

***Coins of Charles & Johanna
Struck in the First Mint of
The Americas in Mexico City
1536-1572***

**Presented by Clyde Hubbard
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BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT C&J COINS OF MEXICO 1536-1572

1. Decree of May 11, 1535 authorized the establishment of the Mexico Mint only.
2. First Viceroy to Mexico, Antonio de Mendoza, arrived in Veracruz November, 1535.
3. Dies for coins were made by punching elements of the design. Dies were not engraved.
4. First letter punches were of Gothic type. When broken they were replaced by Latin type.
5. Early series of coins with no waves under pillars were struck years 1536-1542.
6. Silver coins of denominations $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, 2, 3 and 4 reales were made.
7. Metal alloy was approximately 93% silver with 7% copper.
8. Coins bore a single initial of an assayer to guarantee correct silver percentage.
9. Assayer initials R, G, F or P appear on early series coins.
10. Late series coins 1543-1572 with waves under pillars bear assayer initials G, A, R, S, L or O. Denominations were $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, 2 and 4 reales.
11. The mintmark m or M with or without o indicates made in the Mexico mint.
12. Coin inscriptions are in Latin.
13. Copper coins of 2 and 4 Maravedis were made. 34 maravedis = one real.
14. Coining of gold was specifically prohibited. Gold coins were first made in Mexico in 1679.
15. Coins were undated. Dates first show on Mexican colonial coins of Philip III, in 1607.
16. Blanks were of fairly regular thickness and form. C&J coins are NOT COBS.
17. Weight of individual coins was not specified. Sixty-seven reales were to be made from one mark of silver.
18. One Mark was equivalent to 230 grams so a new one real coin should weigh 3.432 grams.
19. Coins were hammer-struck with no fixed relation of obverse and reverse.
20. The fixed bottom die was the obverse which took longer to make. This was the shield side.
21. The hand-held top die was the reverse or pillar side. It broke more frequently.
22. All official positions in the mint were held by Spaniards through purchase.
23. All physical labor of coinage was performed by so-called Indians and black slaves.
24. The Mint in Mexico City was the first of several Spanish American mints.
25. All coins of Mo mintmark were made there from 1536-1809.
26. Branch mints in New Spain made coins from 1810-1822 because of the war for independence turmoil.
27. A high percentage of Mexican silver coins was exported either to Spain or to other parts of the empire.
28. C&J coins were still circulating in Costa Rica as late as 1846.
29. The Coinage of the First Mint of the Americas at Mexico City 1536-1572 by R.I. Nesmith is a recommended reference book. First published in 1955 by ANS, it has been reprinted twice.
30. Kent Ponterio has suggested that the 1572 date is wrong for the changing of C&J coinage to Philip II. However, I disagree..A document of June 28, 1570 shows a payment to Juan Paulo Proxini for new dies and punches to replace the pillar types used in Mexico and Peru.
31. Kent has had access to numerous hoard coins enabling him to contribute new information about the Charles and Johanna coinage. We hope he continues with these studies.

DOÑA JUANA OF CASTILE, LEON, ARAGON & SICILY

Daughter of Ferdinand V and Isabel I,
Catholic Kings. Born November 6, 1479,
Died April 12, 1555, in Tordesillas.

PHILIP I, ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA

Son of Emperor Maximilian I of Germany
And his wife Mary of Burgundy. Born
July 22, 1478, in Bruges, died November
25, 1506 in Burgos, Spain.

Their children were:

LEONOR, born November 15, 1498.

First married March 24, 1518 to King
Manuel I of Portugal, widower of her
aunts Isabel and Mary. Second marriage:
to King Francis I of France.

CHARLES, born February 24, 1500
in Ghent; died September 21, 1558
in Yuste Monastery, Spain.

King of Castile, Leon, Aragon and
Sicily from January 23, 1516 to
January 16, 1556. Emperor of Germany
from July 10, 1519 to January 16, 1556.

ISABEL, born July 15, 1501 in
Brussels, died in 1525. Married King
Christian II of Denmark.

FERDINAND, born March 10, 1503
in Alcala de Henares, died July 25, 1564.
in Vienna. Married in 1521 to Ana,
daughter of Ladislas VI; was King of
Hungary and Bohemia. Became
Ferdinand I by the abdication of his
brother Charles I of Spain and V of
Germany, in Brussels, January, 1556.
He was also Emperor of Germany
from 1556 to 1564.

