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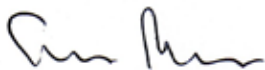
FROM THE EDITOR

I trust the coming annual Convention will be a great success. I will not be there but, as usual, will give a written report to our Board on my activities. This year we have been fortunate in the contributions to the journal, with quite a few new contributors and some well-researched, thoughtful articles, though the coinage was skewed (perhaps inevitably) towards the Colonial era and currency is at present over reliant on just one contributor. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has sent me articles over the past year.

As in previous years, and with as much expectation, I will also remind the Board of two areas where I feel the Association is lacking and should consider recruiting someone with a specific remit in developing the Association. The first is in reaching out to younger members and the second is to oversee and expand our website, especially the online library, and our social media.

However, as I could not have failed to notice that our overworked Executive Director has this year had to devote himself more to his expanding business interests, perhaps I should add another, namely, the organization and promotion of our annual Convention. We should not be so dependent on the goodwill of just one man.

To misquote Donald J. Trump, "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your Association can do for you, ask what you can do for your Association".



Simon Prendergast
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COVER IMAGE

The cover image shows a Philip V 8 Reales 1732 Mo-F (KM 103) that was included in Part III of the auction of the Rudman Collection of Mexican Coins, held by Heritage Auctions at Anaheim on 11 August 2016.

Graded MS63 NGC, the coin is described as "Choice Mint State with full mint bloom and handsome old patina over appealing surfaces showing only trivial handling evidence, in line with the assigned grade. A wonderful example of the rare and iconic first date in the series, currently the second finest certified at NGC, and certainly among the very finest extant. The slight planchet bulging on the reverse, mentioned for sole accuracy, is not atypical for the issue: vide the Millennia collection specimen - Golberg's 5/2008, lot 1085 - showing a similar one on the obverse. Although a few low grade examples of this famous rarity have surfaced in recent years from shipwreck finds, well preserved specimens remain truly desirable and incredibly elusive. Extremely rare in this choice quality and certain to become a centerpiece in the next owner's holdings, a true wonder coin that will elicit fierce bidding competition and should establish a record price for the type. The cataloguer recalls the aforementioned Millennia specimen certified AU58 NGC and the Besalu collection example (raw, described as "Choice AU") sold by us a few years ago (Heritage Auctions 5/2008, lot 52215) hammering for \$40,000 and \$75,000 respectively."

The coin sold for \$152,750 (including Buyer's Premium).



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Simon,

Greetings from Mexico! Congratulations on your excellent work of editing the journal.

In the last issue (June 2016) you published a magnificent article by Pablo Luna Herrera, "Platinum Coins and Medals in Mexico", which included a reference to the Panda Bear "Tohui" medals, stamped in different metals and sizes.



I have in my collection a proof that is not mentioned in the article and is of interest for a couple of features. Firstly, it is a brass proof of the 12 onzas, but funnily, instead of an expected diameter of 80 mm, it is 65 mm (just like the 5 onzas piece). Secondly, it has the legend "PRUEBA LATON" (brass proof) punched on it - you can clearly see that the letters are not aligned. Finally, the edging has a space destined for the folio or number of the piece.

The purpose of my letter is to add this information to Pablo's interesting work.

Best regards
Dr. Luis G. Wulschner

NEWS

First book on Mexican patterns

In the first week of July member Pablo Luna Herrera published his book "Las Pruebas de la Moneda Mexicana del Siglo XX" (The Mexican Coin Patterns of the 20th Century), the first attempt to cover this topic, classifying 195 patterns, almost all with its own picture in full color and historical background. This event was held at the National Numismatic Museum in Mexico City, a building which housed the Mexico Mint from 1848 to 1992.



The author continues working on this project. Please contact him if you have some pattern to add to this investigation.

Any comment are welcome to the e-mail: compramet@hotmail.com.

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THE ASSAYERS OF THE MINT OF MEXICO DURING THE REIGNS OF PHILIP V AND LOUIS I

by Jorge A. Proctor

When King Charles II of Spain died on 1 November 1700, childless despite two marriages, the line of the Spanish Royal House of Habsburg, which had ruled since 1516, died with him. Charles died relatively young, shortly before his 39th birthday. Having suffered from a number of disabilities, both physical and psychological, his always fragile health deteriorated even further towards the end of his life. Anticipating his death, Charles drafted a last will and testament on 13 October 1700, where he named a member of the French Royal House of Bourbon, his sister's grandson, Philip, Duke of Anjou (*Philippe, Duc d'Anjou*), as his primary successor.



Portrait of King Philip V of Spain painted in 1700-1701 by Hyacinthe Rigaud (Location: Chateaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles, France).

© RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource. NY (Image reference ART152504 – Photo: Gérard Blot)

Philip's lineage within the Spanish throne was not in question. He was the great-grandson of King Philip IV, Charles II's father. But, as the second son of the current heir apparent to the French throne, the Grand Dauphin (*Le Grand Dauphin*) Louis, son of King Louis XIV, he was also in the direct line of succession to the French throne. In anticipation of how this could upset the balance of power in Europe, and inevitably lead to war, Charles made special provisions to keep these two monarchies apart, declaring in his last will and testament that: "*being Our intention that, in the interests of the peace of Christendom and of all Europe and of the well-being of these Our Realms, this Crown and that of France shall ever remain sundered*".⁽¹⁾ As such, it provided that in the event that Philip died before he could take the throne, or chose to "*accede to the Throne of France and prefer to wear that Crown rather than that of these Our Realms*",⁽²⁾ then the Spanish throne would pass to his younger brother Charles, Duke of Berry (*Duc de Berry*), under the same provisions. Third in line to the throne in this last will and testament was Charles, Archduke of Austria, the second son of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, Charles II's uncle.⁽³⁾

On 12 November 1700, in the Palace of Versailles, King Louis XIV accepts Charles II's will and proclaims his grandson Philip as King Philip V of Castile and IV of Catalonia and Aragon. With the news from France, he is also proclaimed King of Spain in Madrid, on 24 November 1700. Quickly, news of the death of Charles II and the ascension to the throne of King Philip V were dispatched to the Americas, where they were received in New Spain by March 1701.⁽⁴⁾

The ritual public oath ceremony (*jura del rey*), mandated to demonstrate loyalty to the new king, was conducted in the main square of the New Spain's cities in April of 1701,⁽⁵⁾ for which proclamation medals are known today. But the mint would not start minting coins under the name and coat of arms of the new monarch until 1702.⁽⁶⁾

Although Philip of France had been proclaimed King of Spain in accordance with Charles II's will, the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, considering himself the rightful heir in accordance with Philip IV's will, refused to accept the will of Charles II from the beginning, pursuing the claim on behalf of his descendants, in order to gain at least part of the Spanish empire. Without war having been declared, in May/June 1701 Emperor Leopold sent Austrian troops commanded by the Imperial General Prince Eugene of Savoy to fight the French in northern Italy. But, when King Louis XIV refused to exclude Philip from the line of succession to the French throne, Leopold took advantage of this to organize a coalition against Louis XIV. On 7 September 1701 England, the United Provinces (the Netherlands), and Austria signed a treaty known as the Grand Alliance of The Hague (Treaty of Den Haag). The alliance declared war on Spain and France on 15 May 1702, marking the beginning of what came to be known as the War of Spanish Succession.



