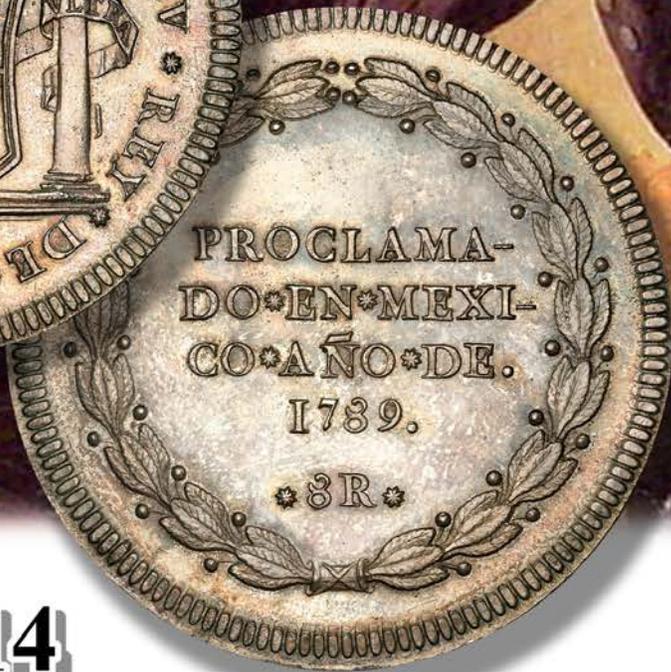
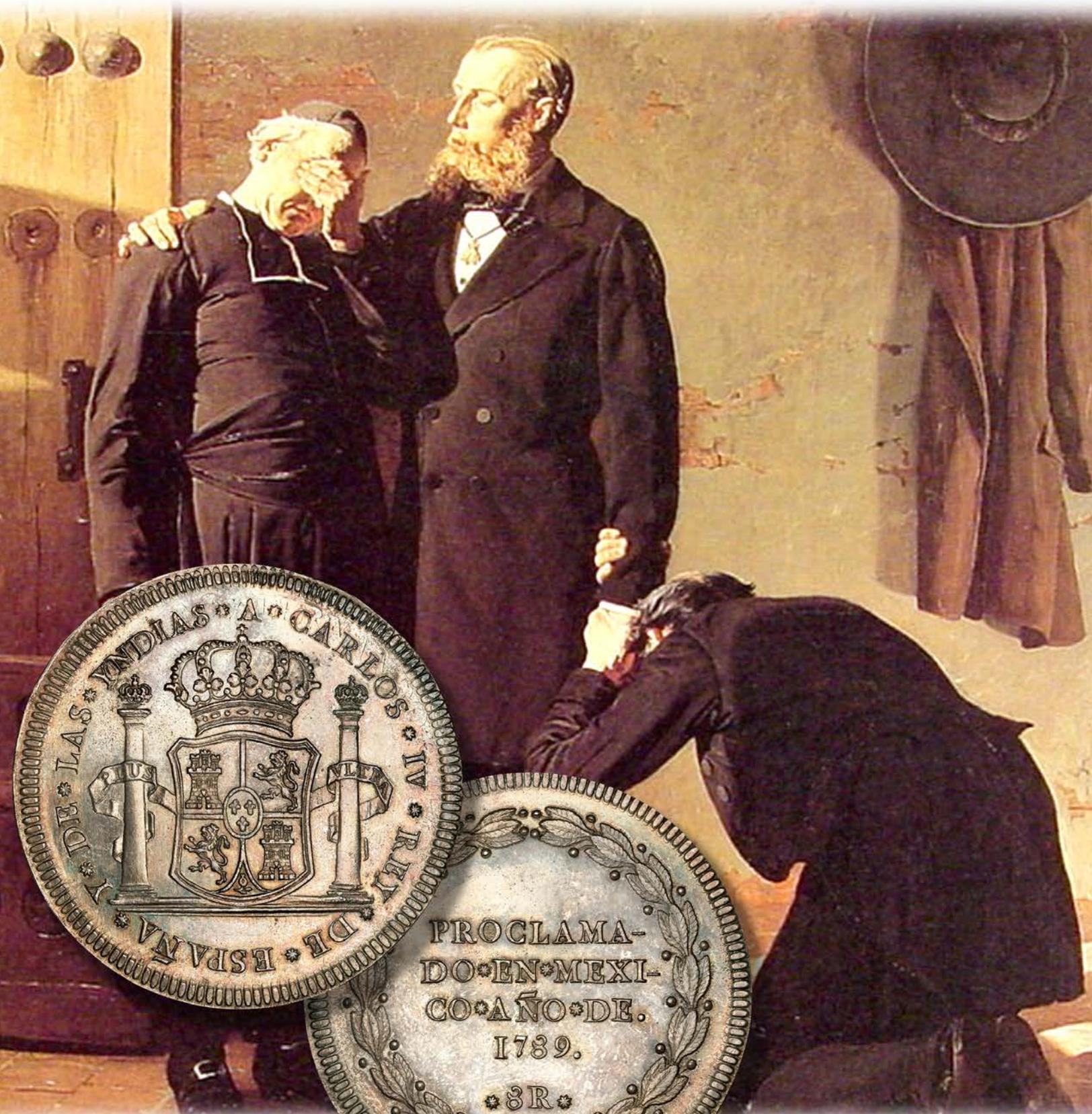


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This year the bourse floor is much larger and we will have a couple of tables dedicated to a book sale. We have numerous books donated by members, which we will be selling at reasonable prices, and we can always use more. If you have extra books in your library that you would like to donate, please send them to me at the address below.

This year we also have room for a number of exhibits. We already have commitments for several interesting ones and have room for a couple more, so if you would like to put together an exhibit, give me a call. This year we will start giving awards for the exhibits.

It seems like everyone has a tendency to wait till the last minute to make hotel and banquet reservations. Don't wait too long as our room block was not increased much over last year. You can make both hotel and banquet reservations online at usmex.org.

Cory

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COVER IMAGE

The background is a detail from "The Last Moments of Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico", an oil painting by the French painter, Jean-Paul Laurens, currently in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. In a seeming reversal of roles, Maximilian is comforting his chaplain and confessor, Father Augustin Fischer. As Kent Ponterio recounts in his article in this issue, Father Fischer was a gifted antiquarian and amassed a fine collection of coins and medals, including re-strikes and mules.

The medal is a re-strike of the proclamation medal of Charles IV, struck over a medal of Ferdinand VII. Further details are given in Kent's article.



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LETTER

Comments on the articles on Mexican symbolism written by Max A. Keech in the March 2012 and September 2012 issues.

Dear Cory, I read with great interest the above articles. First of all I want to recognize the interest and investigation made by Mr. Keech both on our coinage and our emblem; having said that I would like to comment on the content of the articles.

If what he means when he says in the first paragraph of the first article: "... the eagle is not an eagle at all", specifically refers to the bird on the Supreme Junta coins, he could have a point, but if he means that the bird on the Mexican Emblem is not an eagle then this Mexica has to disagree.

First there is the possibility that the engraver of these dies had a different idea of how an eagle looks (Walt Disney had a very particular idea of how a mouse looks) or he thought, for whatever reason, that a cara-cara was more appropriate to be used. That we will never know.

To support the theory of the cara-cara a reference is made to the Mendoza codex. Well, I might be wrong but to me it looks much more like an eagle than a cara-cara, specially if you consider the brown color (particular to a Mexican eagle) against the white and black of a cara-cara. Also the feathers cover most part of the legs contrary to the case of the slender legs of the cara-cara and the feathers (not crest) go all the way back to the wing.

Mr. Keech mentions, referring to the cara-cara that: "... they are not fast flying or aerial hunters and frequently run along the ground (think falcon meets roadrunner)." In Mexico a "roadrunner" is a "correcaminos" and a "falcon" is a "halcón" but accepting his comment it must have been difficult for that bird to get to a rock in the middle of a lake; although I agree that stranger things happen.

You can argue that the bird on the coins has a crest rather than a crown or vice-versa but I strongly recommend reading the superb book of Carrera Stampa, *El Escudo Nacional*, the most profound study (in my opinion) on the Mexican emblem. In this book (pages 113 and 115) you can clearly see drawings of the seal of the Supreme Junta and there is no doubt that the bird has a crown, not a crest. Furthermore, on the Morelos flag that Mr. Keech presents in his article the eagle also has a crown.



I will touch only superficially on the part of the bridge as you really cannot know what the engraver had in mind. You can argue that it is the Calderon bridge and that the design indicates the "Phoenix bird reviving from the ashes" although I wonder how many of the insurgents, or for that case of "the mob", knew about the "Ave Fenix" symbolism. You could also wonder whether they were so masochistic as to enhance the symbol of their defeat? One thing can be said about bridges of this kind and that is that they existed by the dozen throughout the country, the arched architecture was very common, sometimes you found four or more arches depending on the width of the river or the length of the aqueduct. As a matter of fact the bridge of the coat of arms of Mexico City is not exactly a bridge, the sides are separated from the tower and two of them are complemented by lions that are standing with their hind legs on the bridge and their claws resting on the tower: the implication was the triumph of the Spaniards, coming through the roads, over the Aztecs.

Another possibility could be considered: It is a common bridge. Sigmund Freud once said: "There are times when a cigar is only a cigar".

After all this, am I sure it is not the Calderon bridge? No I am not.

But let us go to the emblem. First some general considerations that will help clarify or support the different conclusions:

The *Vocabulario Nahuatl – Castellano* (dictionary) written in 1571 by Fray Alonso de Molina (reedited 1966 by Ediciones Colofon) translate the different words of our interest as follows:

Águila = Quauhtli
Águilucho = Quauhcometl
Águila negra = Poquauhtli
Halcon = Yeytotli
Ave or pajaro = Tototl

No word for cara-cara or predator.

Some years ago I made a presentation concluding that there was no clear evidence that the legend of “an eagle standing on a cactus growing from a rock in the middle of a lake devouring a snake” had substantiated foundation. This conclusion was based on the fact that none of the pre-Cortez codices showed it, and that that it was only mentioned on post-Cortez codices as follows:

<u>Codex</u>	<u>Cactus on rock in lake</u>	<u>Predator/prey</u>
Tira Tepechpan	yes/no lake	predator alone
Siguenza	yes	no predator
Mendoza	yes/no lake	predator alone
Monteleone	yes/no lake	predator alone
Duran/Atlas	yes	predator/snake
Ramirez	yes	predator/bird
Aubin	yes	predator/snake
Porfirio Diaz	no	predator/snake

Carrera Stampa on his *El Escudo Nacional* and Serge Gruzinsky in *The Aztecs, Rise and Fall of an Empire* had reached this conclusion long before and the consensus was, as Mr. Keech also concludes, that the snake was placed there as a representation of evil by the Catholic church to cement the concept of “good” beats “bad” and/or that the Catholic church was stronger than the local Gods, or day/night, etc. Having gone through all this I also concluded that there is reasonable doubt about what was in the predator’s beak, if anything, but there is no evidence that excludes the eagle on a rock.

