

## THE 450TH AND 250TH ANNIVERSARIES OF THE TWO FOUNDATIONS OF THE POTOSÍ MINT

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### ABSTRACT

This article commemorates the 450th and 250th anniversaries of the two founding moments of the Casa de Moneda de Potosí (1572 and 1773), exploring its dual legacy as a global economic powerhouse and a cornerstone of regional identity formation. The first mint, established under Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, marked a transformative moment in global commerce, producing silver coins that became the currency of choice for international trade. Notably, the «reales de a ocho» circulated extensively, shaping financial networks from Europe to Asia. The second mint, erected during the Bourbon reforms, further advanced Potosí's influence through its technological innovations and refined minting processes. Potosí's economic contributions, driven by the vast silver reserves of Cerro Rico, catalyzed significant shifts in global markets, notably the European Price Revolution and the industrial development of France, the Netherlands, and England. Yet, this economic success came at a cost: the exploitation of indigenous labor under the «mita» system and the intensification of colonialism in other continents. Beyond its economic impact, the Casa de Moneda de Potosí played a crucial role in forging a regional identity. The hybrid artistic and cultural expressions of the mestizo baroque, exemplified in local religious art and architecture, underscored the dynamic interplay between indigenous and European influences. This interdisciplinary study combines archival research with historiographical analysis to present a nuanced understanding of Potosí's enduring legacy.

**Keywords:** Potosí Mint, Global Economy and Colonialism, Mestizo Baroque and Regional Identity.

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