MARY, born September, 1505 in
Brussels. Married in 1522 to King
Luis II of Hungary. When widowed,
governed in the name of her
brother Charles I, the States of
Flanders in 1525.



Queen of Castile and Leon from
November 26, 1504 to April 12,
1555. Queen of Aragon and
Sicily from January 23, 1516 to
April 12, 1555.



King of Castile and Leon from
June 27, 1506 to November 25,
1506.

CATHERINE, born January 14, 1507, in Torquemada, died February 12, 1578, in Lisbon. On February 5, 1525, married King John III of Portugal, who was the son of King Manuel I and his second wife, Mary, daughter of the Catholic Majesties.

Royal families arranged marriages among their children for the sole purpose of maintaining or improving positions of power. An ideal matrimonial tie could result in territorial aggrandizement and in having an additional ally in case of war. The principal protagonists in the early part of sixteenth century Europe were kings Francis I of France, Henry VIII of England and Charles I of Spain.



Identified as Charles V, he was only Charles I, King of Spain, when this portrait was made. He is seen wearing the Order of the Golden Fleece. Born in Ghent and educated by tutors, Charles spoke no Spanish at the time of his first visit to Spain at age 17.

1. Charles V at the Time of his First Visit to Spain (1517)

By Bernard van Orley

Paris, Musée du Louvre



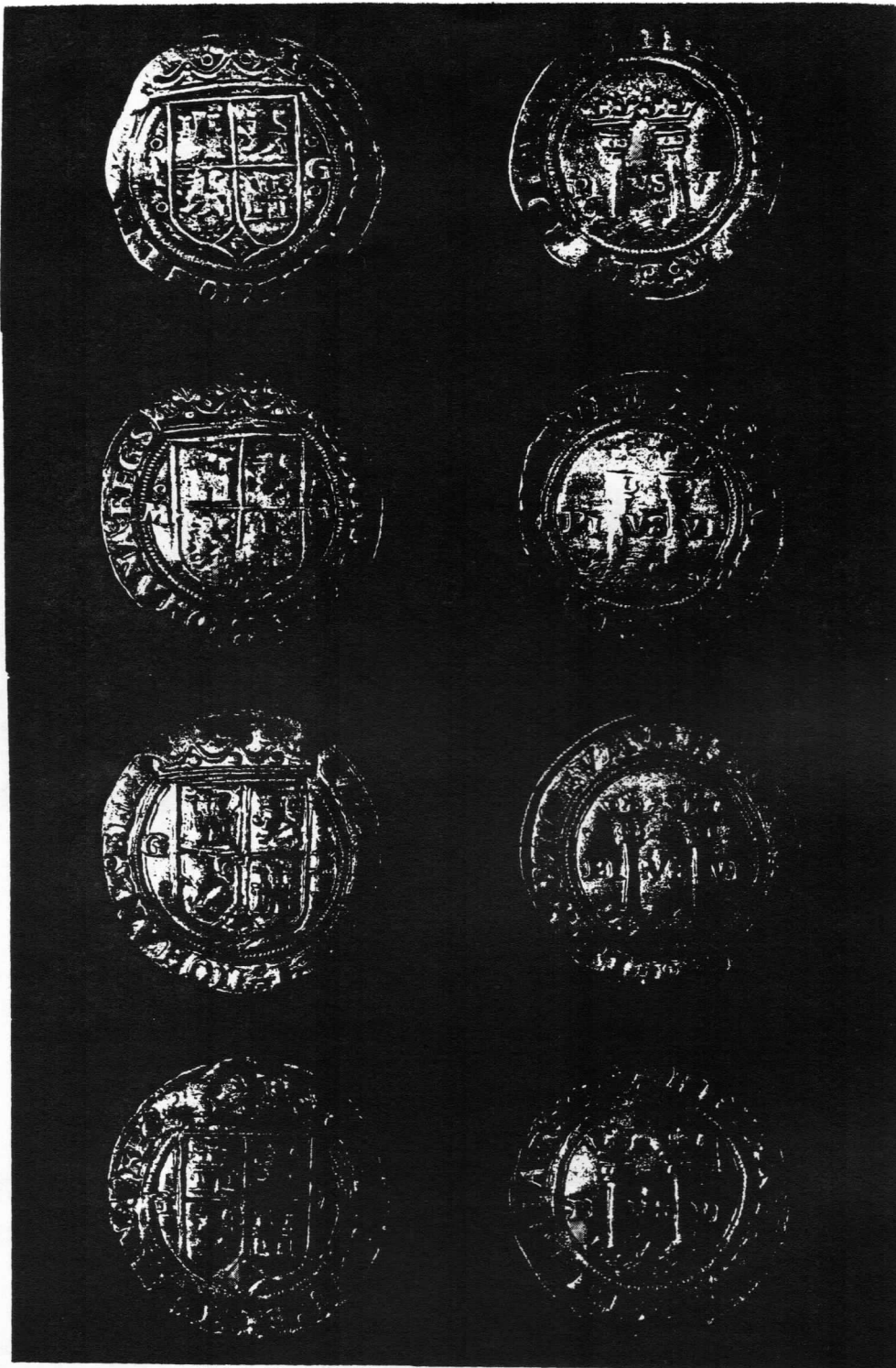
CHARLES & JOHANNA EARLY SERIES 1 REAL 1536-1542