The different codices are not foolproof so we should refer to different evidence. Mr. Keech mentions the Teocalli de la Guerra Sagrada as a pre-conquest piece of evidence. This same monolith is depicted by Carrera Stampa on pages 35-36 of his book but he also made a full drawing of the bird and there is no doubt it is an eagle. Mr. Carrera also shows other pre-Cortez monoliths showing the eagle, albeit not always with a snake.

I would say that the lake, the rock, the cactus and the bird are pretty conclusive, and I would agree that the snake could be a latter addition for religious purposes but based on the archeological evidence, the codices, the proclamations and, why not, the beautiful legend, I would stick to the eagle.

Un abrazo

Rogelio Charteris Reyes

BEHIND THE TABLE / ATRAS DE LA MESA

by Mark Wm. Clark

I left off last time with the March Mexico City show. Neither Alberto Hidalgo nor Duane Douglas held auctions at the show, choosing to wait and see about new government tax regulations. Auctions were held by Angel Smith and Claudio Verrey and there were mixed results. Angel seemed quite happy with the results but Claudio's auction seemed a little less active.

I now hear that Alberto Hidalgo is going to hold an online auction on 17 May. Last time I talked to him he was not sure what to do so I will be curious to hear why he decided to go ahead and do an auction.

Back to the show circuit – Baltimore in late March was a slow show so at least I got to run around the floor more than normal. I was able to make a few purchases and talk to a number of dealers. In other words we had time on our hands. They have a show in June but smaller in size as a number of dealers prefer to skip the summer show (including me!). Baltimore is hot and muggy in the summer; there are lots of tourists and rooms are a bit harder to get as there are fewer available. Still one of my favorite cities to visit.

Seems like there are fewer shows or at least they are spaced out a bit better than last year. I had most of April off until the last weekend. The new Santa Clara show is run by Scott Griffith (old Mint Show in San Francisco) and the show is about half the size of the old Santa Clara show but seems to be growing. We had some crazy weather patterns passing through which probably affected plans of many would-be attendees. It was slow.

At the show I was offered a table at the Sacramento Valley Semi-Annual show, a Friday-Saturday show at a new location near the Sacto airport. Nice facility but parking is short of what any show needs and especially as the hotel rented out the "other" hall for Friday. Several people came in and said they almost left for lack of parking space. How many did leave? We may never know. Saturday had more traffic but a lot of that was due to local TV news coverage. The club put some scarce date 1909-S Lincoln Cents into circulation and redeemable for \$80 but the newscasts added that this type of coin was produced from 1909 to 1958. Many came in with bags of Wheat Cents and thought they could get \$80 for each one. We saw a lot of Wheaties on Saturday – all day long! I was able to see some world coins when I said that I did not deal in US coins but only bought one coin that another dealer bought in a bag.

The internet seems to be down following the economy in general. Ebay has been offering large number of free listings on most categories. I am getting more orders from overseas to my surprise and delight. The new International First Class package rate rose but now the number on the Customs Form is trackable so you do not need to register your mail. You can now satisfy eBay's requirement for that tracking number. Private insurance is available from several sources even for overseas mail at a very reasonable rate.

I was not able to follow Hidalgo's auction as it was the same weekend as the TNA (Texas Numismatic Association)'s annual convention. The show has been moved to new surroundings at the Arlington Convention Center, 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington 76011 (ZIP for those of you using GPS) near Six Flags and the Ballpark. It has a very progressive management in Doug and Mary Davis (who also manage the Memphis Paper Money Show). The old facility in Fort Worth raised prices to a level that did not make sense to continue the show there. The new location is much newer and offers a lot more hotels/motels/restaurants/entertainment close by and is very near DFW Airport. You can bring the family as there is something for everyone nearby.

I thought there might be problems getting in and out with the baseball stadium right next door but there were three games while the show was on and they had it under control. The facility is a big improvement over the former location. Easy entry and exit and plenty of parking (parking at the Convention Center is \$5 which is rather reasonable these days). The show was a bit slow which could have been due to many not being familiar with the new location or to the economy, which has affected many other shows. Good group of people running the show. The TNA club has many hard working volunteers and Doug and Mary do a terrific job at organization and security. There were about 150 dealers and there is room to expand. Keep an eye on this show – it will be getting bigger and better! Lots of Mexico material at Texas shows!

Soon I will make a quick trip down to Mexico to get more catalogs and supplies to those hungry collectors who like many of us up here can't get enough. I am also looking forward to the USMexNA show in Scottsdale this year. Lots of planning and promotion now. Have you seen the lineup of speakers? It should be a really good show and educational program. The show bourse room will double in size. Several people at the TNA show said "See you there" so we'll see a lot of Texans in Scottsdale in October.

What more? Well, another Long Beach in early June, Memphis Paper Money Show in mid-June, ANA in Chicago, 5-9 August, and more Long Beach, on 4-6 September. And more in other areas. If anyone out there wants me to mention other shows that may be of interest to our group, let me know. I know there are more along the Mexican border but I don't have details yet, so send them by email, if you have them.

Mark Wm. Clark
mwclark12@yahoo.com

(Again, thank you for the positive emails I have been getting from our readers and members and for the comments at many shows! Keep sending suggestions for improvements as communicating them will get them into the numismatic world all the faster. Let's start right here!)

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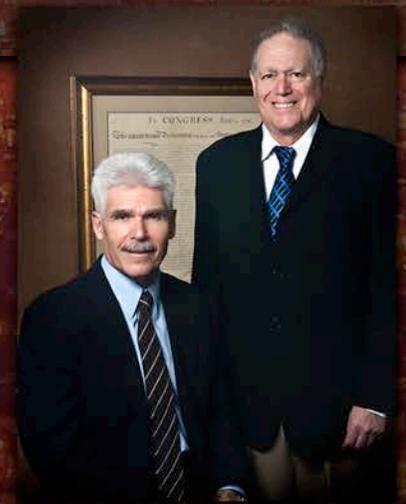
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VARIETIES OF THE 1714 MEXICO CITY 8 ESCUDOS

by Phillip Flemming

For reasons that remain unclear the Mexico City mint experimented exuberantly at the end of the War of Spanish Succession with novel designs for its gold coinage. From 1711 through 1713 ornate crosses and tresses paired with elaborate Bourbon shields and crowns to create new designs of some artistic merit. This experimentation had to have been approved by the new viceroy, Alencastre, Duke of Linares, though no viceregal directives have yet emerged from the archives. In any case, these designs proved unpopular in commerce and were quickly canceled by officials of the viceroyalty. In 1714 Mexico City settled on simplified designs that with only minor alterations would become standard for the remainder of the cob era (1715-32). In 1714 the mint mark *Mo* also permanently replaced *MXo* on all gold denominations. No 1713 dies were carried over to the 1714 coinage.



The new and simplified designs for 1714 were for the most part established at the beginning of the 1714 coinage. The new cross and crowned shield that constituted the major devices of the coinage did not change during the year. There was, however, some on-going experimentation/variation in the legends and with other minor die features. On the first onza dies used in 1714, for example, the date was consigned to the cross side (peninsular-style) with GRAT conspicuously replacing it in the shield side legend. No die study has yet tracked the other changes that followed in 1714, but it now seems possible to do so with high confidence. Before turning to that business it is useful to reflect on a few neglected facts about the Mexican gold cob coinage throughout its 55 year tenure.

From its inception in 1679, and even as early as the first discussions of the 1660s, Mexico City's gold coinage was designed to be a strictly regulated coinage. Among other regulations a cap was imposed on its annual production. No other Spanish colonial mint had its gold (or silver) production capped in this fashion. Apparently the major advocate of this cap was the Mexico City *consulado* itself, the merchant's guild, who found it more profitable to deal in gold bullion. Even with the *consulado* defending the cap it is not clear why the Mexican economy was content to labor under this handicap, particularly as Mexico's annual gold production continued to rise in the post-Fleet era. For the entire cob period (1679-1731), except for 1694-95, the official cap remained at a stingy 1,165 marcos of gold (equivalent to 158,440 pesos). As the gap between what Mexico was mining and what it could mint kept growing, the Mexican economy must have worked with the ever-increasing supply of uncoined gold bullion in ways we do not understand. Archival work by Jorge Proctor is pursuing this question.

Recent archival work by Guillermo Céspedes del Castillo confirms that Mexico City's gold coinage in 1714 was at the official cap of 158,440 pesos. Céspedes' mintage figures do not include a breakdown by denomination or the delivery dates in 1714. It is not known whether fixed ratios of the gold denominations were also prescribed at Mexico City. No fixed ratios were observed in the gold coinages at Lima or Santa Fe de Bogota.

Pradeau in his 1938 *Numismatic History of Mexico* (p. 56) represents the annual gold mintage for the period 1696 through 1732, including 1714, as a constant 200,000 pesos. Pradeau does not discuss the obvious cap that his numbers reflect. The sources Pradeau used are alluded to earlier in his book (p. 47) and are clearly of mixed reliability. Céspedes' better sourced numbers, depending on documents from both Spain's Archives of the Indies (AGI) and Mexico's national archives (AGNM), should now be preferred to Pradeau's. As Lazo Garcia has shown in the case of the Peruvian mints, Spanish colonial mints normally kept records of their coinage by denomination and delivery. It is possible that the exact mintages by denomination and the production/delivery dates of the 1714 gold coinage lie undiscovered in AGNM documents. This information would be very useful in confirming the die study we are about to present. Céspedes helpfully identifies the AGNM volumes in which to begin this search. Archivists please take note.

Perspective on the size of the 1714 gold coinage can be had from several comparisons. 158,440 pesos of gold is dwarfed by the 1714 Mexican silver coinage of almost 2,647,000 pesos. By value only 5.65% of the 1714 Mexican coinage is in gold. The Mexican gold issue is also small in comparison with contemporary Santa Fe and Lima gold issues. Santa Fe reported struck 386,240 pesos of gold in 1714 and Lima reported 718,283 pesos in a down year. Peru produced more gold than Mexico, especially after 1705, but Mexico's gold production was not at the level of one fifth of Peru's. Mexican gold production had increased significantly at San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato and Guadalajara by the end of Carlos II's reign. We lack good data on Colonial Mexican gold production but one academic study estimates an average of at least 1.8 tons per year in this period. If this is correct, a large percentage of Mexico's gold production went uncoined, more than an inconvenience for the Mexican commerce.