Mexico City, cast and chased silver Proclamation Medal for King Philip V, dated 1701. Images from the Stack's Bowers and Ponterio, January 2015 NYINC Auction, lot #1001. (Courtesy of Stack's Bowers Galleries)

Back in Mexico, when the mint started striking coins under Philip V, the working assayer is Manuel de León (assayer mark L). Manuel had been working this post since 1677, when he was appointed by Sebastian Carrillo Maldonado, on behalf of the owners of the post, the Barefoot Carmelites of the Mexican monastery of the Holy Desert of Mount Carmel (*El monasterio de Carmelitas Descalzos del Santo Desierto del Monte Carmelo*), following the death of Gerónimo Becerra (assayer mark G). Manuel de León continued as the mint's assayer until 1705. On 23 February of that year his brother, José de León, is brought in as an interim assayer, when Manuel is unable to continue due to an incapacitating illness.⁽⁷⁾ This José de León should not be confused with José Eustaquio de León, who was his son. José de León had already been working as Manuel's deputy at the time of his selection,⁽⁸⁾ making for a smooth transition in February. Not many days later, Manuel de León dies. José is promoted to the rank of lieutenant assayer at the mint by the Barefoot Carmelites on 11 March 1705,⁽⁹⁾ and he is ratified on 9 April 1705.⁽¹⁰⁾



Left: Enlarged image of a 1704 Mexican 8 Reales with assayer mark L for Manuel de León.



Right: Enlarged image of a 1715 Mexican 8 Reales with assayer mark J for José de León, recovered from the 1715 Fleet.

(Courtesy of The 1715 Fleet Society)

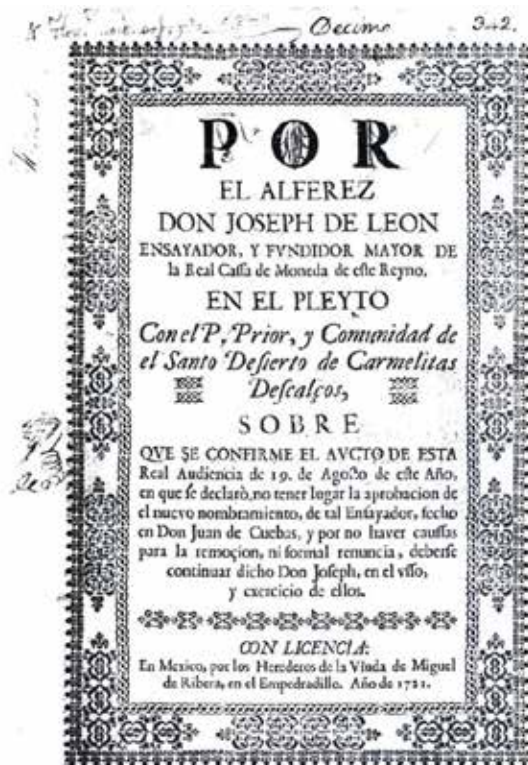


José de León was the assayer in office during the remainder of the War of Spanish Succession, which lasted until 1713, when the Treaties of Utrecht officially put an end to the hostilities.⁽¹¹⁾ The Treaties of Utrecht recognized Philip V as the king of Spain. But they transferred the Spanish possessions in the Netherlands and Italy to Austria and Savoy. To ensure that the French and Spanish monarchies remained separate, the treaties also required that Philip V renounce, for himself and his descendants, any right to the French throne. Various French princes were also required to relinquish any claim, for themselves and their descendants, to the Spanish throne.

In 1715 José de León attempted to appoint his own son, Manuel de León, as his deputy.⁽¹²⁾ The post of deputy was not one that had been mandated by Spain, but conceived entirely in Mexico. As lieutenant (*teniente*) of the assayer on record, the deputy was allowed to work the post for this assayer when sick or absent. But, he was not allowed to use his identifying mark on the coins, as guarantee that the fineness in the alloy he prepared corresponded to that officially ordered. This was in sharp contrast to the Spanish ordinance, which required that the assayer mark placed on the coins be that of whomever had assayed the metal used on these coins.⁽¹³⁾ This guarantee, and any possible penalties, continues to rest on the assayer on records, whose mark the deputy continues to use. As such, the deputy is selected by the assayer on record, almost always being a close relative.

The appointment of Manuel de León was rejected by the Barefoot Carmelites due to Manuel's age at the time. Manuel was said to be under 25 years of age. A working assayer or his deputy had to be 25 years old to hold these posts at the Mexico mint.⁽¹⁴⁾

By 1718 José de León had suffered an accident, when he fell off a ladder at the mint, and ended up as a convalescent.⁽¹⁵⁾ This time, rather than just appoint Manuel as a deputy, José decided that it would be best to transfer the office to his son, whom he saw as a good and capable candidate. José went before the head of the Barefoot Carmelite convent, Prior Fray Martín de la Madre de Dios,⁽¹⁶⁾ to make his wishes known. The Prior immediately set a date for him or his son to return and present José's formal letter of resignation and the birth certificate of his son Manuel, as evidence that he was now of the required age. But, when that day came and went with no sign of José or his son, Fray Martín de la Madre Dios wasted no time in appointing Don Juan de Cueva, a former assayer from the mines of San Luis de Potosí, to replace José at the mint. But José de León was not about to go quietly! Before Juan de Cueva could be ratified by the Spanish authorities, José quickly filed a lawsuit claiming that there had been a misunderstanding. This action successfully blocked the appointment of Juan de Cueva by the Barefoot Carmelites.⁽¹⁷⁾



Copies of the front page of the legal arguments during the trial between the Mint Assayer, José de León, and the owners of the office, the Barefoot Carmelite Convent of the Holy Desert (1718-1721). To the left is the front page of José de León's arguments, while at the right is the front page of the Barefoot Carmelites'.

