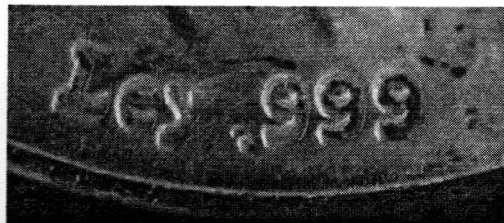


RIM LETTERING ON EARLY LIBERTADS, 1982-1989

By Jack Vanderzyl

First of all I am not a trained, certified Numismatist, if there is such a thing. I might barely qualify as a part-time coin collector and am definitely not a Tom Clancy.

Being new to the Libertad series (having acquired my first one in April 2002), I was minutely examining two 1987's in an effort to determine what constituted the DD/Double die features. I had purchased one of them as a DD, with the seller claiming that there was some doubling on the date and other places. Now, he either had a different type of vision or the coin had corrected itself because, under high magnification, it was not detectable. I subsequently learned that the best (maybe the only) way to make this distinction was that the DD had a double decimal point in front of the 999. It so happened that the one purchased had the double decimal point. I informed the seller of this feature and he was elated, having never noticed it. I'm leaning to the belief that DD originally meant Double Decimal Point and was somehow perverted to Double Die.

**Normal strike, 1 decimal point****D/D strike, double decimal point**

I have digressed mightily from the title of this article so, for those of you still with me; we'll get back to it. While making the aforementioned examination, I had the two coins, both being DD's, on edge. I was casually looking at the rim lettering and wondering what to look at next, when it hit me. On one of them I could read the rim lettering normally (left to right), and on the other it was upside down and backward. Inquisitive as I am, this really got my interest so I launched into an investigation and found that all of the 1982-1989 Libertads share this feature.

What was truly astounding, of all the people I mentioned this to (some having dealt with Libertads for years) only about 1 in 7 was aware of this difference. On reflection, it's not too surprising since I had to be told of the DD on the 1987 before I noticed it.

Needless to say, there are two schools of thought. One might say that it's a minor difference done in the minting process and unimportant. However, the purist feels that if they're not the same they are different (inarguable logic) and in order to have a complete collection/set, minor though it may be, one must have one of each. I place myself in the purist camp, but the reader can make his own choice.

While I have you totally enthralled and on the edge of your chair, let me add a couple other discoveries and comments. For my records and to others I've mentioned this to, we classify them as Obverse Rim Lettering (ORL), and Reverse Rim Lettering (RRL), with ORL meaning: with coin on edge, Obverse (Eagle side) facing you, Rim Lettering can be read normally (Lt. to Rt.). RRL = opposite, or with Reverse, (Winged Liberty) facing you, Rim Lettering can be read normally. I don't know if this is the best nomenclature, but it's working so far.



Top: RRL, Bottom: ORL

I have a batch of UN Peso "Jose Morelos y Pavon" 1957 – 1967 series that exhibit this same difference in Rim Lettering. I have a strong hunch that all Mexican coin series with Rim Lettering will exhibit this feature that statistically it should be 50 – 50, which reports seem to confirm. Someone else will have to report on the proof coins minted during this period. I have only 2, 1986 and 2-1987, all of which are RRL.

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It was also noted (with my limited inventory) that years 1982, 1983 and 1989 did not have a Decimal point in front of the 999, and the other years, 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1988 did, and of course they 1987s have both, one and two decimal points.

Enjoy your Libertad collection.

Jack Vanderzyl, Fort Worth, Texas

Libertad Varieties

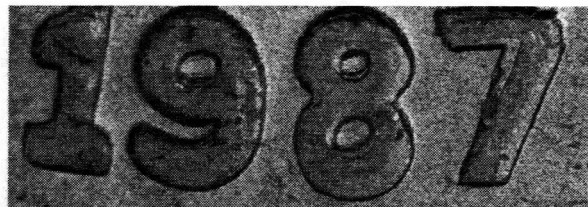
By Thomas Jasek C-33

In the September 2002 issue of the Journal (Volume VI, No. III), Mr. Jack Vanderzyl presented a variety of information on Libertads. I would like to address some of the information presented and to expand further on the varieties that exist in the Libertads issued from 1982 to date.

To date, the 1987 double die variety is probably the most recognized minting variety in the Libertad series (not referring to the actual design changes made in 1991). Mr. Vanderzyl examined a coin he owned and stated that he did not see the double die (referred to as DD) on his specific coin. He noted that he observed a double (two) decimal points, and that the term DD probably originally meant "Double Decimal Point".

I would like to present the following pictorial information to verify that the designation "DD" does indeed describe a double die variety in the 1987 mintage. As a matter of fact, Ken Potter of *World Coin News* (January, 2002 issue) reported and showed that there are actually two versions of double dies for this date. To date, I have not been able to locate a specimen of the second variety that Potter described. As a matter of fact, in reviewing Potter's pictures, I have a hard time discerning a difference between the two varieties. It appears that one must have two very early stage strikes of these varieties to most effectively establish the difference. (Minting varieties are often described in stages of the die life – that is, early in the life of a die, all imperfections or differences are seen easily, but later in the die life, these differences disappear, due to die wear.) The stage of the strike may be reason the Mr. Vanderzyl was not able to distinguish the double die on his specific coin. The area where the doubling is visible may have become worn or flatten on the die, so by the time that Mr. Vanderzyl's specific coin was struck, the doubling was no longer discernible. Only the doubled decimal points were visible, since there is almost full separation between them. The point is that, yes, a Libertad described as a 1987 DD or Double Die should have doubling on the reverse, visible most easily on the "1987 MEXICO Ley .999". In the later stages of the die, perhaps only the doubled decimal points are visible, although I have not seen a Libertad from a die that late in die life that the doubling was not visible.