To understand what 158,440 pesos represents in actual gold coinage, imagine that this entire mintage was struck in onzas. Then 9,902 onzas would have been produced. We know from 1715 Fleet salvages that a respectable number of two escudos plus some

one and four escudos were also struck in 1714 so the 1714 gold coinage was not all onzas. We know from the only other Spanish Colonial mint that struck a large onza coinage in this period that the complementary minor gold denominations were always a small part of the total mintage. In 1714 95% of Lima's gold coinage was struck as onzas. That percentage only increased in the post-Fleet era and the 1710-15 average was over 96% of the gold coinage as onzas. If we apply these percentages to Mexico, then 95% of Mexico's 158,440 gold pesos would comprise a mintage of 9,407 onzas and 90% of 158,550 pesos would be 8,912 onzas. As a reasonable estimate of the 1714 Mexican onza coinage let's assume that it was likely in the 8,900-9,400 range. A mintage of this size, we can immediately infer, could easily have been accomplished with two pairs of 1714 onza dies. The similarly sized 1713 Mexican onza coinage seems to have been accomplished with two pairs of dies. Because of the small mintage, then, we should expect to encounter a small number of onza dies, unless other considerations complicated the 1714 gold mintage.

What follows is an attempt to reconstruct the 1714 onza coinage based upon die links and some assumptions about how the Mexican coiners reacted to the problems they evidently encountered in 1714. More complicated reconstructions are always possible, but the evidence of the coins themselves now suggests that four shield dies and five cross dies were used for the 1714 coinage. That means that on average about 2,300 and 2,000 onzas were struck per obverse and reverse die respectively, very low numbers which imply that the working life of most 1714 dies were prematurely curtailed by factors other than wear. Here in outline is our reconstruction.



Variety 1. Date on Reverse with GRAT in normal obverse date position.

By die linkages this is the first set of dies employed in 1714. We have already illustrated an exceptional example of this coinage above. At the very beginning of the coinage Mexico may have attempted some special, nearly round strikings with its new designs for 1714. Schulman in 1972 called a similar specimen (lot 484) an "almost royal", recognizing that it was clearly different from other examples of this variety. A more typical mint state example of this date-on-reverse variety is illustrated on this page. Whether by error or as an experiment, the

date was engraved Spanish peninsular-style in the legend above the cross. GRAT took the normal place for the date in the obverse legend. If this was a deliberate experiment, as we are inclined to believe, it was probably a well-intentioned effort to make the king's name, the denomination (VIII), and the date all visible on the coin. PHILIPPUS and the VIII denomination faced the date and mint mark on opposite sides of the shield. Mexican onza planchets were often small (28-30 mm). A clear date on one side meant no PHILIPPUS or denomination visible on the other, and vice versa. In principle moving the date to the reverse ended this competition for space. Unfortunately, after a session of minting with the new dies, it was discovered that 80-90% of the onzas struck showed no legible date on the reverse. The problem was that Mexico was still hand striking its gold coinage on poorly shaped and prepared planchets, rarely achieving more than partial cross side legends. Spanish-style dies were not compatible with Mexican-style production. No date on the onzas was a situation completely unacceptable to Mexican mint officials. The solution quickly arrived at was to return the date to the obverse legend, where with a slightly offset striking a legible and even bold four digit date could be achieved. Most 1714 onzas struck with a dated obverse die show this right offset (as do 1713 onzas).

When the date was returned to the shield side, the 1714 dated cross die was retired. Apparently Mexico City wanted no double date 1714 onzas. Instead of simultaneously retiring the original GRAT obverse, it was decided for some reason to try to salvage that die by engraving 1714 over GRAT in the legend, creating, as we shall see, the second variety of 1714. The Florida State Collection, by the way, has more than a dozen examples of the date-on-reverse variety, only two with legible dates (see FL # 11.00039). Something over a dozen examples with full or nearly full reverse dates have appeared in the marketplace in the last 30 years. All appear to be 1715 Fleet coins.



Many date-on-reverse 1714's, as we noted, have no legible legends. Diagnostics that can be used to identify the date-on-reverse dies on legendless coins include, on the shield side, an overstruck denomination VIII/IIIV and "ears" on the fesse of Austria (left side of the shield). The *tallador* initially punched in the denomination backwards and also put the fleurs of Burgundy on the wrong side of the coin (in the space for Austria). The corrections he was required to make did not efface the obvious errors. On the reverse the fleurs in the angles of the cross have a distinctive "jellyfish" shape. 1714 is the last year we see "jellyfish" fleurs on Mexican escudos. A second cross die also used a different style of "jellyfish" fleurs to strike almost all of the normally dated 1714 issues. For comparison, we offer a side-by-side comparison of standard fleurs (right) with the "jellyfish" fleurs used on the date-on-reverse die.

Variety 2. Date engraved over GRAT (same shield die as previous but recut), new dateless reverse (2nd) introduced with traditionally shaped fleurs.



The *tallador* who was ordered to engrave 1714 on the GRAT obverse probably did not efface the GRAT for fear of fatally weakening the die. Yet it was not a worn die: shield and crown show no significant loss of high-point detail on any date-on-reverse coin. In any case, the resulting jumble of letters and shallow digits could not have pleased anyone, and it was not, judging by the scarcity of the 1714/GRAT issues, very successful in preserving working life of that obverse die. Notice also that the new reverse reverts to a design with traditional fleurs in the angles of the cross. Florida State has about a half dozen examples of this variety, only one of which (FL # 11.00421)

shows the 1714/GRAT overstrike with some clarity.



Pictured here is an enlargement of the overstrike from a coin in private hands. About a half dozen examples of this variety showing a clear 1714/GRAT overstrike have surfaced in the last 30 years. All of these are Fleet coins and apparently come from the Douglass Beach site, said to be the wreck site of the Mexican Fleet patache *Nieves*.

Variety 3. New obverse die (2nd) with date in normal position, initially paired with the previous traditional fleurs cross die (2nd), but soon with a new reverse die (3rd) featuring “jellyfish” fleurs. 1714 onzas struck with this obverse are commonly called the “normal” variety of 1714.

The recut 1714/GRAT obverse did not last very long before the overstrike became an illegible mess. The digits of the overdate, especially the final 14, were clearly not engraved deeply enough. When the die failed or was withdrawn for other reasons the Mexican coiners were able to turn to a new obverse die with the date in normal or standard position. Besides returning the date to the obverse the new die incorporated several other small changes including a slightly simpler crown. Surprisingly, the little-used previous cross die also did not last long (judging by the rarity of this sub-variety with traditional cross fleurs). Schulman (1972) lot 309 is one of the best example of the new normal obverse and the traditional fleurs reverse. Florida State has nearly twenty examples of the normal variety, about one quarter of them with full or partial dates. In the example illustrated notice the slight right offset, again sacrificing right legends (PHILIPPUS) for a clear full date.



(courtesy Daniel Frank Sedwick)



Variety 3a. Normal shield die with “small 4”, same “jellyfish” cross die.

Some collectors believe these coins (about four are now known) are from different dies than the previous. Other collectors think it was just a matter of doubling in the legend and shield. Four coins with the identical features point to a problem with the dies, not the striking. What we see on this coin is an obverse die beginning to fail in the area of the date on otherwise a fairly new die. Much of the 4 is gone. A crack runs down from the second 1 into the inner border. Some of that border and the left boundary of the shield is failing. Not long after this coin was struck a significant portion of the die in the area of the date failed completely. What did the Mexico City mint do when its normal 1714 shield die failed unexpectedly?

Variety 4. Obverse (3rd) struck from a Royal die, same “jellyfish” reverse die as previous.

What the coiners did at this point is surprising. Continued use of the previous cross die with a new Royal obverse die suggests that at this point the mint chose to press a Royal die into service to strike ordinary onzas. This was a highly unusual if not unprecedented move and would only have happened if Mexico City had no other 1714 shield die available to finish a scheduled delivery. The continued reverse die can be identified on the coin illustrated by a tightly spaced EX followed by a fat cross used as the stop. On several coins this reverse seems fairly worn. The obverse Royal die has many distinctive features including small crosses used as legend stops and flanking the shield. Two examples of this variety are attested, including one that was in the Florida State Collection (FL # 11.00042) until traded away in 1977!



(courtesy Daniel Frank Sedwick)

Variety 5. Both obverse and reverse (4th) struck from Royal dies.

Not long after the Royal obverse die had been sacrificed to business production the worn cross die also failed and had to be replaced. Since the Royal obverse die had already been used for business production it was not a hard decision to press the Royal reverse die into service alongside the Royal obverse. Arguably the best of the five known example of this remarkable variety is pictured below. Its closest rival sold in April of 2012 for almost \$49,000. Another lesser example with almost no date and a boxy, faceted planchet sold recently (10/13) for \$29,375. The worst example of this rarity was lot 5135 in the 1977 Blauvelt-Fleet sale. Ponterio had the final example in his September 1996 sale. Florida State does not have an example of this variety. Please see the addendum below for a discussion of a unique non-business strike from these same Royal dies.





Florida State Collection, Bureau of Archaeological Research (by permission)

Variety 6. New obverse (4th) with normally placed date, large M, square stops bracketing the denomination and assayer. New reverse (5th) with traditional fleurs.

This variety is unknown to many veteran collectors of 1715 Fleet Mexican cob gold. Florida State has two examples, including the one pictured below (FL # 11.00009). So far only one example has shown up in private hands (illustrated here). Originally in Schulman's 1972 Spanish Galleon Sale (lot # 532), this clearly dated specimen reappeared in the 1977 Blauvelt-Fleet Sale. We suspect a few more examples exist, mis-attributed as 1715 onzas because of the large letters and stops. Even in the absence of a date, notice the clear 1714 style crown. Kent Ponterio, who first drew attention to this variety, calls this a "style of 1715" obverse, and indeed several features of the 1715 coinage are previewed on this coin. The large M used for the mint mark is the same M used on the 1715 onzas. Stops flank the denomination VIII, but in this case small square stops and not the large triangular stops standard in 1715. A square stop also separates the M and J (another may be below the J). On the two Florida State coins both obverse and reverse dies looks almost pristine.



Florida State Collection, Bureau of Archaeological Research (by permission)

Further confirmation that the Large M variety comes at the end of the 1714 mintage is found in the fact that the 5th reverse carries over into the 1715 mintage. See Florida State coin # 11.00118 pictured here. Reverse die diagnostics include a slightly detached upper lobe of the tressure and distinctive traditional fleurs in all quadrants. No other 1714 dies are known to carry over to 1715.

1714 (using the new punches for 1715) to handle a gold delivery that probably was not very large (sparing the cross die for re-use in 1715). If the calendar of the 1714 gold deliveries is eventually discovered, this is good coinage to match with a smallish December delivery. Another reason why these coins should be placed late in 1714, and in particular after the Royal dies issues, is because the Royals would not have been sacrificed to business production if the Large M dies had been available. Mexico City did not capriciously sacrifice very expensive Royal dies to produce business issues.

The most reasonable explanation of the Large M variety is that these coins are from dies cut late in

The Six Varieties of 1714 Onzas



We conclude that that the Mexican onzas of 1714 were struck with four obverse and five reverse dies. The obverse dies included a Royal die apparently pressed into service on an emergency basis when the normal 1714 obverse die unexpectedly failed. The first coinage of 1714 was the unsuccessful date-on-reverse issue, the final onza coinage was the brief Large M issue. Most of the 1714 coinage was likely struck with the so-called normal obverse. Five reverse dies were paired with these four obverses, including a Royal reverse die used when no other 1714 reverse was available. Cross dies with "jellyfish" fleurs pair with both the date-on-reverse obverse and the normal obverse. Cross dies with traditional fleurs pair with the date-over-GRAT recut obverse, the Large M obverse, and briefly with the normal obverse. The Royal reverse also uses traditional fleurs.