At the end, José de León won his lawsuit and remained in office, despite the Barefoot Carmelites' desires. During the last years of his tenure José de León employed his son, Manuel de León, and Nicolás de Rojas, as deputies.⁽¹⁸⁾

siendo las de la letra J labradas (segun se dixo) en tiempo que fue Ensayador de la Casa Don Joseph de Leon, y otros, no del mismo nombre;

respectivo a los 3. de la letra J (con cuya señal expresaron Don Joseph de Ribas, Don Manuel de Leon, y Don Joseph Eustaquio de Leon) se avian despachado en la Real Casa las Monedas por tres Ensayadores, que el uno fue Don Joseph de Leon, padre de los referidos; otro el mismo Don Manuel de Leon su hijo, y el tercero Don Nicolàs de Roxas, a quien siguiò Don Joseph de Ribas,

In the 1729 mint investigation it was revealed that the coins with assayer mark J were minted during the time that José de León served as assayer, "and others, not of the same name." The names of the other assayers who worked as deputies under José de León is further revealed in this document, which states that three assayers were responsible for the coins with assayer mark J, these being: José de León, his son Manuel de León, and Nicolás de Rojas.

As for the Barefoot Carmelites, determined to ensure that a similar situation never happened again, they convinced the Viceroy to allow them to name their lieutenants, without intervention from the Treasurer of the Mint, who until now



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had been involved in the approval process. The Viceroy agreed, giving the order in 1720.⁽¹⁹⁾ This now allowed for the Barefoot Carmelite monastery of the Holy Desert to take advantage of the deputyship system already in place, and upon completion of José de León's tenure in 1723, they named themselves as the assayer on record (The D on the coins is for Desierto, in acknowledgement of "El Convento del Santo Desierto del Monte Carmelo"), while appointing José de Rivas Angulo to be responsible for the actual work at the mint, as their deputy.⁽²⁰⁾

Since the deputies did not hold the same rights bestowed on the lieutenants, the Barefoot Carmelites must have felt pretty comfortable with their decision. Any problems that arose, they could just replace José de Rivas Angulo, without the fear of another litigation, which they could lose. But, identifying themselves as the assayer on the coins, while someone else did the work, now created a dangerous proposition, as this mark also identified who to hold responsible, if problems were ever found with the weight and fineness on the coins.

las de la D, de las que
se avian fabricado desde que era Ensayador Don Joseph
de Ribas, que entrò à serlo en principios del año de 23.
desde cuyo tiempo ponía esta letra, por ser este oficio
del Santo Desierto

las otras proporcionadamente, porque el Ensayador D.
Joseph de Ribas Angulo, que entrò à serlo por principios
de 24.

The 1729 mint investigation also revealed that the coins with assayer mark D were minted during the time that José de Rivas Angulo served as assayer, who used this mark in acknowledgement that it belongs to the Holy Desert ("el Santo Desierto"). Although the year when José de Rivas Angulo started working as the assayer on record was initially recorded in error as the beginning of 1723 (simply documented as 23), this in fact was later corrected, as can be seen above, to 1724 (again, simply documented as 24).



Enlarged image of a 1724 Mexican Half Real "galano" coin with assayer mark D for "el Santo Desierto", minted under assayer José de Rivas Angulo. Images from Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC, Treasure Auction #18, 29 October 2015, Lot #534.

(Courtesy of Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC)

In January of 1724, José de Rivas Angulo starts working the post of assayer in the Mexico City mint. At that same time in Spain, King Philip V decides to abdicate the throne in favor of his eldest son, the Prince of Asturias (*Principe de Asturias*), Louis, so that he could withdraw into solitude, where he could devote the rest of his life to the service of God, in preparation for eternity.⁽²¹⁾

Philip V advised the Council of Castile of his intend to abdicate the throne to his 16-year-old son, Louis, by Royal Decree signed on 10 January 1724.⁽²²⁾ Prince Louis was made aware of the abdication of the throne on him by a letter written from San Ildefonso by his father, King Philip V, on 14 January.⁽²³⁾ On 15 January, Louis, who was the same age as his father had been when he ascended to the throne of Spain in 1700, from San Lorenzo el Real, accepts the crown and is proclaimed King Louis I of Spain on 9 February 1724.⁽²⁴⁾

As it was customary, once Louis I was proclaimed King in Spain, the news, in the form of Royal decrees, were quickly dispatched to the Americas, so that the ritual public oath ceremony for the

proclamation of the new king could also be conducted there. On 25 July of 1724, this ceremony was conducted in Mexico,⁽²⁵⁾ at which time the Latin name of the king was changed on the coinage from that of "PHILIPPVS V" to "LUDOVICUS I".

Louis I's reign would not be marked by any memorable events, as it would be of short duration. The young king died in Madrid between the hours of two and three in the morning on 31 August 1724, after contracting smallpox;⁽²⁶⁾ he had just turned seventeen on 25 August. The death of Louis opened the door for the return of Philip V to the throne. But, despite him being named in Louis' last will and testament, this was not an automatic proposition. Not only did Philip lack interest to return to the throne, but the Council of Castile, unsure of the legality of a king's return after



Painting of King Louis I of Spain on Horseback, by an unknown Peruvian artist, ca. 1725.

Label: "Portraits of the king and the royal family were produced in the New World to serve many functions; they hung in government buildings and in private homes of the nobility. King Luis I (1707– 1724) of Spain ruled only some seven months before dying of smallpox, but records state that an equestrian portrait of Luis was made in the city of Potosí in 1725 for the city's jura del rey (oath to the king), a ceremony performed at the ascension of each new monarch. It is probable that when this work was painted, news of the king's death was still making its way to the Spanish colonies."

Image and label courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Object Number 2012-139-2 (Gift of Roberta and Richard Huber, 2012)

abdication, also needed to conduct deliberations. At the end, under advice of the Papal nuncio in Madrid, Alessandro Aldobrandini, and in agreement with the final report of the Council of Castile, on 6 September 1724 Philip agreed to return to the throne,⁽²⁷⁾ to which he was restored the following day.⁽²⁸⁾

Soon after decrees were drafted and dispatched to the Indies, announcing the death of Louis I and the return of Philip V to the throne, asking that they "exercise restraint, excusing all those expenses that are not very necessary".⁽²⁹⁾ These decrees ensured that Spain's overseas possessions carry out the mandatory symbolic rituals known as *exequias reales*: Royal funerary honors, performed in order to commemorate the death of the ruler, and celebrate the transfer of secular loyalty and power to the next king.