1. Assayer R Nesmith 3b
2. Assayer G Nesmith 9a

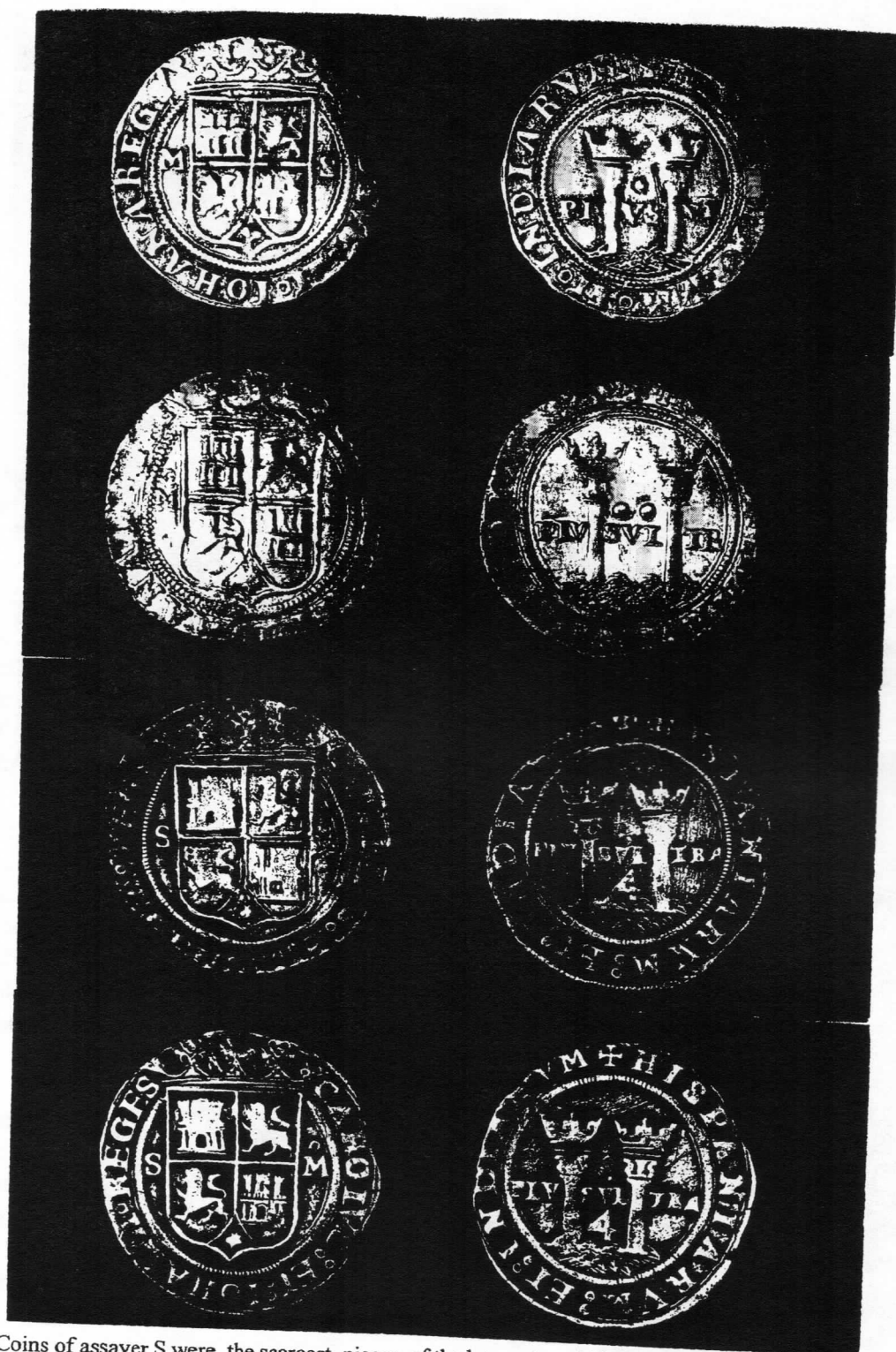
3. Assayer F Nesmith 14
4. Assayer P Nesmith 19a