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Brazil. Pedro I gold
Coronation 6400 Reis 1822-R
AU55 NGC
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Guatemala. Central American Republic
gold 8 Escudos 1824 NG-M
MS65 NGC
Realized \$176,250



Guatemala. Ferdinand VI
gold Escudo 1751/0 G-J
AU53 NGC
Realized \$45,531



Mexico. Republic silver Pattern
8 Reales 1882 Ho-JA
SP64 PCGS
Realized \$47,000



Mexico. Felipe V gold Royal
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THE PROOF RE-STRIKE AND MULE PROCLAMATION MEDALS OF MEXICO

The story of Father Augustin Fischer and George Steele Skilton

by Kent Ponterio



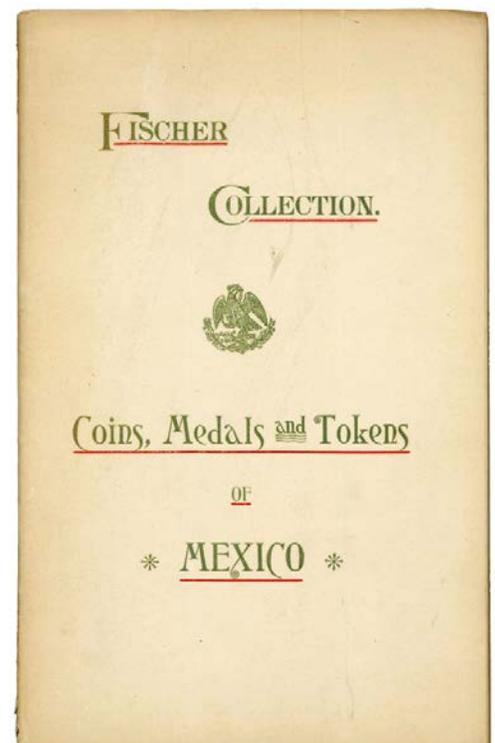
Zamora Proclamation Medal Proof Re-strike
Image courtesy of Dan Sedwick

Throughout history many world mints have re-struck coins from resurrected genuine dies. For instance, along with other re-strikes, the United States produced the famous 1804 Dollars, which were re-struck on multiple occasions. Russia observed similar practices by issuing Novodel re-strikes long after the originals. In some cases new dies were created when the originals were nonexistent. The practice of re-striking coins to meet demand from collectors took place in many countries over the years, including Mexico in the 19th century.

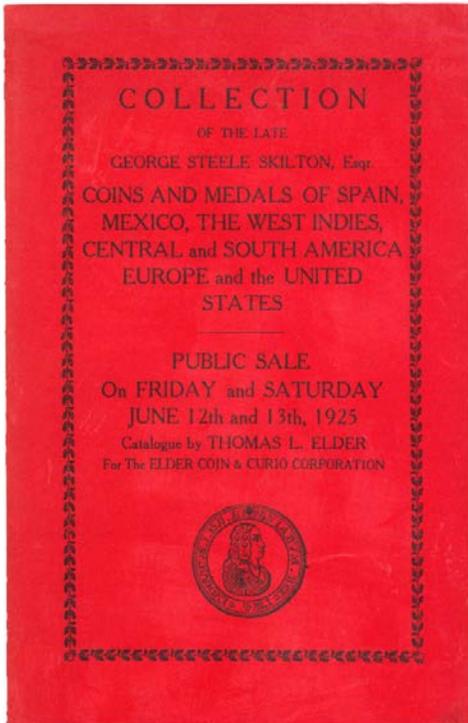
I first became aware of proof re-strikes and mules of the Spanish Colonial proclamation medals while cataloguing an extensive collection in the mid 1990s. The collection came to us meticulously sorted and stored in red velvet trays, among which were two trays filled with medals that were clearly of different manufacture. Many pieces that are traditionally found with milled edges were, in this case, produced with plain edges, struck out of collar and were inconsistent in weight. Several were also on oversized planchets with uneven rims, struck on polished blanks from polished dies stuck in proof. Further, many were unpublished mules made from obverse and reverse dies from different cities. Many of the pieces remain uncatalogued in the standard references by Grove, Medina and Herrera. When I inquired about the origin of these pieces I was told they were re-strikes made for Father Fischer, the priest who was confessor to the Emperor Maximilian.

The first mention of these pieces is in the April 1891 Scott Stamp and Coin Company Ltd of New York auction of the Father Augustin Fischer Collection of Coins, Medals and Tokens of Mexico. At first the catalogue does not seem like much, as it is a small 51-page pamphlet containing some 800 lots of Mexican material. The descriptions are brief at best with only a handful of items illustrated via engravings rather than photographs. Recently I was fortunate to obtain an original copy of the catalogue from David Sklow's January 2013 numismatic book auction. As a reference the catalogue is not of great importance, however there is a small section imbedded at the end titled "re-strikes and mules" that sheds quite a bit of light on a subject that otherwise remains unexplained in Mexican numismatics. Page 48 of the catalogue is the only place that to my knowledge talks about these pieces at any length. The description is brief and contains some inaccuracy regarding dating and origin, however it sheds some insight on these pieces. The introduction to the catalogue gives a brief biography of the collector Father Fischer:

"Father Fischer was born at Wurtemberg, Germany, about 1820 and died in the City Mexico in 1887. During the Empire he was Minister of the Household and a Confessor to Maximilian. He was Minister Plenipotentiary to Rome under the Emperor in 1865. He possessed one of the best Libraries of Spanish Americana in the western world, and those in correspondence with him found he had a remarkable collection of Coins."



Father Fischer's ties to Maximilian extend far beyond the role of confessor to the emperor. He was often found in the same small social circles and was in fact imprisoned at the same time as the late emperor. The Fischer collection was purchased by Scott Stamp and Coin via private treaty in October of 1890 from a gentleman who bought the collection in Mexico. By this time parts of the collection had already been dispersed, however it still contained 50 re-strike proclamation medals, 35 of which were mules.



After the sale of the Fischer collection 34 years passed before there was further mention of re-strikes and mules in the numismatic literature. In June of 1925 the Elder Coin & Curio Corporation auctioned the collection of the late George Steele Skilton which is the only other catalogue I am aware of that makes mention of such pieces. The 118-page Skilton catalogue contains some 3,214 lots and is text only with no illustrations. Arranged in chronological order more than 50 proclamation medals are described as either "restrike", "restrike proof", "proof" or "muling" and are interspersed with the regular proclamations. George Steele Skilton was born 25 November 1845 in Troy, New York. From 1865 to 1868 he attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering. Following graduation he moved to Mexico and remained there until 1886. His time in Mexico was spent predominantly working in the railroad industry for the Mexican Railroad Company (1871-1872), the Mexican Central Railroad (1874-1876 and again 1880-1882) and the Sinaloa and Durango Railroad Company (1884-1886).

The Skilton family papers, 1845-1917, housed in the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute archives, shed further light. The papers focus on the careers of the three Skilton brothers James, Julius and George, all natives of Troy and graduates of the Institute. All three brothers were involved with the U.S. and Mexico Claims Commission and the Mexican Consulate.

Dr. Julius Augustus Skilton graduated from the Institute in 1849 with a Bachelor of Natural Science and went on to get an A.M. from Wesleyan University and a M.D. from Albany Medical College. He practiced medicine in Troy until the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War when he enlisted as a surgeon. After the Civil War Julius traveled on assignment to Mexico for the *New York Herald*. He escorted Mexican President Benito Juárez back to Mexico from New Orleans and proceeded to assist with his restoration of Mexican rule. Julius was commissioned to exhume and examine the body of Maximilian before it was sent back to Austria. Julius was largely responsible for the release of Father Fischer and other members of the Austrian nobility from prison following Maximilian's execution. He was the recipient of several gifts from Father Fischer for aiding in his release from prison, among which was a portrait of the late emperor as well as an elaborate saddle presented to the emperor by the Mexican people in 1864.

RESTRIKES AND MULES.

These pieces were struck about 1885 through the efforts of an American collector then in Mexico. He selected the dies, and during his absence from the city they were executed, and unfortunately the correct obverse and reverse were placed together in but fifteen instances. Before his return the medals were disposed of to a native collector, and by him sold to Father Fischer. We have never seen or heard of others, and we feel quite positive that it is the first and only use of the dies since the year in which they are dated. All have plain edges and are in perfect condition.

Page 48 of the 1891 Scott Stamp and Coin Catalogue of the Fischer Collection

Now the question arises as to when exactly were "the restrikes and mules" produced and for whom. While the 1891 description from the Scott Stamp and Coin catalogue above gives some insight, the information is incomplete and speculative. It is important to note that the information published in the Scott catalogue came to them third hand (at best) from the previous owner of the collection. The biography of Father Fischer from the 1891 Scott catalogue states: "To what extent his coins, medals and books were culled before they reached New York, we are unable to state." Examination of the Skilton collection leads me to suggest that it was somewhere in the 50% range, at least for the medals. The combined number of "restrikes and mules" listed in the Fischer (1891) and Skilton (1925) auction catalogues is just over 100 pieces, roughly 50 in each collection.

In my opinion these “restrikes and mules” were neither produced in the 1880s, nor were they produced for an American collector. Rather they were struck specifically for Father Augustin Fischer sometime in the mid 1860s. His close relationship with Maximilian gave him access to the mint in order to have pieces produced for his collection. We know that after Fischer was freed from prison he gave several items to Julius Augustus Skilton in gratitude for his assistance. This might explain the “culling” of the Fischer collection mentioned in the 1891 Scott catalogue, as coins and medals were surely among those gifts. George Steele Skilton did not arrive in Mexico until sometime after his graduation from Rensselaer in 1868 and he would have acquired the medals from his brother sometime after that. Further, Father Fischer died in 1887 and George Skilton left Mexico in 1886, having not added to his collection since 1881. Thus, the suggested date of 1885 is impossible.

One thing is for certain, the “proof re-strikes” are extremely rare. In most cases they are rarer than the originals, of course with the exception of the “mules” for which originals do not exist.



*Mexico City Proclamation Medal of Charles IV Proof Re-strike
Image courtesy of Heritage Auctions (HA.com)*

The above pictured medal is quite interesting in terms of what evidence it provides in regards to the proof re-strikes. First, it is struck with a plain edge rather than the normal colonial edge found on this issue. Second, it is struck in the weight of 22.19gms rather than on a standard 8 Reales planchet of 27gms which is the norm for denominated proclamations of this nature. The third and perhaps most interesting factor is that the obverse is struck over a medal of the next king. Underneath the name of “CARLOS” for Charles IV is a very clear “FERNANDO” for Ferdinand VII who would not be king until nearly two decades after this medal is dated. There is no clear evidence of overstriking on the reverse. It would seem that the initial medal was a mule – Ferdinand VII obverse with a Charles IV reverse. This error must have been noticed immediately, as only the obverse die was changed during the overstrike.



