

# THE LATIN AMERICAN DATABASE OF UNDERGROUND WATERMARKS

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**MEXICO, CHILE, ARGENTINA ,BOLIVIA, COLOMBIA & PERU**

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**WHY DID THE SPANISH  
COLONIES  
NEEDED SO MUCH PAPER  
DURING THE 16TH TO THE 18TH  
CENTURIES?**

# WHY DID THE SPANISH COLONIES NEEDED SO MUCH PAPER?

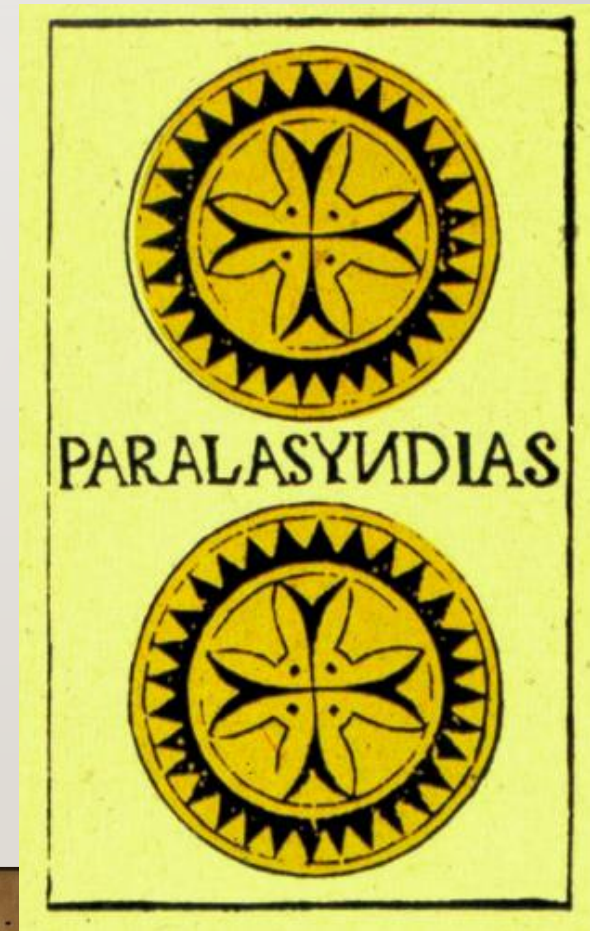
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- Administration (reports, census, taxes, imports, exports, etc.)
- Printed paper (flyers) appeared to convey ideologies and politics.
- Manifestos, pamphlets, libels, songs,
- Also, loose leaves and images printed on paper were distributed among Native Americans.
- Legal arguments, memorials and petitions, festival reports, sermons, panegyrics, letters with news, gazettes, orders, receipts, etc., were published in newspapers to communicate news to the people.
- The Spanish Inquisition
- And all of this consumed thousands of reams of paper.

# WHY DID THE SPANISH COLONIES NEEDED SO MUCH PAPER?

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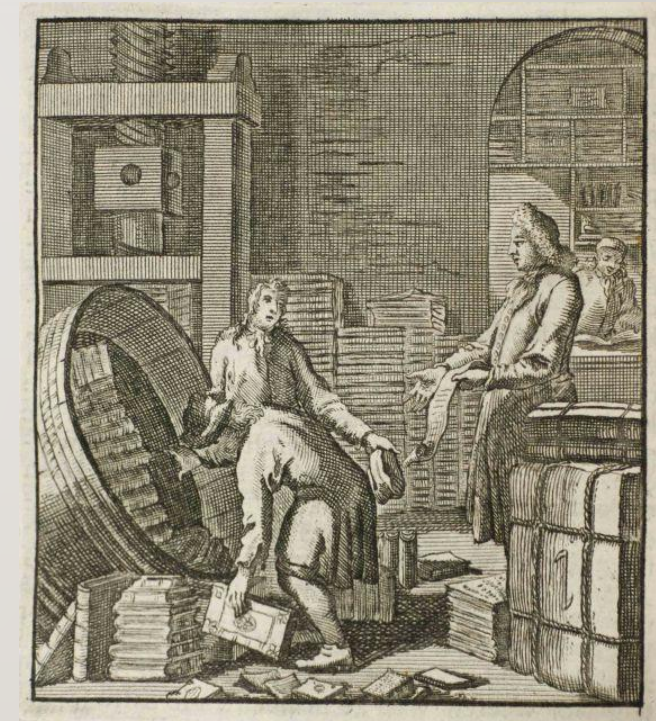
- Playing cards.
- During the 16th. Century 12,000 decks of cards were produced just in Mexico City every year





# LA FLOTA DE INDIAS Y LA FLOTA DE TIERRA FIRME PAPER

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# THE SPANISH MAIN AND CARIBBEAN PIRATE HAVENS c. 1670











Latinamerica is roughly  
20 million km  
Iceland would fit aproximately  
194 times in Latin America



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WHAT DID THEY DO  
TO SORT THIS OUT?