CHARLES & JOHANNA LATE SERIES 1 REAL TYPES

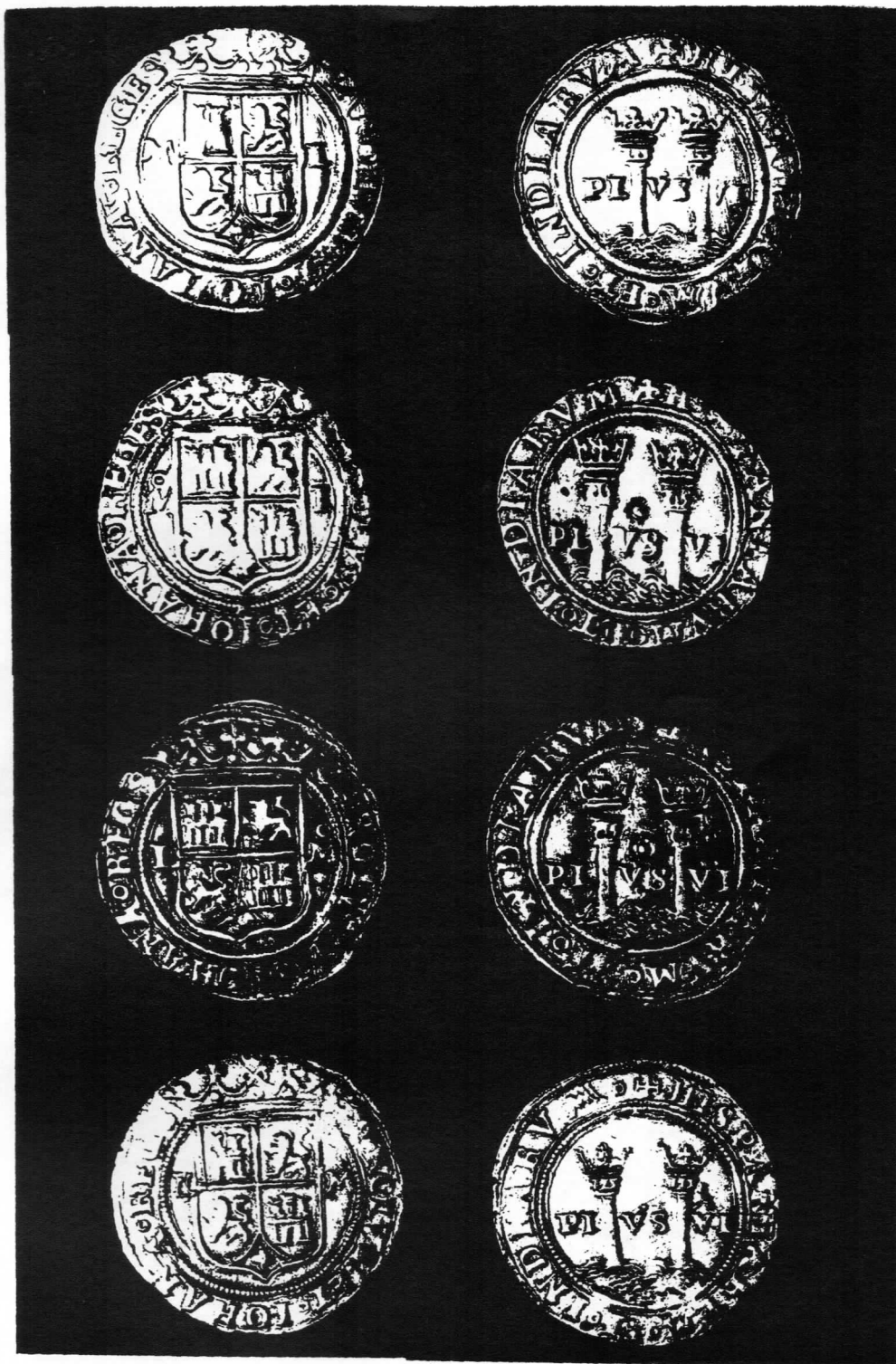
	N#	Obv. Des.	Rev. Des.	Obv. Leg.	Rev. Leg.
$\overset{\circ}{M} - \overset{\circ}{G}$	32	1	A	CH7	a
$\overset{\circ}{M} - \overset{\circ}{G}$	36	2	A	CH12	b
$G - \overset{\circ}{M}$	40	3	A	12	b
G - M	44	2	A	CH8	p
M - A	56	9	A	29	bb
A - M	60	9	A	24	bb
$\overset{\circ}{M} - A$	64	10	A	26	aa
M - R	68	10	C1	26	aa
M - S	76	12	C	31	aa
L - M	80	10	C1	26	bb
M - L	84a	10	C1	24	aa
$\overset{\circ}{M} - L$	88a	12	D	24	aa
$L - \overset{\circ}{M}$	92a	12	D	26	aa
O - M	96a	12	D	26	aa
M - O	100a	12	D	26	aa
$O - \overset{\circ}{M}$	104a	12	D	26	aa
$\overset{\circ}{M} - O$	108d	13	E	33	X3