*Enlargement of the Mexico City Proclamation Medal of Charles IV Proof Re-strike
The obverse is clearly struck over a later medal of Ferdinand VII
Image courtesy of Heritage Auctions (HA.com)*

REVOLUTIONARY PAPER MONEY OF THE WEST COAST

PART I: FELIPE RIVEROS

by William Lovett

This is the first of a series of articles about the paper money issued by various revolutionary leaders along the west coast of Mexico - Felipe Riveros in Sinaloa, Alvaro Obregón and Manuel M. Diéguez in Sinaloa and Jalisco and Rafael Buelna in Tepic – as their reasons for issue and subsequent history are interrelated. Alongside Villa's two Chihuahua issues and Carranza's 'national' issues (Monclova, Ejército Constitucionalista and Gobierno Provisional) these provided the main mediums of exchange in the area whilst their ultimate fate depended on the fortunes of their begetters. With the split between Carranza and Villa the two main military commanders, Obregón and Diéguez, supported Carranza and so provision was made for the withdrawal and replacement of their notes, whilst the more urbane Riveros chose the Convention and had to throw in his lot with Villa and the intellectual Buelna broke with Obregón. Their issues, therefore, ended up worthless.

I have ignored the Sonora issues of José María Maytorena as they are covered comprehensively in <http://papermoneyofsonora.com/history/the-estado-de-sonora-notes.html>. Similarly, the complicated issues from the various opposing factions in Durango and the Huertista issue from Mazatlán will be the subjects of separate articles.

There are several lacunae in the following articles and I would appreciate any comments, corrections or suggestions.

Felipe Riveros

Felipe Riveros was elected governor of Sinaloa for the four year term beginning 27 September 1912. In February 1913 he at first acknowledged Huerta's usurpation but Huerta had him arrested and taken to Mexico City. He was tried for treason but acquitted and fled back to Sinaloa, where the rebels established themselves at San Blas. On 5 July Carranza recognized Riveros as governor of Sinaloa (though it was not legally in his power to do so Carranza was trying to establish himself as Primer Jefe) and in September 1913 Carranza passed through the north of the state on his way to Hermosillo, Sonora.

Military operations, however, were in the hands of others, such as General Iturbe. General Alvaro Obregón crossed from Sonora to Sinaloa in November 1913 and captured Culiacán on 14 November and then besieged Mazatlán, where the federal forces held out until 9 August 1914.

Decree no. 3

Riveros' first currency decree (no. 3) from San Blas on 13 July 1913 was for an issue of \$100,000 in five denominations in five series (A – E). There were to be \$20,000 in each of the series, made up of

	Number	Value
25c	10,000	\$2,500
50c	5,000	\$2,500
\$1	5,000	\$5,000
\$5	1,000	\$5,000
\$10	500	\$5,000
		<u>\$20,000</u>



The decree detailed the size (191mm x 73mm), colour of ink and text to be used and stated that the notes were provisional, while a law on paper currency was passed.



The notes are quite primitive. They carried the printed names of Riveros as governor and Felipe Dussart as secretary (even though he had already stepped down) and the signature of José A. Meza as state treasurer (Tesorero General). A month later, on 13 August, Riveros, still at San Blas, in his decree no. 8 authorised another issue of \$1,000,000 in five series (A – E). There were to

be \$200,000 in each of the series, made up of 400,000 of 5c, 400,000 of 10c, 160,000 of 25c, 80,000 of 50c, 20,000 of \$1, 4,000 of \$5 and 2,000 of \$10. However, for some reason this money was never printed.

Decree no 11

Later, on 15 September of the same year another one hundred thousand pesos of these "bearer vouchers", was authorized in San Blas. There were to be five series (F – J), each again made up of \$20,000 as in the previous series.

These were signed by governor Riveros, secretary Fidencio E. Smith and the state treasurer.



Decree no 14

Decree no. 14 of 23 October authorised another \$300,000 in Series K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, X, Y, Z.

On some notes the handwritten signatory is Matías Ayala, as Interventor, rather than Meza as interim Tesorero General.

Another 50c note refers to this decree no. 14, but is of cruder design, the seal is of the Regimiento Cosala of the Brigada Sinaloa rather than the state of Sinaloa, and the handwritten signatory is Teniente Coronel Nigromante(?). Cosala is a small town in Sinaloa, about 50 miles south east of Culiacán, whilst the Brigada Sinaloa, commanded by General Ramón F. Iturbe, was part of the Constitutionalist Cuerpo de Ejército del Noroeste. Presumably this was an extremely local issue, trying to piggyback on the acceptance of Riveros' issues.



Decree no 17

However, Riveros still wanted to issue up to \$1m and was seeking Carranza's authority. On 28 October Carranza told Riveros that he had contacted a J. Webb, a printer in Los Angeles, and told him to come to Hermosillo, Sonora to discuss the proposition. Carranza wanted to avoid any notes being seized by the American authorities, which had happened with the Monclova issue.

On 14 November 1913 the rebels had taken the state capital, Culiacán. With Carranza's blessing, decree no. 17, of 13 December, authorized another \$500,000 in 25 series (Series A bis to T bis, W, U bis, V bis, X bis, Y bis) each composed of 2,500 \$1, 2,500 \$5 and 500 \$10 notes.



These notes had the new location, Culiacán, and José G. Heredia, as secretary.

Counterfeits

As these notes are so poorly printed counterfeiting was inevitable and by 13 January 1914 Sonora authorities were refusing to accept Sinaloa notes because of counterfeits. On 30 September 1914 state treasurer Meza listed the characteristics of a counterfeit \$1 note that had appeared.

1. In genuine notes the edging is formed by a series of squares separated by white lines whilst the counterfeits notes had circles with transversal lines
2. In the bogus notes 'República' in the seal is missing an accent and the initial letter of 'Libre' is lower case
3. The typeface is different, notable at first glance in the title 'El Estado de Sinaloa'
4. The genuine notes are either decree 11 of 15 September 1913 or decree 14 of 23 October 1913 whilst the counterfeit are decree 14 of 16 September 1913
5. On the counterfeit notes the name of the Secretary is written 'Schmith' rather than 'Schmidt'
6. The genuine notes have progressive numbering, whilst the bogus notes lack numeration
7. The Treasurer General's signature is very different.

Another counterfeit is shown here. Note the poor (hand drawn) text and design and the error in the date (1914 instead of 1913) and signature.



The Meza affair

On 20 November 1914 Riveros declared himself a Villista and left Culiacán to establish his government in San Blas. On 8 March 1915 state treasurer Meza was arrested for embezzlement, as since 25 November he had supposedly put into circulation a large quantity of notes without authorization. On 25 March the new provisional governor, Manuel Rodríguez Gutiérrez, decreed that these notes should be identified and revalidated by the Treasury General within two months so as not to prejudice their holders. Without this they would not be acceptable. On 15 June this period was extended for another two months, until 25 July. On 6 August the Treasury General produced a list of the notes that it had revalidated:

Number		Series	Value	Total
4,017	25c	Y Bis	\$1,004.25	\$1,004.25
3,086	50c	Y "	\$1,543.00	\$1,543.00
2,130	\$1	B "	\$2,130.00	
1,688		C "	\$1,688.00	
1,144		H "	\$1,144.00	
1,538		E "	\$1,538.00	
1,332		D "	\$1,332.00	
1,204		K "	\$1,204.00	\$9,036.00
577	\$5	P "	\$2,885.00	
585		Q "	\$2,925.00	
620		R "	\$3,100.00	
400		S "	\$2,000.00	
307		V "	\$1,535.00	
979		W "	\$4,895.00	\$17,340.00
1	\$10	H "	\$10.00	
320		U "	\$3,200.00	
330		N "	\$3,300.00	
253		Y "	\$2,530.00	
67		T "	\$670.00	
458		X "	\$4,580.00	\$14,290.00
				<u>\$43,213.25</u>

The period for revalidation was extended again until 21 October 1915.

Presumably this refers to some dispute between the former Convencionista regime and the new rulers but how were the unauthorized notes distinguished and what was the validation?

Decree no. 1: the definitive issue

In January 1915 Riveros wrote to the American Bank Note Company, New York for a quote to replace his provisional issues with a definitive issue (as Maytorena was doing in Sonora). The ABNC replied with quotations for 1,225,000 notes in five lower denominations and 87,000 notes in three higher denominations, but no other correspondence is on file. On 22 February 1915, in decree no. 1, Riveros had revised the quantities:

	Series	each	total
25c	A-J	100-40100	100,000
50c	A-J	100-40100	200,000
\$1	A-J	100-40100	400,000
\$5	A-J	1000-9000	400,000
\$10	A-J	1000-10000	900,000
\$20	A-J	10000-17500	1,500,000
\$50	A-J	10000-12000	1,000.00
\$100	A-J	10000-10500	500,000
			<u>\$5,000,000</u>

The signatures of the governor, Riveros, and Secretario General, José G. Heredia, were to appear in facsimile on all values and the signatures of the Tesorero General, Matías Ayala, and Interventor, Ignacio Bermúdez, in facsimile on the three lower values and handwritten on the \$5 to \$100. The face had the images of Benito Juárez and Francisco Madero, and the reverse an allegory of Justice and Liberty, crowned by the national seal with a view of Culiacán on the left and of Mazatlán on the right. A million pesos of this issue were to be used to redeem the provisional notes of decrees 3, 11, 14 and 17.

Riveros had these notes printed by Britton & Rey, a well-established lithography firm located in San Francisco, California, probably because of cost and a quicker delivery though Britton & Rey had produced a prodigious body of early California town views and so were well-suited to engrave panoramas of Culiacán and Mazatlán.



Decree no. 2

Because of the pressing need for more 5c and 10c notes on 15 April Riveros also authorised an issue of \$40,000 of the former and \$60,000 of the latter, both serie A. Again, the decree specified the design of the notes. They were to be of forced acceptance up to \$10 in a single payment.



Luis Herrera

In late 1915 the Constitutionalist Luis Herrera, General Jefe of the Brigada 'Benito Juárez', was isolated from other Carrancista forces and needed to improvise paper currency to pay his troops until he met up with the forces under J. B. Treviño. Since he had captured a batch of \$80,000 of Riveros' notes, he reused them and on 29 November, in Parral, southern Chihuahua, included them in a list of issues that were legal tender, provided that they had been revalidated with the Brigade seal and the signature of either himself or Coronel R. Dominguez, his chief of staff (Jefe de Estado Mayor).



Sinaloa issue revalidated by General Luis Herrera or Coronel R. Dominguez

By April 1916 merchants in Parral were asking for these notes to be exchanged. A report was sent to the Secretaría de Hacienda, who replied to the governor of Chihuahua, C. Enríquez, that the notes of all the issues authorized by Carranza had to be handed in to the Jefaturas de Haciendas and Administraciones Principales de Timbre.