# WHEAT MILLS

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PAPER MILLS

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# WHEAT AND PAPER MILLS IN MEXICO AND SOUTH AMERICA

## WHEAT MILLS

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- **MEXICO: 1521**, 16th. Century
- **PERU: 1532**, 16th. Century
- **CHILE:** : 16th century.
- **COLOMBIA: 1532**, 16th. C.
- **BOLIVIA:** 16th. Century
- **ARGENTINA:** 17th. Century

## PAPER MILLS

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- **MEXICO; 1580** , 16th. Century
- **PERU: 1584**, 16th. Century
- **CHILE: 1865**, 19th Century,
- **COLOMBIA:** 1847, 19th Century
- **BOLIVIA: 1940-1950**, 20th Century,
- **ARENTINA: 1862**, 19th Century,

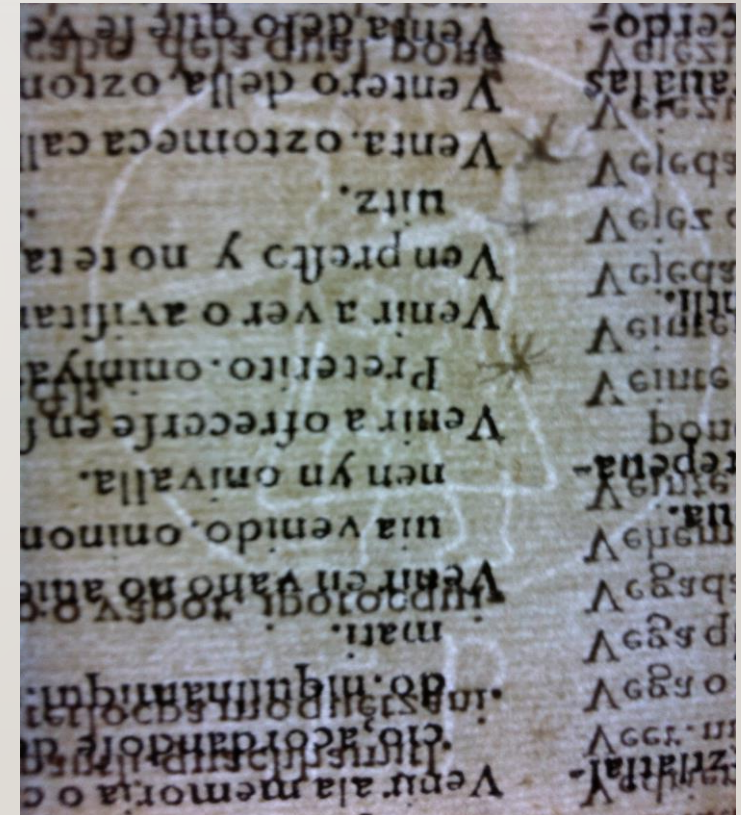




# PILGRIM WATERMARKS

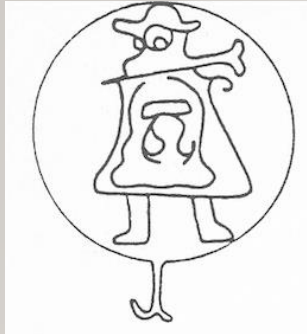


Pilgrim.  
Archivo de la Corona de Aragón,  
Generalitat de Catalunya, Barcelona, 1500.  
Marca de agua No. 212 de Valls i Subirá..



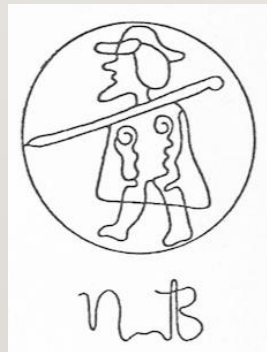
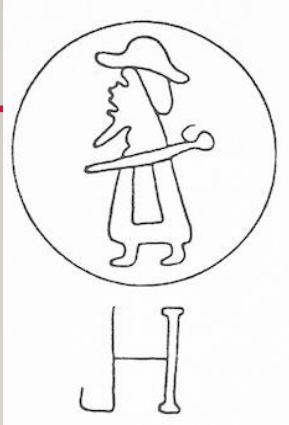
# PILGRIM WATERMARKS USED IN MEXICO

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# PILGRIM WATERMARKS USED IN MEXICO