With the slow communication between Spain and the Indies, Mexico would not learn of the death of Louis I until 1725, first learning of it, unofficially, through a vessel that arrived in January from Caracas.⁽³⁰⁾ The official notification arrived in the port city of Veracruz in February, from where it was finally delivered to the city of Mexico on 28 March 1725, where the funerary ceremonies began.⁽³¹⁾

Although the exact date when the mint of Mexico began replacing the name of Louis I for that of Philip V on the coins is not currently known, this probably occurred fairly quickly, just as it had been done in 1724. Due to the imperfect striking of these coins, which leave much of the design off the coin's planchet, a standard at the time, the King's name is not visible, or not visible enough, in almost all the few known Mexican coins from this year to establish how many coins are known for each monarch. But we do know that the change did occur in this year, as this is further corroborated by some of the known 1725 Mexican special production coins, nowadays known as "galanos", for which the King's name is clearly shown as "PHILIPPVS V".⁽³²⁾

José de Rivas Angulo continued working the post of assayer at the mint, using the letter D for Desierto, as he had been doing since 1724, and in 1727 he was even allowed to have his own deputy, for which his brother, Diego González de la Cueva, is assigned.⁽³³⁾ But, soon after, discrepancies on the required fineness of the Mexican coins were found after repeated assays conducted in Spain by orders of the King. At this same time, problems were also being reported with the overall weight of the Mexican coins, as well as those from Potosí.⁽³⁴⁾ Determined to solve these problems, the King passed a new monetary reform on 9 June 1728.⁽³⁵⁾ With the justification of standardization between

the fineness of the Spanish coins and those of other European nations, this new Royal Ordinance, among other things, would now lower the fineness in the Mexican coins, from 11 dineros and 4 grains (930.5 fine) to 11 dineros (916.6 fine) and produce the coins at a rate of 68 reales per mark of silver, vice the 67 reales previously worked. This order also instructed the mechanization of the coin-striking process in all the Spanish mints, in Spain and the Indies, replacing with new machines (rolling-mills and screw presses) the manufacturing techniques of cutting coin blanks with scissors and striking the coins with hammers between two dies. The new machines would now produce perfectly round machine-struck coins with a milled edge design ("*de figura circular con cordoncillo al canto*"), a milled coinage, which would now serve to discourage the illegal practices of debasing coins by clipping⁽³⁶⁾ and sweating.⁽³⁷⁾

The design for the new milled coinage was revealed for the first time by a separate decree dated 8 September 1728. This design, on one side, consisted of the Bourbon shield of King Philip V with the inscription PHILIPPVS V. D. G.⁽³⁸⁾ HISPANIARVM ET INDIARVM REX (Philip V, by the grace of God, king of Spain and the Indies), further abbreviated where needed, and on the other side, both hemispheres of earth (referred to as "two worlds") crowned, placed above waves and between two crowned pillars (representing the Pillars of Hercules), with each pillar containing a banner with a portion of the motto PLVS VLTRA (meaning "more beyond"), and the inscription above: VTRAQUE VNUM (meaning "both are one").⁽³⁹⁾

At the end of 1728 the Mexican Viceroy Juan de Acuña, the Marquis of Casafuerte, confirmed receipt of the new monetary orders. It is likely that it was at this time that he also received a separate decree written on 30 June 1728,⁽⁴⁰⁾ asking that he conduct an investigation of the mint officials and their involvement in the loss of weight and fineness on the Mexican coins.

On 30 December the Viceroy ordered that on 1 January 1729 part of the new monetary plan be put in motion, ordering that the fineness in the current coins be lowered as decreed, changing the rate of production of the coins, as well, to the new rate of 68 reales per mark of silver.⁽⁴¹⁾ By 15 January 1729⁽⁴²⁾ the Viceroy was able to inform Spain that the changes ordered on 30 December of 1728 had in fact been implemented, also informing that he had appointed as Superintendent of the Mint the Oidor⁽⁴³⁾ Don José Fernández de Veitia, and as interim accountant (*contador interino*) Manuel de León (he was ratified by Spain for this position on 2 August 1731).⁽⁴⁴⁾

Being led by the Oidor Don José Fernández de Veitia, on 7 February 1729 the probe on the Mexico Mint was started.⁽⁴⁵⁾ On 17 March, by Viceregal order, the use of the assayer initial D for Desierto was discontinued,⁽⁴⁶⁾ being finally replaced with an R, to properly identify the working assayer, José de Rivas Angulo.

At the end of 1729 the Oidor and Superintendent of the Mint Don José Fernández de Veitia proceeded to provide the Attorney General (Fiscal) with a report formulating charges against the treasurer and other mint officials. But, by January 1730 the charges had yet to be formalized by the Attorney General, who insisted that with the pending departure of the fleet⁽⁴⁷⁾ which needed these coins, the imprisonment of the officials would only cause a delay in the operations of the mint, causing great damages to the merchant and the Kingdoms in general. The Attorney General requested that this trial be postponed until further notice, to which the Viceroy agreed, ordering Fernández de Veitia to continue the mintage operation.

With the fleet having departed in May 1730, Don José Fernández de Veitia now consulted with the Viceroy on 2 June 1730. The Viceroy in turn, with the Attorney General in agreement, ordered on 16 June that the guilty mint officials be arrested, being placed on house arrest (*casa por cárcel*). The guilty officials and the fines imposed were as followed:⁽⁴⁸⁾

- Treasurer, Don José Diego de Medina Saravia, 10,000 pesos
- Assayer, Don José de Rivas Angulo, 6,000 pesos
- Weighmaster, Don Manuel Cayetano de Elizaga, 6,000 pesos
- Scribe, Don Mateo Picardo, 4,000 pesos
- Chief Guard, Don Damián Pérez Bello, 4,000 pesos
- Chief Guard, Don Juan Antonio de Urrutia, Marquis del Villar del Aguila, 4,000 pesos



*Enlarged image of a 1729 Mexican 8 Reales coin with assayer mark R for assayer José de Rivas Angulo. Images from Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC, Treasure Auction #5, 9 April 2009, Lot #498.
(Courtesy of Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC)*

By the end of June 1730, with the urgent need to fill the now vacant assayer position at the mint, the Barefoot Carmelites of the Convent of the Holy Desert were asked to name a new lieutenant. Since Diego González de la Cueva had already been named as deputy since 1727, Fray José de los Angeles, the Barefoot Carmelite Attorney General of the Province of New Spain, proceeded to name him as the new lieutenant. This appointment was accepted, but not before the judge advised Diego González de la Cueva to use the letter G of his last name, as the letter D of his first name would be easily confused with the one previously used as identifier for the Holy Desert.⁽⁴⁹⁾

As the coins attest to, Diego González de la Cueva's tenure was extremely short (not lasting more than a few months).



Enlarged image of a 1730 Mexican 8 Reales coin with assayer mark G for assayer Diego González de la Cueva. Images from Stack's Bowers and Ponterio, January 2011 NYINC, Auction Session 1, 7 January 2011, Lot #16.