1 Real $\overset{\circ}{M}-\overset{\circ}{G}$ Nesmith 32 1 Real $\overset{\circ}{G}-\overset{\circ}{M}$ Nesmith 40 (unlisted)
 1 Real $\overset{\circ}{M}-\overset{\circ}{G}$ Nesmith 36 1 Real $\overset{\circ}{G}-\overset{\circ}{M}$ Nesmith 44



Coins of assayer S were the scarcest pieces of the late series of Charles and Johanna when Nesmith wrote his book. Some varieties then unknown to the author have since been identified. For this reason we have devoted a special page to illustrate denominations in addition to those of one real.



1 Real L-M Nesmith 80 1 Real $\overset{\circ}{M}$ -L Nesmith 88a

1 Real M-L Nesmith 84a 1 Real L- $\overset{\circ}{M}$ Nesmith 92a



1 Real O-M Nesmith 96a 1 Real O-M̄ Nesmith 104a

1 Real M-O Nesmith 100a 1 Real M̄-O Nesmith 108a

REFERENCES TO COPPER FROM ACTS OF THE MEXICO CITY COUNCIL

#1100 April 17, 1542

Councilman Gonzalo Ruiz presented a written objection to the coining of copper money. The indians hoard it and do not want to exchange it for cocoa beans, cotton, corn or other items. They have neglected cultivation. It was agreed to meet again next Friday to deal with the matter.

#1101 April 21, 1542

The City Council postponed discussion about copper money because Gonzalo de Salazar and the treasurer Juan Alonso de Sosa were absent.

#1185 June 5, 1543

A public announcement has been ordered to the effect that all persons should accept the copper cuartos that were struck by order of the Viceroy. Penalty for non-acceptance is 100 lashes.

#1313 December 22, 1544

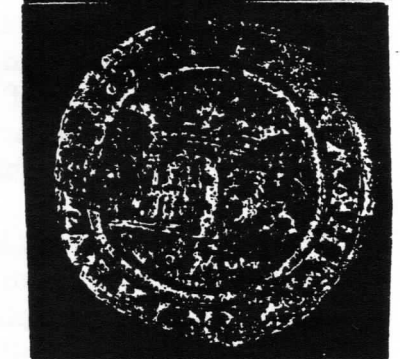
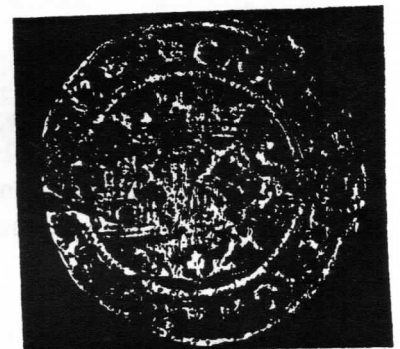
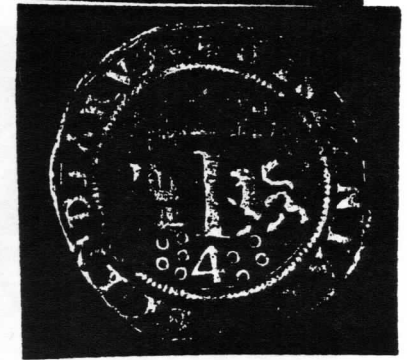
Councilman Ruy Gonzalez testified again that copper money should not be made and that silver money should not be used by the natives. Reason is that they hoard it and cause prices to increase.