# PILGRIM WATERMARKS USED IN MEXICO





# UNDERGROUND PILGRIM WATERMARKS MEXICO



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# UNDERGROUND PILGRIM WATERMARKS MEXICO

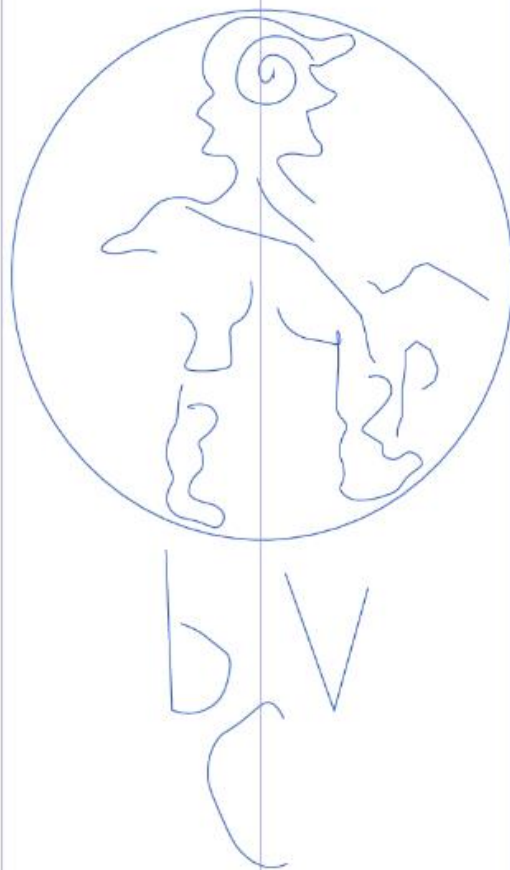
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# UNDERGROUND PILGRIM WATERMARKS CHILE

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# UNDERGROUND PILGRIM WATERMARKS BOLIVIA



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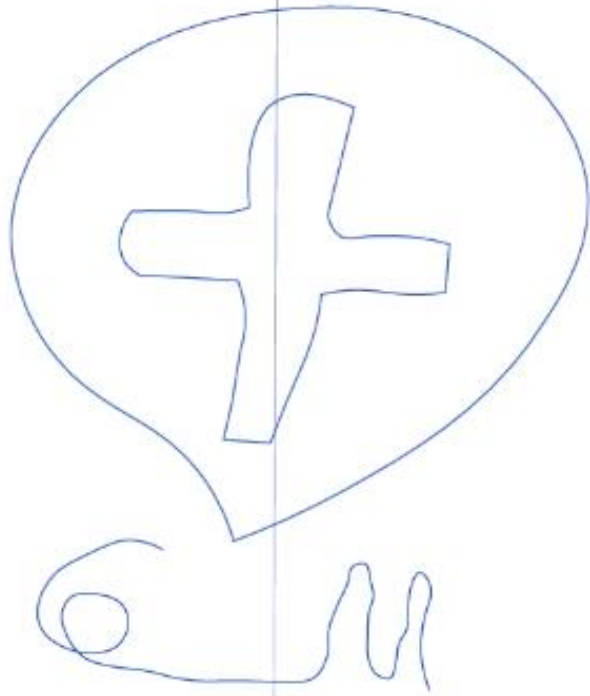


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# UNDERGROUND CROSS WATERMARK CHILE

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- Paper manufacturing in Latin America happened very differently than in the rest of the world.
- The existence of wheat mills opened up opportunities to break the law and make money illegally. Since it was a scarce product and there was demand.
- Due to the scarcity of paper and the fact that so many residents were of dubious origins, Latin America became a hotbed of shady business, as watermarks bear witness.





- We know that watermarks could come loose at some point while in the mold, and this can result in disfigured mark. This is not the case with these examples, which are well-drawn but with unique lines and designs not found in other examples.
- There is no doubt that the images are of well known watermarks but in these, the lines have been made hastily and without any skill.
- Usually the letters are drawn much better than the figure.



- The lines have very little detail and lack volume, all are completely linear.
- Any self-respecting paper maker would not have created watermarks with these characteristics.
- Considering the design of the watermarks, the careless lines, and the lack of resemblance they bear to other watermarks, in addition to the fact that they have not been found in international databases, we can thus far state that they are clandestine.





- We can conclude by saying that by allowing wheat mills in the New World, possibilities were opened to break the law and make money, which they were willing to do.
- Suffering from a shortage of paper and with so many neighbors coming from murky origins, Latin America became a place where doing easy business, —and not always necessarily legal— was productive and that is how we can take a look at it through watermarks.





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THANK YOU