(Courtesy of Stack's Bowers Galleries)



Enlarged image of a 1730 Mexican 8 Reales coin with assayer mark R for assayer José de Rivas Angulo.

Images from Stack's Bowers and Ponterio, January 2011 NYINC, Auction Session 1, 7 January 2011, Lot #15 (Recovered from the wreck of the "Rooswijk").

(Courtesy of Stack's Bowers Galleries)

Although no explanation has yet been found in the documents describing the circumstances for his departure, this is most likely related to him being appointment to the post of Master Assayer and Weight Master of the Foundry of the city of Mexico (*Ensayador Mayor y Balanzario de la Real Caja de México*), a post which we know he was already occupying by 17 February 1731.⁽⁵⁰⁾ With the departure of Diego González de la Cueva in 1730, Francisco de la Peña y Flores, who had been present at the mint since 1729 assisting as an interim assayer (*ensayador interino*), is now promoted, choosing the letter F as his identifier.



Enlarged image of a 1730 Mexican 8 Reales coin with assayer mark F for assayer Francisco de la Peña y Flores. Images from Stack's Bowers and Ponterio, January 2011 NYINC, Auction Session 1, 7 January 2011, Lot #17.

(Courtesy of Stack's Bowers Galleries)



Enlarged image of a Mexican milled 8 Reales from 1732 with assayer mark F for assayer Francisco de la Peña y Flores. Images from the Ira & Larry Goldberg Coins and Collectibles, Sale #46: The Millennia Collection, Beverly Hills, CA, 26 May 2008, Lot #1085.

(Courtesy of Ira and Larry Goldberg, Los Angeles, California)

Francisco de la Peña y Flores was the assayer on record when, in 1732, the Mexico mint finally was able to mechanize the coining process and produce its first milled coinage. But in 1733, following the requirements of a new decree signed in Spain on 16 July 1730⁽⁵¹⁾ which required that two separate assayers worked the post simultaneously, Manuel de León, the son of the former assayer José de León and current mint's accountant, under a Royal decree signed in Seville, Spain on 14 July 1732, is now moved to the post of primary assayer, with Francisco de la Peña y Flores becoming the secondary assayer. Spain's new appointment of Manuel de León as the primary proprietary numbered assayer (*ensayador propietario de número*),⁽⁵²⁾ also followed the requirements of the new regulations signed in 1730 which discontinued the practice of leasing the mint offices to private parties and reverted the entire institution back to full royal control. Spain was now solely responsible for reviewing and granting all appointments of mint personnel.



Enlarged image of a 1733 Mexican Klippe (recortada) 8 reales with the marks of assayers Manuel de León (M) and Francisco de la Peña y Flores (F). Images from Daniel Frank Sedwick Auction #4, 6 November 2008, Lot #548.

(Courtesy of Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC)

Philip V died of a stroke in Madrid, Spain on 9 July 1746, at which time Manuel de León (assayer mark M) and Francisco de la Peña y Flores (assayer mark F) were still serving as the two proprietary (working) assayers of the Mexico mint. Philip V would be succeeded by Ferdinand, his son from his first marriage to Marie Louise of Savoy. Ferdinand started reigning upon Philip's death, being proclaimed as Ferdinand VI, King of Spain and the Indies, on 10 August 1746.⁽⁵³⁾

As for the deputyship system, this was initially suspended with the execution of the royal orders that allowed for two assayers to work simultaneously at the mint. But the system would not die off. In fact, the Oidor and Mint Superintendent Don José Fernandez de Veitia, relying on his past experience with the deputyship system exercised in Mexico, proposed to the King that to prevent any delays on the mintage operation, an additional assayer should be appointed,

beside the two main working assayers already mandated, so as to have someone designated to take the job for one of these assayers, or succeed him altogether, if the circumstances required it. The King approved this recommendation on 15 July 1735, appointing Francisco Herranz as the first "Supernumerary assayer" (*ensayador Supernumerario*) on 14 August 1736.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Although Herranz did travel to Mexico in 1736 in fulfillment of his appointment, he would never serve as an assayer on record at the Mexico mint, as he died in 1745 while still awaiting the opportunity to assume one of the two primary assayer positions.

With Herranz's death, the post would be temporarily occupied by José de Rivas Angulo (not to be confused with the earlier assayer of the same name), who was named as interim assayer by the Viceroy, until the King could make his own appointment. This appointment would ultimately go to Manuel de Asorín, appointed by the King on 19 October 1745. Manuel de Asorín traveled to Mexico at the end of 1746⁽⁵⁵⁾ and would eventually become an assayer on record in 1754, when promoted in that year, following the death of Francisco de la Peña y Flores.

New, updated list of the Mexican assayers during the Reign of Philip V (1700-1746)		
L	Manuel de León	(1677-1705)
J	José de León	(1705-1723)
D	El Santo Desierto (with José de Rivas Angulo as their working assayer)	(1724-1729)
R	José de Rivas Angulo	(1729-1730)
G	Diego González de la Cueva	(1730)
F	Francisco de la Peña y Flores	(1730-1733)
FM	Manuel de León Francisco de la Peña y Flores	(1733-1754)

Endnotes

- (1) *Spain under the Bourbons, 1700–1833: A collection of documents*. Edited and translated by W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley. Published by Macmillan & Co Ltd, London, 1968, p. 1.
- (2) *Spain under the Bourbons* (ibid, n. 1).
- (3) *Spain under the Bourbons* (op. cit., n. 1), pp. 1-2.
- (4) F. L. Ramos. *Succession and Death: Royal Ceremonies in Colonial Puebla, The Americas*, Published by Academy of American Franciscan History, Vol. 60, No. 2 (Oct., 2003), p. 185; Archivo General de Indias (AGI): Guadalajara, 232, L. 9, F. 55v-56r. On 6 March 1701, the officials from Puebla de los Angeles received the royal decree ordering

the proclamation of the new Spanish King, Philip V, and 12 days later, the decree ordering the celebration of royal funerary honors for King Charles II. As for the President of the Audiencia of Guadalajara, he was able to acknowledge receipt of these same orders on 26 March.