#1516 September 12, 1547

Garcia de Moron who bid and won the concession to sell meat at a fixed price for one year, asked that he not be paid in copper coins. Reason is that when he buys cattle he is only allowed to pay in gold or silver. A vote was taken reference the quantity of meat that could be bought using copper as payment. The vote results were submitted to the Viceroy for his decision.

#1520 September 27, 1547

The mayor Jeronimo Ruiz de Mota and councilman Antonio de Carbajal informed the meeting of the Viceroy's decision that the butcher shops accept in payment for meat up to four coins of 4 maravedis. If the price is more than that amount it must be paid in silver. This was proclaimed publicly and so noted.

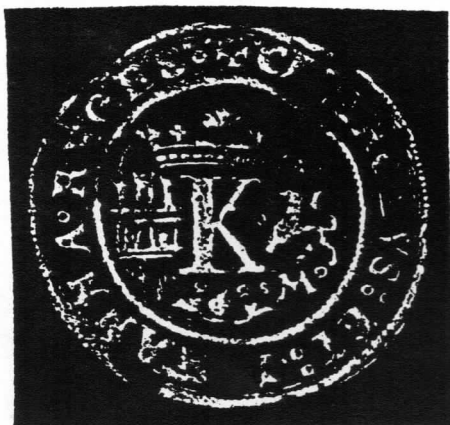


#1707 March 6, 1550

II. It was agreed to consult with Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza about discontinuing silver and copper money since it has caused great loss due to the haughtiness and miserliness of the indians. They have stopped cultivating the land and are doing other tasks dedicating their time to commerce, resulting in a shortage of food.

#1737 August 25, 1550

Butcher shops were ordered to receive copper coins in payment of meat as provided by law. The shops were notified of this order.



The severity of the June 5, 1543 law is an extreme unparalleled in the history of peacetime money use. Refusal by a native to accept coins of insignificant value (34 maravedis = 1 silver real) could cost him a severe beating. The solution was: do not offer anything for sale to Spaniards and get rid of the coppers by throwing them into Lake Texcoco. These acts of passive resistance were so effective that no more copper coins were struck in New Spain until 1814.

Hundreds of silver coins of Charles and Johanna were examined and classified by Mr. Nesmith in the preparation of his book. However, he was able to locate only 67 pieces of copper, many of them so badly preserved that he said it would be presumptuous to consider cataloging them. Last year a lifetime collection of 4 maravedi pieces was made available to me for classification. Together with what I had they still total less than a hundred pieces. Many of these I classified as UNC, meaning UNCollectible. Three turned out to be modern counterfeits.

This raises a question What happened to make the coppers disappear so completely? Page 38 of the book *Treasure Bars from New World Shipwrecks* by Alan K. Craig and Ernest J. Richards, Jr. shows a detail of cargo placed aboard Spanish ships returning from Veracruz to Spain in 1554. Included in the manifest were : "Maravedis (copper coins) 706,510 (2,597 ps.)" The ships never reached Spain. Salvage of ships wrecked on Padre Island and near Cayo Ines de Soto, Cuba, seem to fit the case. If anyone has information about copper coins being found I would appreciate hearing about it.

The combination of names of king and mother instead of king and queen on coins is unusual, so there must be a reason for the departure from the norm. When Charles I came to Spain with a retinue of Flemish followers, the latter had a monopoly of choice positions in the court, much to the distress of officials in Castile. Even though Charles' mother Johanna was considered incompetent to rule, the Spaniards insisted that she be joint ruler in name if not in fact. This accounts for the strange arrangement for laws to be issued in Johanna's name even though she had never seen them. The decree of 1535 that authorized the mint in Mexico is an example. It is signed as I THE QUEEN. By Order of His Majesty, His Majesty being her son, Charles I.