some African nations have issued multi-face notes. They include Ghana (series of the ‘Big Six’), Nigeria, Eritrea, Morocco and Lesotho. In most of them appear political leaders, kings and important people in their history. For instance, in 1997 the new state of Eritrea issued a set of notes (1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 nakfa – P1-6) showing native children and community members. All these notes were designed by Clarece Holbert of the US Bureau of Engraving and Printing and printed in Germany by Giesecke and Devrient. Also, the Philippines and Thailand have put into circulation recent multi-face notes

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