- (5) G. Casasola. *6 Siglos de historia gráfica de México*. Tomo 1. Editorial Gustavo Casasola, México 1987. pp.284. Gustavo Casasola writes: "*En la Nueva España, el 2 de abril 1701 se publica el bando anunciando al pueblo y al comercio que durante la celebración de las ceremonias de jura del Rey Felipe V, se adornen las fachadas que cuelguen luminarias por donde deberá pasar el estandarte real, y el que no lo cumpliera, se le multará con diez pesos. El día 4 con motivo de las fiestas de la Encarnación, dieron comienzo los actos preparados: a las diez de la mañana repicaron todas las campanas de todas las iglesias; en el tablado colocado frente a palacio, don Miguel de Cuevas sacó el estandarte y se fue a colocar donde se encontraba el virrey, el arzobispo, la real audiencia, todos los tribunales, los gobernadores con todos sus ministros. En el momento en que fue la proclamación, se soltaron al aire palomas, pájaros, y otras aves, la guardia real disparó sus arcabuces y volvieron a repicar las campanas, a las tres de la tarde se efectuó el desfile por las calles de la ciudad, pero un terrible aguacero, deslució la marcha. Calmada la lluvia se continuó con las ceremonias hasta que el virrey y el arzobispo regresaron a palacio y catedral. Por la noche hubo luminarias y una gran verbena en la plaza mayor.*"
- (6) Archivo General de la Nación (AGN): Instituciones Coloniales, Real Hacienda, Casa de Moneda (021), Vol. 13, Fojas: 3-11.
- (7) AGN: Instituciones Coloniales, Real Hacienda, Casa de Moneda (021), Vol. 6, Exp. 87, Fojas: 253-256.
- (8) AGI: México, 202, N. 19. José de León is recorded as already serving as deputy of his brother Manuel de León by December of 1697.
- (9) J. de Ordaz. *Por los Reverendos Padres Prior y Carmelitas Descalços, Hermitaños de el Santo Decierte de este Reyno, como Dueños de los Officios de Ensayador, y Fundidor Mayor de la Real Casa de Moneda de esta Corte en los autos con Don Joseph de Leon su Theniente, que ha sido en dicho Officios*. Con Licencia del Supremo Gobierno en México en Imprenta nueva Plantiniana de Juan Francisco de Ortega y Bonilla, 1721, fol. 1r.
- (10) AGN: Instituciones Coloniales, Real Hacienda, Casa de Moneda (021), Vol. 6, Exp. 89, Fojas: 261v-264v.
- (11) The Treaties of Utrecht is the general name given to a series of important treaties signed between 1713 and 1714 which officially ended this conflict.
- (12) *Por el Alferes Don Joseph de Leon Ensayador, y Fvndidor Mayor de la Real Cassa de Moneda de este Reyno, en el Pleyto con el P. Prior, y Comunidad de el Santo Desiertode Carmelitas Descalços, Con Licencia: en México, Por los Herederos de la Viuda de Miguel de Ribera*, 1721, fol. 2v, 5th numbered paragraph.
- (13) T. Dasí, *Estudio de los Reales de a Ocho* (Valencia, España, 1950), Vol. 1, pgs. LV- LXXIX, Document No. 76. "*Quaderno de Ordenanças de la lavor de la moneda* (1497.– junio 13. – Medina del Campo)". In the Royal Pragmatic of Medina del Campo, law No. 28, it states: "*Lei XXXVIII - Otrosi, porque, si alguna moneda de oro, ó de plata se hallare falta, se sepa qual Ensayador hizo el ensai della, ordenamos i mandamos que cada Ensayador haga poner en cada pieza una señal suya, por donde se conozca quién hizo el ensai de aquella moneda; porque si fuere baxa lei, sepamos á quál Ensayador nos avemos de tornar: i mandamos a los Entalladores de cada una de las dichas Casas que pongan en los cuños la señal, que él Ensayador le señalare por ante el Escrivano de la Casa, para que lo asiente en su libro, i por allí se conozca la señal de que Ensayador es i el que errare sea punido con esta prueba.*"
- (14) *Por el Alferes Don Joseph de Leon...* (op. cit., n. 12).
- (15) *Por el Alferes Don Joseph de Leon...* (op. cit., n. 12), fol. 1v, 1st numbered paragraph.
- (16) *El Santo Desierto de los Carmelitas de la Provincia de San Alberto de México*. Revisión Paleográfica Introducciones y Notas por Dionisio Victoria Moreno y Manuel Arredondo Herrera. Biblioteca Enciclopédica del Estado de México, México, 1978, p. 580. Martín de la Madre de Dios became the Prior of the Carmelite Convent of the Holy Desert in 1713 and remained in office until 1720.
- (17) *Por el Alferes Don Joseph de Leon...* (op. cit., n. 12).
- (18) *Por el Real Fisco El Doct. D. Juan Ignacio de la Encina y la Carrera, Cavallero del Orden de Santiago, del Consejo de su Mag. Y su Fiscal en el Real de Hacienda, y de la Junta de Comercio, y Moneda, en la causa que pende en dicha Real Junta contra el Thesorero, Ensayador, y otros Oficiales de la Casa de Moneda de Mexico, sobre faltas en la obligacion de sus oficios*– Spain, Circa 1735, p. 5, 9th numbered paragraph and page 6, 12th numbered paragraph.

This document, which discusses the coins with assayer mark J being examined during the 1729 mint investigation, states that: "... *siendo las de la letra J labradas (segun se dixo) en tiempo que fue Ensayador de la Casa Don Joseph de Leon, y otros, no del mismo nombre...*" and "...*la letra J (con cuya señal expressaron Don Joseph de Ribas, Don Manuel de Leon, y Don Joseph Eustaquio de Leon) se avian despachado en la Real Casa las Monedas por tres Ensayadores, que el uno fue Don Joseph de Leon, padre de los referidos; otro el mismo Don Manuel de Leon su hijo, y el tercero Don Nicolàs de Roxas, à quien siguiò Joseph de Ribas...*"