Validity

On 22 February 1914 Carranza, from his headquarters at Nogales, Sonora, made the issues that had been issued, with his approval, by the Constitutionalist governments in Sonora, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Durango, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas forced circulation throughout the territory dominated by the Constitutionalist government, and the Sinaloa notes were accepted, though with difficulty, in neighbouring states (note the Guaymas, Sonora revalidation on the \$10 note illustrated on page 19).

After the Carranza-Villa split, the Riveros' issues continued to be listed by the Villistas among the notes of forced circulation, but were disowned by the Carrancistas and Carranza never made any provision for any sort of retirement, despite the fact that he had given his blessing to the earlier issues.

STUDY OF MEXICO'S PRE-LIBERTAD SILVER ONZAS (1949, 1978-1980)

by Scott Doll

Introduction

The silver Libertad is one of the most popular bullion issues from the Mexico City mint and has been released for sale every year since 1982 in various sizes ranging from 1/20 of an ounce up to one kilogram. It may be a surprise to some, but the Libertads were not the first silver bullion issue from the Mexico City mint. There is a predecessor one ounce silver bullion coin simply known as an "Onza" which was minted back in 1949 for only one brief year. It was then resurrected for a short three year period starting in 1978 and ending in 1980. The term Onza as the identifier for these issues is easily derived from the legend which states UNA ONZA TROY. The term stuck over time and became the de facto name referenced by most collectors. With that said, the Mexican public gave them another name of "Tejo" which in Spanish means a piece of silver or gold. Whatever the case, Onzas or Tejos have become more popular over time with the public and collectors alike and arguably they have proven they can hold their own in popularity and acceptance when compared to the Libertads.

The story of the 1949 silver Onza actually began much earlier in 1936 when the Mexico City mint issued a commemorative medal which depicts as part of the obverse design a coining press used by the mint during the early part of the eighteenth century. This particular medal was issued in limited quantity in copper, silver and gold to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the Mexico City mint. Eleven years later in 1947 the mint used the same coining press design on the obverse of a crown-size one ounce silver pattern. The design for the reverse displayed a suspended balance scale which is a popular design feature on other Mexico 19th and 20th century coins. This particular coin was never released to the public with that date, but two years later in 1949 it was used in a similar silver bullion issue.



1936 Casa de Moneda Medal in Copper (enlarged)
Celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the Mexico City Mint

The year 1949 was a very busy time at the mint due to the devaluation of the peso which occurred during that year. The mint had been steadily decreasing the amount of silver used in the regular coin issues since the early part of the twentieth century and 1949 saw yet another decrease. By this time the public was missing their large silver coins and the mint somewhat obliged demand that year when the Banco de México requested that a crown-size coin with no denomination be struck in silver. This in turn satisfied public demand since it allowed them to purchase and store these large silver coins. The government was also satisfied since they were able to sell off large supplies of stored silver. The Mexico City mint had yet another purpose in mind for this issue as they were looking to increase revenue by highlighting the high quality and past performance of the mint to show other countries that they were capable of supporting their minting needs. By all accounts, the Mexican people, the mint (Casa de Moneda) and the government all benefited with this first year silver issue.

Besides the coining press and the hanging balance scales, the other details of the coin highlighted the mint with the obverse legend of CASA DE MONEDA DE MEXICO (Mexico City mint), as well as the high silver content with the reverse legend of UNA ONZA TROY = 480 GRANOS DE PLATA PURA (one troy ounce of 480 grains of pure silver). The gross weight is somewhat more than an ounce due to other metals, predominately copper, contained within the planchet. The fineness of .925 (sterling silver) is higher than that used for any circulating Mexican coin at the time, therefore the Onzas were popular with anyone who wanted to buy and hold silver bullion. The reported mintage for the 1949 Onza is 1,000,000 pieces.



1949 Silver UNA ONZA TROY (enlarged)

The original sale price in 1949 for these silver Onzas were reported to be the equivalent to \$1 (US) and although this particular Onza design was minted for only one year, they were actively sold by banks in Mexico and other financial

organizations around the world from 1949 up to 1961 when the price of silver soared, which caused the Mexican banks to suspend sales.

1978 Silver Onza

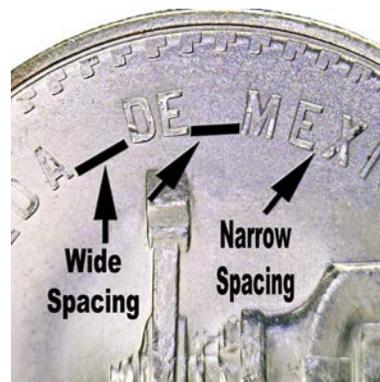
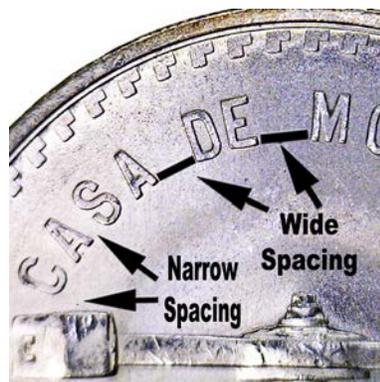
The mint resurrected the silver bullion Onza and began minting them once again in 1978 after a very lengthy absence of 29 years. The design of the 1978 issue is basically the same as that seen on the 1949 issue with the exception of the obverse and reverse legends. In fact, the obverse legend in 1978 has two distinct varieties. One legend variety has a wide spacing between the words *CASA DE MONEDA DE MEXICO* and narrow spacing between the letters while the other variety has a narrow spacing between the words and wide spacing between the letters. The specific mintage is not known for each specific legend variety, however the total mintage for the 1978 Onza is 280,000 which is significantly less than the 1949 issue.



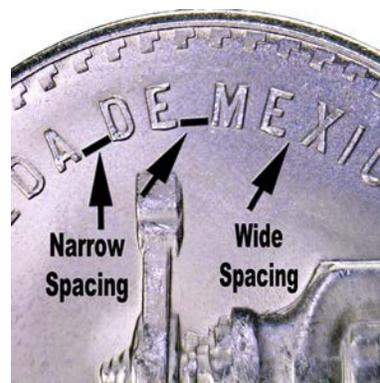
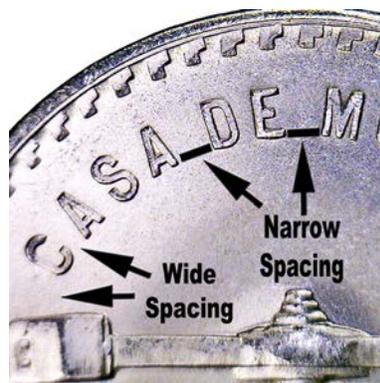
1978 Silver UNA ONZA TROY – Type 1 (enlarged)



1978 Silver UNA ONZA TROY – Type 2 (enlarged)



Type 1 – Wide spacing between the words and narrow spacing between the letters



Type 2 – Narrow spacing between the words and wide spacing between the letters

1979 Silver Onza

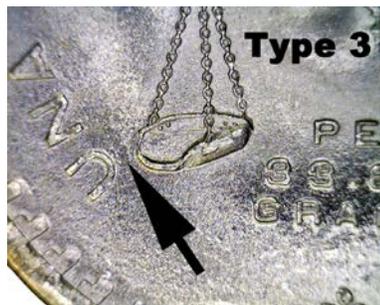
The mint continued with the silver Onzas in 1979 with little change to the overall design with the exception on the reverse legend with the positioning of the left pan of the hanging balance scale. One variety (Type 3) points to "U" in UNA. The other variety (Type 4) points to the space between the "U" and the "N" in UNA. The specific mintage is not known for each variety; however the total mintage for the 1979 Onza is 4,508,000 which is significantly more than prior years combined.



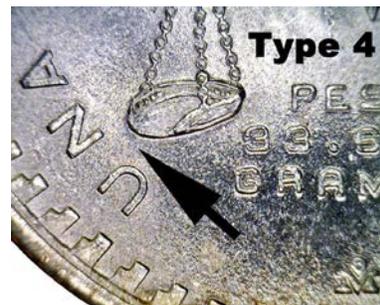
1979 Silver UNA ONZA TROY – Type 3 (enlarged)



1979 Silver UNA ONZA TROY – Type 4 (enlarged)



Type 3 –
pan points to
"U"



Type 4 –
pan points between
"U" and "N"



Type 3 Obverse Error

There is a die defect error worth noting for the 1979 Type 3 issue. This error shows a dot "." before the date which is very similar to the popular Mexico dot "." 1954 brass 5 centavos coin which is also the result of a die error.

1980 Silver Onza

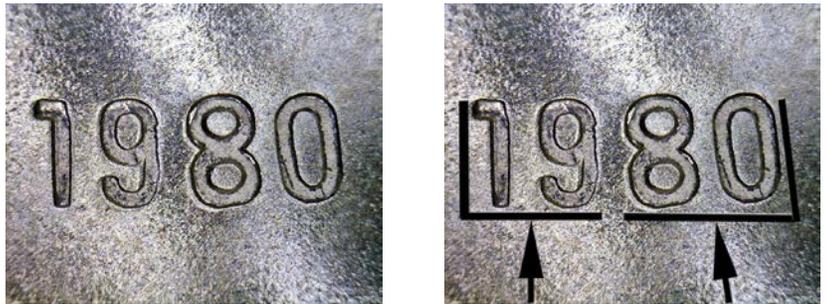
The final year for the Onza with the coining press design came in 1980. Although the overall design is basically the same as prior years, 1980 has something not seen with prior Onzas – overdates. There are at least four known overdate varieties, albeit some are very faint and arguably could be attributed to other things. All the same, these have been generally accepted by collectors as overdates and collected as such. 1980 also has several other date varieties to include slanting digits and high and low digits. The total mintage for 1980 is 6,104,000 which is once again more than all previous years combined.



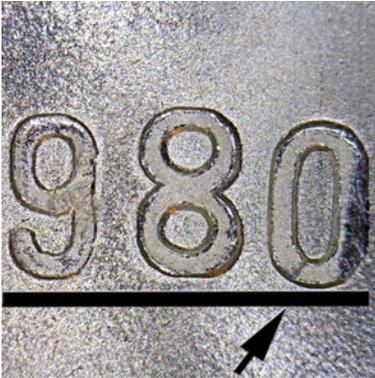
1980 Silver UNA ONZA TROY – Type 5 (enlarged)

Example #1 Date Alignment Error

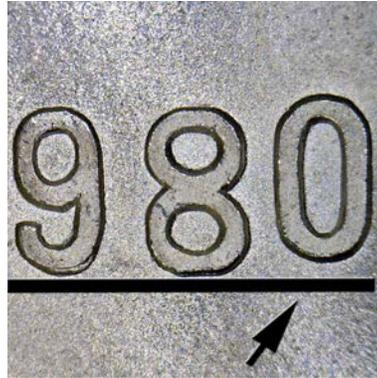
There is several known date alignment errors in the 1980 issue. Example #1 shows a vertical “19” and a slightly slanting “80” in the date. The “0” in the date is also slightly higher compared to other digits.