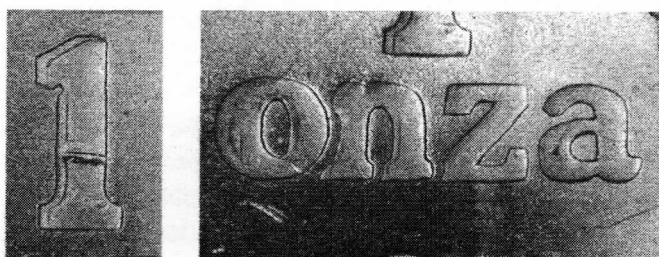
The pictures below show the doubling on the 1987 Libertad in the date and legend area only. Again, this is only one of the varieties that have been described for this year.



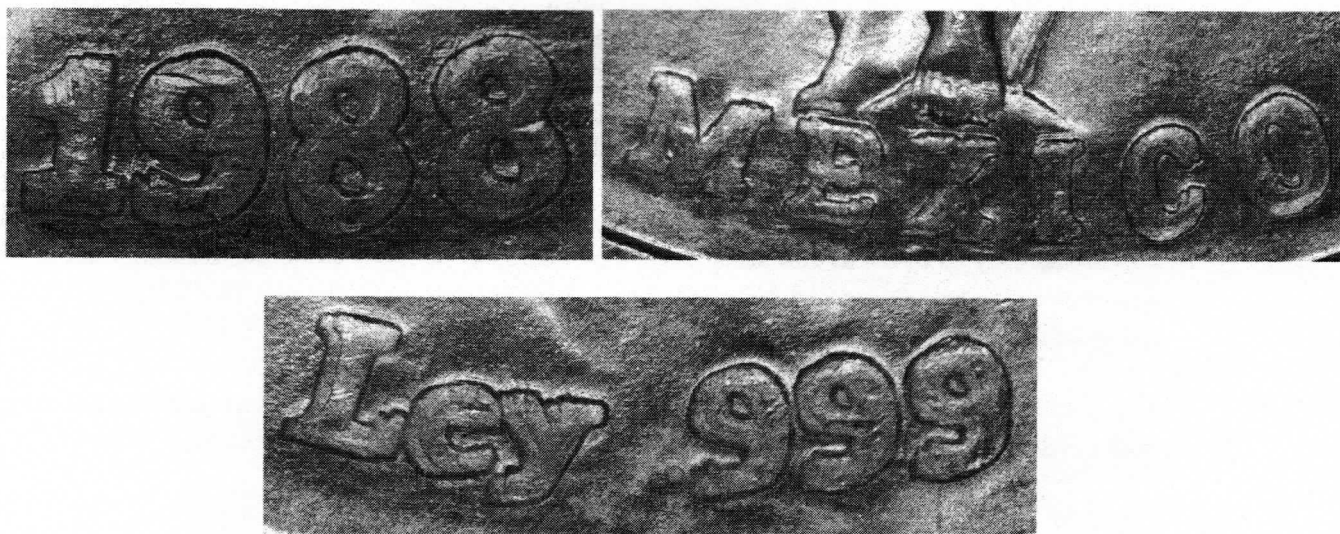


In addition to the 1987 double die, there are two other double die varieties. These occurred in 1982 (the first year) and in 1988.

The 1982 double die is most easily visible on the upper, left side of the coin, specifically on the "1 onza". The doubling on the coin pictured is not very pronounced, but the "1 onza" is wider than would normally be expected. Doubling on the legend is not as evident, but again the legend characters are wider than expected.



The 1988 double die is very pronounced and similar to the 1987. The pictures below illustrated the doubling on "1988 MEXICO Ley .999". As with the 1987 variety, the doubled decimal points are almost completely separated.



The final discussion point by Mr. Vanderzyl focused on the orientation of the edge legends on the Libertads. This particular element has been discussed by several of the variety collectors with whom I associate. As Mr. Vanderzyl points out, there is a 50-50 chance of which way the legend will be oriented on the finished coin. This is because the edge legend is applied during the upsetting process step, before striking. Since there is no control over which way the planchet ends up in the collar, the orientation is strictly

statistically, and must result a 50-50 distribution of with the legend being correctly oriented or with an inverted orientation. While these represent different “varieties”, collecting these or not collecting these is a personal preference. I don’t collect Libertad varieties on the basis of the edge legend orientation, but a fellow variety collector has collected one of each orientation. Again, it’s all a personal choice and one of those things in the coin collecting area that gives each collector the freedom and pleasure to collect what he or she prefers and, more importantly, enjoys.

As far as Mr. Vanderzyl observed that the edge lettering on the 1987 Proof coins (the two he examined) had the same orientation. Unless the planchets are hand placed into the collar with a specific legend orientation, these too, should have an random distribution of both orientations. With just two coins examined, it is statistically possible to have the same orientation for both. I do not know whether the Mexican Mint handled the Libertad Proofs in any special way. For instance, the US Mint Proof Gold One Ounce coins are handled individually, with each planchet being placed by hand into the press for striking. Under such circumstances, the edge orientation could be controlled.

I hope that presenting the pictures of these three varieties has added to the knowledge of the members who collect these varieties. Personally, I would like to hear about additional Libertad varieties and specifically, the 1988 double die. These and any other questions or comments can be set to me at: silverfox@grandecom.net.