- (19) AGI: México, 749.
- (20) *Las Casas de Moneda de los Reinos de Indias*. Vol. 2: "Cecas de Fundación Temprana". Directed by Anes y Alvarez de Castellón, Gonzalo and Céspedes del Castillo, Guillermo. Chapter titled "La Época de Gestión Delegada, 1535-1732", by Agustín Pineda Aguilar, Madrid, Spain, 1997, p. 70. Although he did not provide an explanation as to how such an unusual event could have taken place, Agustín Pineda Aguilar can be credited with being the first to correctly identify the letter D (assayer mark) seen on the coins, as being the initial used for "Desierto". In his writing from 1997, when discussing the mint investigation conducted in 1729, Agustín Pineda Aguilar writes: "*En cuanto a la falta en la ley, cuya imputación tocaba directamente al fundidor y ensayador, se las relacionaba con la entrada y errada fundición de algunas platas que se habían amonedado y cuyos registros evidenciaban la letra D, inicial de <<Desierto>>, por los carmelitas del Santo Desierto, titulares del oficio.*"
1. *Por el Real Fisco...* (op. cit., n. 18), p. 5, 9th numbered paragraph. This information is substantiated by this document, which discusses the coins being examined during the 1729 mint investigation. This document states: "...*las de la D, de las que se avian fabricado desde que era Ensayador Don Joseph de Ribas, que entro à serlo en principios del año de 23. desde cuyo tiempo ponía esta letra, por ser este oficio del Santo Desierto...*" It should be noted that, regarding the start of José de Rivas Angulo's tenure, the year 23 (for 1723) is documented in error in the previous paragraph. This is in fact later corrected in page 11, numbered paragraph 29, of this same document as follows: "...*el Ensayador D. Joseph de Ribas Angulo, que entrò à serlo por principios de 24...*"
- (21) *Voto y Renuncia del Rey Don Felipe V, Discursos Leídos Ante la Real Academia de la Historia en la recepción pública del Excmo. Sr. D. Joaquín Maldonado Macanaz, el día 3 de Mayo de 1894*, Madrid, Imprenta y Litografía de los Huérfanos, 1894, pp. 15-16. Although King Philip V's abdication of the throne came as a surprise to many in Madrid and Europe, he had in fact made a secret pledge (*un Voto secreto*) with his wife, Queen Elizabeth Farnese, signed on 27 July of 1720 at El Escorial, where they agreed to relinquish this crown by all Saints Day of 1723 (1 November 1723), at the latest; a date which, for unknown reasons, was slightly delayed. This pledge was renewed a total of four times, on: 15 August 1720 at El Escorial, 27 August 1721 at El Escorial, 15 August 1722 at El Escorial and 15 August 1723 at Valsaín. The initial pledge, although written in French, has been translated and published in Spanish, and it states: "*Nos prometemos mutuamente renunciar la Corona y retirarnos del mundo, para pensar sólo en nuestra salvación y en servir á Dios, infaliblemente antes del día de los Santos del año de 1723, á más tardar. Escorial 27 de julio de 1720.—Felipe—Isabel.*"
- (22) *Voto y Renuncia del Rey Don Felipe V...* (ibid, n. 21), p. 13. The Royal Decree abdicating the throne, signed by King Philip V on 10 January 1724, states: "*Habiendo considerado de cuatro años á esta parte con alguna particular reflexión y madurez las miserias de esta vida, por las enfermedades, guerras y turbulencias que Dios ha sido servido enviarme en los veinte y tres años de mi reinado, y considerando también que mi hijo primogénito Don Luis, Príncipe jurado de España, se halla en edad suficiente, ya casado y con capacidad, juicio y prendas bastantes para regir y gobernar con acierto y justicia esta Monarquía, he deliberado apartarme absolutamente del gobierno y manejo de ella, renunciándola con todos sus Estados, Reinos y Señoríos en el Príncipe Don Luis, mi hijo primogénito, y retirarme con la Reina, en quien he hallado un pronto ánimo y voluntad á acompañarme gustosa á este Palacio y Retiro de San Ildefonso, para servir á Dios, y desembarazado de estos cuidados pensar en la muerte y solicitar mi salud. Lo participo al Consejo, para que en su vista avise donde con venga y llegue á noticia de todos. En San Ildefonso á 10 de Enero de 1724.*"
- (23) P. Nolasco Blanco y M. Diez. *Examen Histórico-Filosófico de la Legislación Española*, Tomo I, Madrid, Imprenta de Don Marcos Bueno, 1845, pp. 313-316. This book includes a complete transcribed copy of this important letter.
- (24) J. Ortega Rubio. *Historia de España*, Tomo V. Madrid, Librería Editorial, 1908, pp. 31- 32.
- (25) M. Soto. *El Arte Maestra: Un tratado de pintura novohispano*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliográficas, Mexico, 2005, p. 90. The date of the proclamation of Louis I in Mexico is known from the title of a book printed in Mexico in 1724 by the Publisher (*Impresor Mayor de la ciudad de México*) Joseph Bernardo de Hogal, Titled: *Breve Explicacion de lo que contiene la pyramide, que para celebrar la Jura de nueftro Catholico Monarcha Luis Primero, (que Dios Guarde), ofrecieron los profeffores del Nobiliffimo Arte de la Pintura, en la Ciudad de Mexico, el dia 25 de Julio del Año de 1724*. No copies of this book are known today.

- (26) *Spain under the Bourbons* (op. cit., n. 1), p. 85.
- (27) *Fénelon in the Enlightenment: Traditions, Adaptations, and Variations*, Edited by C. Schmitt-Maaß, S. Stockhorst and D. Ahn (Amsterdam – New York, 2014), Section titled, “*Prendre modèle sur Télémaque: The Fénelonian Underpinnings of ‘Cultural Policy’ at the Court of Philip V of Spain*” by Jorge Fernández, Santos Ortiz-Iribas and Sara Muniain Ederra, p. 139.
- (28) Eulogio Fernández Carrasco, “Felipe V. Abdicación y restauración de la Corona Española y sus efectos jurídicos”, *GLOSSAE. European Journal of Legal History* 12 (Valencia, Spain, 2015). pp. 304-305.
- (29) Santiago Sebastián López. *Arte Funerario y Astrología: La Pira de Luis I*, *Ars Longa*, Revista del Departament d’Història de l’Art de la Universitat de València, No. 2, 1991, p. 113. Regarding the Royal decree, the autor writes: “...ordenaba en una real cédula que se organizase el luto, pero recordaba que en lo tocante a tñmulos ‘se moderen, escusando todos aquellos gastos que no sean muy precisos’”.
- (30) López (ibid. n. 29).
- (31) I. Osorio Romero. *El sueño criollo: José Antonio de Villerías y Roelas (1695-1728)*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas, Mexico, 1991, p. 45.
- (32) J. L. Lázaro. *Reales de a Ocho: Los REDONDOS de Lima, Méjico y Potosí y otras acuñaciones especiales*. Madrid, 1996, p. 132 (Philip V 1725 Mexico 8 Reales); Numismatic Collection of the Bank of Mexico, Inventory Numbers 702 and 703 (Philip V 1725 Mexico Half Reales).
- (33) Centro de Estudios de Historia de México, Archivo de Manuscritos de la Colección Román Beltrán, Fondo VIII-4, Carpeta: 4, Legajo: 137. When the Barefoot Carmelites were asked in 1730 to name a new assayer, Fray José de los Angeles provided the name of Diego González de la Cueva, since, as he responded: “*Que su convento del Santo Desierto, desde el año de 1727 tenía nombrado a Don Diego Gonzalez de la Cueva, para las ausencias y enfermedades de don Jose de Ribas.*”
2. *Por el Real Fisco...* (op. cit., n. 18), p. 12, 30th numbered paragraph (this paragraph starts on the previous page). The fact that these two officials were brothers is recorded in the 1729 mint investigation, being documented as: “...sucedìò varias vezes que à su instancia Don Joseph de Ribas, y su hermano Don Diego González de la Cueba, ensayaron el grano, ò fragmento, que quisieron tomar de la Cizalla...”
- (34) *Los Códigos Españoles Concordados y Anotados: Nueva Recopilación. –Autos Acordados. Ordenanzas de Bilbao*. Tomo 12. Madrid, 1851, pp. 265-276. *Ordenanzas para las Casas de Moneda de estos Reinos, i los de las Indias – Madrid á 9. de Junio de 1728*; AGI (op. cit., n. 19). Decree from King Philip V dated in Madrid on 5 August 1728, remitted to the Viceroy in Mexico.
- (35) *Los Códigos Españoles...* (ibid. n. 34).
- (36) Clipping: shaving or cutting small pieces of metal from the coin’s circumference, which was specially made possible by the imperfect technique of flan preparation during the hammered struck coinage, which irregular coin blanks were normally obtained by cutting up hammered sheets of metal with shears.
- (37) Sweating: dropping a number of coins in a bag, and then shaking it violently thus, by friction, leaving tiny amounts of metal onto the inside of the bag’s surface. The metal scrap left on the inside of the bag would then be collected by burning the bag. Provided that these coins were not later weighed, they would retain the appearance of not having been tampered with.
- (38) D. G.: abbreviation for DEO GRATIA (by the grace of God).
- (39) *Los Códigos Españoles...* (op. cit., n. 34), p. 278. “*Madrid á 8. de Septiembre de 1728. “...Que la plata nueva, que he mandado labrar en Indias, i la que se labrare en estos Reinos con el cuño de mis Reales Armas de Castillos, i Leones, i en medio el escudo pequeño de las flores de Lis, i una granada al pie con la inscripcion Philippus V. D. G. Hispaniarum, et Indiarum Rex, i por el reverso las dos columnas coronadas con el Plus ultra, bañandolas unas ondas de mar, i entre ellas dos mundos unidos con una corona, que los ciñe, i por inscripcion utraque unum...*”
- (40) *Las Casas de Moneda...* (op. cit., n. 20).
- (41) *Las Casas de Moneda...* (op. cit., n. 20), p. 66.
- (42) *Las Casas de Moneda...* (op. cit., n. 20), p. 67.