Example #1
1980 Onza with a vertical “19” & slanting “80” & high “0”



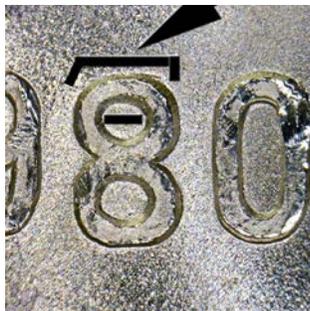
Example #2.1
1980 Onza with a low “0”



Example #2.2
1980 Onza with a high “0”

Examples #2.1 & #2.2 Date Alignment Errors

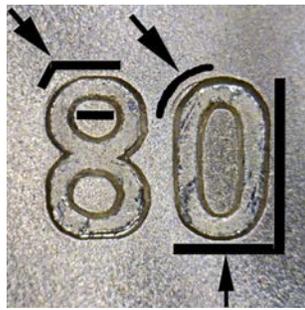
Examples #2.1 & #2.2 highlights two different Onza date varieties. Example #2.1 shows an Onza with a low “0” which is also slightly slanting to the right. Example #2.2 shows a high vertical “0” (no slanting) in the date. All other date digits on both examples are evenly aligned and for the most part vertical.



Examples #3 Overdate Error

Example #3 shows a very faint “8” over a “7” overdate. The top horizontal portion of the “7” can be seen across the top of the “8”, as well as across the top inner curve of the “8”. This bar is very faint and not easily discernible on the scan, but can be seen on an actual coin using a magnifier.

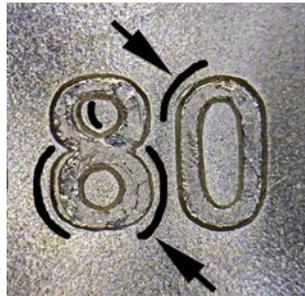
Example #3
1980/70 overdate - “8” over “7”



Examples #4 Overdate Error

Example #4 shows a 1980/79 overdate. The description for the "8" over "7" overdate is basically the same as Example #3. The "0" over "9" overdate can only be seen on a very small area at the upper outer left curve of the "0". The "0" digit is vertical and evenly aligned with the other digits of the date.

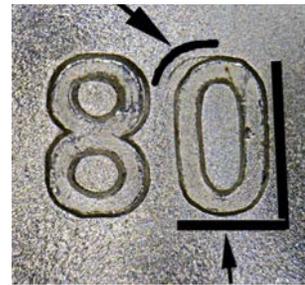
Example #4 - 1980/79 overdate - "80" over "79" with small overdate area



Example #5 Overdate & Doubling Error

Example #5 shows a 1980/9 overdate which is similar to Example #4 except the "8" over the "7" overdate is missing on this variety. This overdate example also shows a doubling on the "8" which is visible on the inner top portion of the digit, as well as the bottom side curves.

Example #5 - 1980/9 overdate - "0" over "9" with small overdate area & doubling on the "8" in the date



Example #6 Overdate Error

Example #6 shows a 1980/9 overdate which is similar to the previous 1980/9 overdate examples (#4 & #5) except this overdate covers a somewhat larger area on the coin surface. The "0" is also slightly slanting to the left compared to previous 1980/9 overdate example where the digit is more upright.

Example #6 - 1980/9 overdate - "0" over "9" with large overdate area

Scarcity and Summary

Overall, these Onzas are by and large common due to generally high mintages (approximately 12 million were minted with four different dates). With that said, some of the varieties listed can be a challenge to find and thus considered somewhat scarce. It is also important to note that the Onza varieties outlined within this article do not constitute a complete listing of the varieties since I am most certain there are more varieties waiting to be discovered and documented.

The values for the Onza generally fluctuate with the market price of silver bullion (currently around \$20). Most Onzas on the market today can be easily purchased at reasonable prices through online auctions and at coins shows. Since the Onzas are normally seen with surface or bag marks, expect to pay a slight premium for a Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) coin with minimal marks.

A high grade, non-overdate or other non-date variety Onza in today's market will generally sell for spot silver plus a 25-35% markup. However, there are some exceptions to this opinion. The first year Onza (1949) in BU will sell for about 2.5-3 x silver spot price, the various 1980 overdates and other date varieties will go anywhere 1.5-2 x silver spot price. The 1978 Type 2 Onza, which can be a challenge to find, will also go for approximately 1.5-2 x silver spot price.

Since many dealers do not take the time to classify the varieties within this Onza series, you might be surprised when you are able to pick up most dates and varieties for the same price as one of the common Onzas. A complete set of high grade Onzas outlined within this article should be able to be purchased for not a whole lot more money above silver bullion value as long as you are patient and look for the bargains. Good luck and happy hunting!

Please send any additional information, comments, questions or suggestions you have on this article to Scott Doll at rscottdoll@sbcglobal.net.

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LIMA, PERU, COB 8 ESCUDOS, 1701H, PHILIP V
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MEXICO, COB 8 ESCUDOS, 1709J, POSSIBLE "ROYAL" PRESENTATION
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BRAZIL, SERRO FRIO GOLD INGOT #114, DOM PEDRO II, 1832
SOLD FOR \$218,500



MEXICO CITY, MEXICO, COB 8 ESCUDOS, 1714J, ROYAL DIES
SOLD FOR \$49,000



MEDELLIN, COLOMBIA, 5 PESOS, 1863-M, ENCAPSULATED NGC MS-62
SOLD FOR \$27,600



GOLD CROSS WITH EMERALDS FROM 1715 FLEET
SOLD FOR \$43,200



BRAZIL (BAHIA MINT), 3200 REISS, JOAO V, 1750-B, ENCAPSULATED NGC AU 50
SOLD FOR \$49,900

ATOCHA LONG, ORNATE, GOLD CHAIN, 822 LINKS
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SHIPWRECKS AND MEXICAN COINS (Part II)

by Daniel Sedwick

Spanish 1715 Fleet: As I mentioned in Part I of my article, this is probably THE most important shipwreck for Mexican coins, as it yielded over a hundred thousand Mexican coins, both silver and gold, and filled in many years' worth of dates and types that were previously unknown.

It all started with the War of Spanish Succession (1701-14), which delayed the annual treasure shipment from the New World to Spain for several years. The result, in 1715, was a combined Fleet of 12 ships that were overloaded and overly delayed into the hurricane season. When the inevitable storm hit, on 30 July, all the ships of the Fleet were wrecked, blown onto the shores and reefs of the east coast of Florida. Even after somewhat successful salvage efforts by the Spanish, some 14 million pesos of official cargo were still missing, with probably an equal amount of contraband also lost.

In the late 1950s a local named Kip Wagner found an 8 reales on the beach during a hurricane and decided to trace the source. With the help of a 1774 map he discovered that the coin came from the Spanish 1715 Fleet, and he went on to locate parts of the wrecksites on the reefs, mainly by flying over in a small plane and spotting the ship-shaped jumbles of ballast stones. With a handful of associates he formed the Real Eight Corporation and recovered many, many coins. These coins were sold at auction throughout the 1960s and 1970s, after which Real Eight disbanded and the various wrecksites (leased from the State of Florida) ended up in the hands of Mel Fisher, who sub-leased the sites while his company searched the Keys for the ostensibly richer *Atocha* shipwreck. Finds continue to be made by subcontractors, as recently as this summer, in relatively small amounts compared to the Real Eight days. Even the beach itself yields 1715 Fleet coins and artifacts when storms come through.



1715 Fleet cob 8E 1714J Royal dies NGC MS 63
(Sedwick Auction #14 lot 2)

Spanish 1733 Fleet: Like the 1715 Fleet, this Fleet was combined and delayed, amounted to many ships sunk, and was contemporaneously salvaged by the Spanish. In fact it was very well salvaged, to the extent that comparatively little was left for modern salvagers from the mid-1900s until 1990, when the Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary was established, making the wrecksites off-limits to salvagers. Now this is a case where the government trouble is not archeological or historical but environmental. Most of the modern coin finds from the 1733 Fleet were cob 8 and 4 reales, many with clear dates from 1730 to 1733 despite sometimes heavy corrosion. Watch out for the gold cobs, however, as practically all of the Mexican gold cobs certified as being from the 1733 Fleet are actually fakes made in the 1960s!



1715 Fleet cob 8R 1715J
(Sedwick Auction #6 lot 466)

The coins from the 1715 Fleet include every date and denomination from the Mexican mint from the late 1690s to 1715, including Royals. I like to use the 1715 Fleet as a paradigm of quality as well, for most of its gold cobs are in fact better than their counterparts that spent the last 300 years *above* the waves. At NGC, for example, all of the Mint State grades up to and including MS 67 are represented among the 1715 Fleet finds. That is right—MS 67! A large amount of the silver coins are exceptional quality as well, including many full dates and rarities.

I will leave the topic of the 1715 Fleet with this interesting observation: It is probably the only wreck for which there are a sizable number of people who collect only coins from that wreck.



1733 Fleet cob 8R 1732
(Sedwick Auction #14 lot 507)



Rooswijk (1739) cob 8R 1726(D)
(Sedwick Auction #14 lot 519)

Vliegenthart (1735) and Rooswijk (1739): When it comes to cobs, the finds from these wrecks are virtually identical, as most are minimally corroded and with clear dates from 1730 to 1733 in the denominations of 8 and 4 reales, in addition to a few rare dates in the 1720s. No Mexican gold came from either of these Dutch wrecks, however.

Klippes (1733-1734)

In the years 1733 and 1734 there was a brief experiment in 8 reales and 4 reales only which involved machine-striking shield-type designs onto hand-cut planchets. Without getting too involved in the subject, suffice to say that these ephemeral issues are limited, generally well struck and beautiful, and undeniably augmented in number by the salvage of several important shipwrecks. The Spanish 1733 Fleet mentioned above is one, but the bigger sources tend to be the Dutch wrecks of *Rooswijk* (1739) and *Hollandia* (1743). Because these coins are machine struck, quality of strike is a bit more predictable than for cobs, and therefore grade is a much bigger factor in value. While most shipwreck specimens are at least a little bit corroded, the ones that are not corroded look fully Mint State and actually surpass the non-salvage specimens in price, especially with modern methods of chemically cleaning and retoning shipwreck coins.



Rooswijk (1739) klippe 8R 1733MF
(Sedwick Auction #14 lot 524)

Pillar dollars

While Mexican cobs started the trend, it was not until the "pillar dollars" of the 1730s to the 1770s that Mexican coinage became a true coin-of-the-realm worldwide. Even the early United States specified that "Spanish milled dollars" were legal tender until 1857. It is little wonder, then, that Mexican pillar dollars have been found in great quantity from the shipwrecks of many nations, particularly Spanish, Dutch, French and British shipwrecks.



1733 Fleet pillar 8R 1733F, mintmark M.X
(Sedwick Auction #14 lot 946)

The design of these coins is beautiful and unique to the New World, as it was only made at Spanish American mints, showing the Pillars of Hercules around two globes above the date on one side and simplified arms on the other side, a design reminiscent of the Charles and Joanna coins from two centuries prior. Like the earlier coins, there is ambiguity about which side is more important, as the more mundane arms side is technically the obverse by virtue of its legend. While certain errors and overdates and minor varieties command a premium, the whole date-run is easily collectible, but not without the inclusion of several wreck coins, in particular the first two dates, 1732 and 1733 (the latter also with mintmark M.X). I think it is fair to say the majority of the known specimens of these first two dates in the 8 reales come from either the 1733 Fleet or the three Dutch wrecks *Rooswijk* (1739), *Hollandia* (1743) and *Reijgersdaal* (1747). The British wrecks *Dodington* (1755) and *Tilbury* (1757) are also known for their Mexican pillar-dollar yields, as is also the French wreck *Auguste* (1761).

Busts (portraits)

While there is no shortage of Mexican bust (or portrait) 8 reales from the 1770s to the 1810s on the market, the fact is that thousands of the available coins are from shipwrecks. Perhaps the most prevalent shipwreck bust 8 reales right now are from the *Cazador* (1784), the great majority of which are dated 1783, assayer FF; but some rare and earlier issues were also found, including a few examples of the error date 1872, which previously was not known to exist except in archival citations. (Also it is interesting to note that the 1783FM assayer variety is absent from the *Cazador* finds, which indicates that that striking took place later in the year.) Two similar but much smaller sources, with a wider



Cazador (1784) bust 2R 1783FF
(Sedwick Auction #9 lot 977)



"Coconut wreck" (1810) bust 8R 1807TH
(Sedwick Auction #14 lot 614)

distribution of dates, are an unidentified ca.-1781 wreck in the Chesapeake and the *Hartwell* (1787). Later coins come from the *Cabalva* (1818) and from a series of early-1800s wrecks that are not fully identified: one from 1810 off the east coast of Florida, one from the same period in deep water off Bermuda ("Coconut wreck") and one from around 1811 off Cadiz, Spain.

Bust-type gold tends to be elusive from shipwrecks, with the exception of a few pieces from the 1733 Fleet and some unidentified early-1800s wrecks. Interestingly, though, there is one wreck that would have flooded the market with hundreds of thousands of bust silver and gold coins prior to 1804 — the Spanish ship *Mercedes*, sunk in 1804 in deep water off Spain — but the salvagers who brought up

the coins (Odyssey) lost their legal battle with Spain over the find, and now all the coins reside in a museum in Spain, probably never to be seen in any meaningful way, let alone sold.

This is a good time to bring up the archeological issue again, for it is not just about who controls the salvage — it is also about ownership of recovered treasure. Today the trend is toward disallowing private ownership of any shipwreck finds, which to me is a clear case of "throwing the baby out with the bathwater." It is understandable that archeologists and government bodies would like to preserve history and prevent looting, but the fact is that many items found on shipwrecks have little or no importance archeologically, and also many of them are not unique, even within their own wreck. Coins are a great example, for in any given treasure wreck you will have thousands of silver coins that are all identical. Does the local museum need more than a few representative pieces to tell the story? Also I question how much interest



1733 Fleet bust 8E 1733F
(Sedwick Auction #6 lot 114)

governments and state museums really have in shipwreck treasure. The State of Florida, for example, has one of the world's best collections of gold cobs, by virtue of divisions with the salvage-lease holders on its coasts; but anyone who visits the museum in Tallahassee can tell you these coins are not on public display, and even legitimate scholars have limited access at best. The fact is that sales of coins and ingots and some non-unique artifacts are what make salvage possible in the first place, and you can believe it is expensive: Odyssey once told me they spend \$35,000 per day salvaging in deep water! Does anyone really think that governments will spend that kind of money on shipwreck salvage? The record is against it: In 2000 the government of Spain won the rights to the shipwrecks *Juno* and *La Galga* off the coast of Virginia against a salvage company that had a lease with the state and had already begun salvage. Guess what? Spain has not done a single thing to salvage the ships since then. Funny enough, the Spanish government does not seem to have a problem spending money on legal costs, but only because it has proven to be a favorable gamble for them. It is a classic manifestation of the biblical Pharisees or the "dog-in-the-manger" fable, wherein the dog, who

does not eat horse food, spitefully keeps the horse from entering the manger to eat! Anyway, I can tell you what will happen if governments around the world do not work together with commercial salvage firms: Coins will still come up, but their provenance will be lost forever.

Mexican Republic coins

The final type of Mexican coins recovered in any quantity from shipwrecks: the cap-and-rays issues of the mid- to late 1800s. Like their predecessors these coins circulated around the world but by their time shipping was far less susceptible to piracy and incompetent navigation or weather prediction. Also the shipping of these coins tended to have more of a trade or military flavor as opposed to simple transfer of wealth, and of course they had nothing to do with Spanish or Dutch fleets. Where we see these coins is primarily from US shipwrecks or from ships involving trade with the US, and there are a couple whose cap-and-rays coins cross my desk with some regularity: the *SS Crescent City* (1871) and the *USS Charleston* (1899).

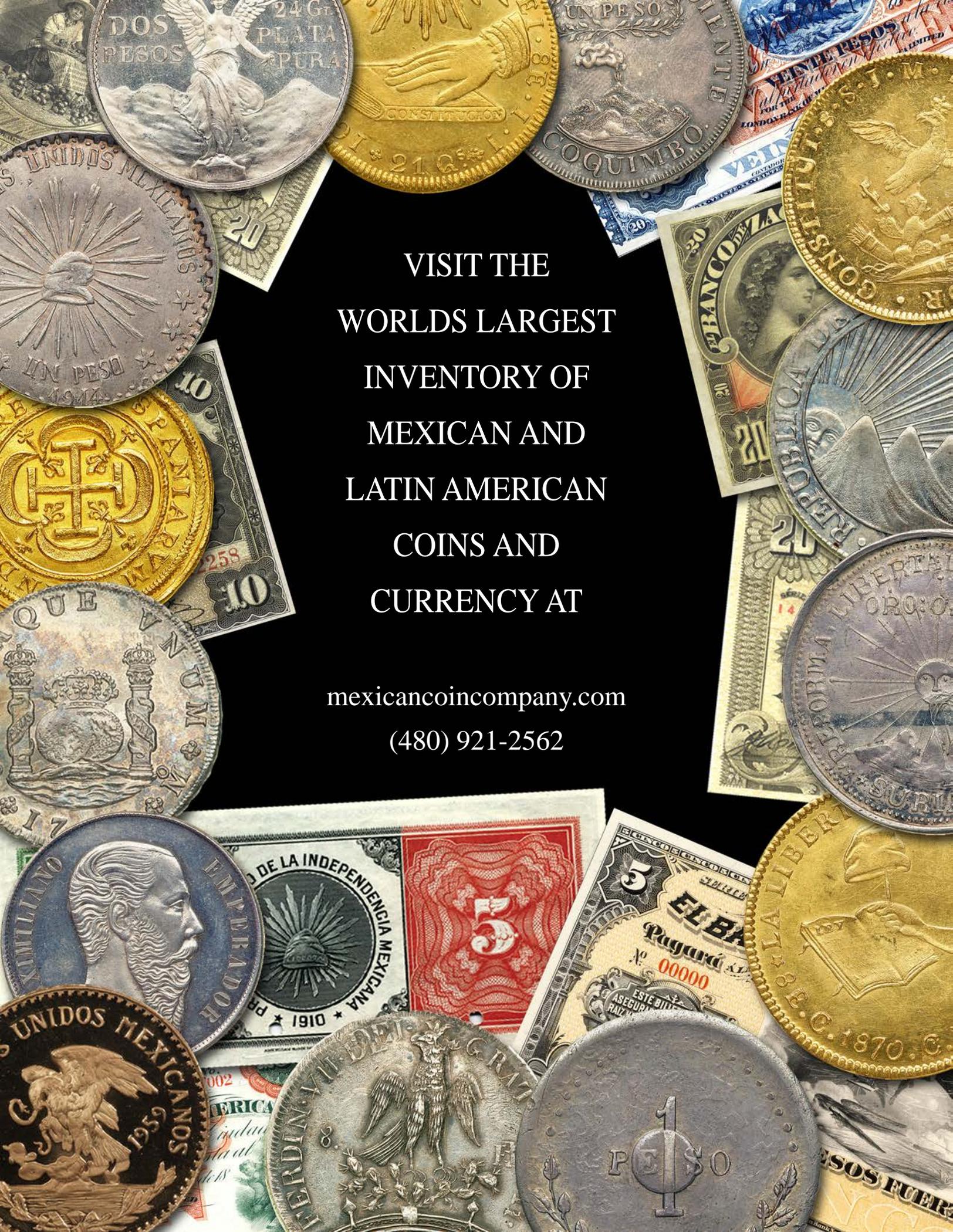


SS Crescent City (1871) cap-and-rays 8R 1833PiJS
(Sedwick Auction #14 lot 1295)

The *Charleston* gives me one more anecdote to vent about governmental intrusion, for it was a US Navy ship, and US Naval policy is that their shipwrecks and everything inside them belong to the US Navy in perpetuity (Spain and other countries have a similar policy). The idea is that any military ships are soldiers' graves, even if no troops were lost on the wrecks. In the case of the *Charleston*, the US government was powerless because the coins were looted and distributed before any legal action could be taken. But the opposite happened when a US Navy wreck known as the *USS Yorktown* of 1839 was legitimately salvaged by a commercial company (Arqueonautas) under the aegis of a local government (Cape Verde Islands) and its contents sold in a public forum (Sotheby's in London), only after which the US Navy threatened legal action and claimed ownership of all the coins and artifacts. The auction house recovered what it could and gave it to the US Navy, leaving the consignor (the salvagers) empty-handed. How upside-down is that? Basically the system rewards the wildcat diver while penalizing the legitimate tradesmen. Something needs to change.

The evidence is quite clear that shipwrecks are important sources for Mexican coins, and therefore we numismatists must work toward changing the worldwide movement to curtail shipwreck salvage and de-privatize shipwreck finds. It is ironic, but proven, that more coins and knowledge hit the field WITHOUT government involvement in shipwreck salvage, the exact opposite of what archeologists and bureaucratic opponents of shipwreck salvage hope to achieve. I believe there is a happy medium, a compromise that still exists in some countries that currently work constructively with salvagers: the local government selects important pieces (usually artifacts) and a cross-section of the numismatic finds in return for its oversight and protection, not just from poachers and interlopers but from other governments that hope to claim a part of their past without taking any initiative to recover it in the first place. The fact is that many more Mexican numismatic treasures are still out there, waiting to be found. Let's make that possible!

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