- (43) Oidor: Title given to a royal judge appointed to serve as a member of one of the judicial tribunals known as *Audiencias*. Unlike in Spain, where the function of these judges was limited to judicial matters, in America they also held a wide range of executive and legislative powers.
- (44) A. Herrera, *El Duro*, Vol. 1, Madrid, Spain, 1914, p. 213.
- (45) *Las Casas de Moneda...* (op. cit., n. 20).
- (46) Centro de Estudios de Historia de México (op. cit., n. 33).
- (47) http://www.todoavante.es/index.php?title=1729_-_Flota_de_Nueva_Espana. This fleet, commanded by Lieutenant General Esteban Mari, Marquis of Mari, departed the port of Cadiz, Spain on 8-9 August 1729, and arrived in Veracruz on 22, 23, 24, 27 and 28 of October of 1729. On 12 December 1729 the frigate *Angustias y San Rafael*, commanded by Captain Arnaud, serving as an advice vessel (navío de aviso) departed Veracruz to notify Spain of the forthcoming arrival of the fleet, arriving in Cadiz on 22 February 1730. The fleet finally departs Veracruz on 2-3 May 1730, arriving in Cadiz on 18 August 1730.
- (48) *Las Casas de Moneda...* (op. cit., n. 20), p. 71.
- (49) Centro de Estudios de Historia de México (op. cit., n. 33).
- (50) S. de Fonseca y C. de Urrutia. *Historia General de Real Hacienda*. Tomo I, Impresa por Vicente G. Torres, Mexico, 1845, p. 89.
- (51) *Los Códigos Españoles...* (op. cit., n. 34), pp. 280-292. "Nueva Ordenanza para la labor de la moneda, su lei, i ensayes, Ministros, i Operarios de las Casas, sus obligaciones, sueldos, i derechos. El mismo en Cazalla á 16. de Julio de 1730. Cedula."
- (52) Herrera (op. cit., n. 44).
- (53) J. de Pinedo y Salazar. *Historia de la Insigne Órden del Toyson de Oro, dedicada al Rey Nuestro Señor, Xefe Soberano y Gran Maestre de Ella*. Parte Primera, Tomo I, Imprenta Real, Madrid, 1787, p. 524.
- (54) AGI: Contratación, 5483, N. 1, R. 16. In this document dated in San Ildefonso on 14 August 1736, the King tells us that his appointing of Don Francisco Herranz to the post of Supernumerary assayer (*ensayador Supernumerario*) at the mint of Mexico followed his approval of the recommendation made by the Mint's Superintendent, Don José Fernández de Veitia, for this to be instituted. This document states: "Por quanto me ha Representado el Oydor don Joseph Fernandez de Veytia, Superintendente de la Casa de Moneda de la Ciudad de Mexico, q' en cumplimiento de lo mandado en la ordenanza formada para Casas de Moneda en 16 de Jullio de 1730 -Se nombraron para la Referida Casa dos ensayadores para q' Separadamente y por duplicado hagan los ensayes de plata y oro q' se compran y labran de mi quenta pero q' la experiencia avia manifestado la presission de haverse de valer de otro ensayador extraño, por ympedimiento o enfermedad de alguno de los dos, o en los casos de discordia, q' se ofrescan, a fin de no atrasar el Curso de las labores, ni el corriente de las compras de metales, pues aun en mas ocurrencias nesesitaran los dos ensayadores valerse de otro, q' les ayude, y q por estas Razones tenia el Superintendente por conveniente a mi Real Servicio de q' hubiese otro ensayador Con el titulo de Supernumerario y mitad del sueldo de los propietarios, con obcion á entrar en la primera Vacante del numero Y haviendose visto en mi Junta de Comercio, y de Moneda, y consultadome sobre ese assumpto en 15-de Jullio del año próximo pasado, tube por bien de condezender con la proposission del Referido Superintendente y q' la misma Junta me hiziese preente persona correspondiente a quien se pudiese nombrar, para q' pasase de estos Reynos a Servir el Referido empleo . en cuyo cumplimiento me ha expuesto en consulta de 25 de Septiembre del expresado año, q' hallandose en Madrid Don Francisco Herranz de ensayador aprobado en quien concurren las circunstancias de Ynteligencia, práctico, legal, Y de toda confianza, Y de buena Vida, y Costumbres, y q' tenía la experiencia de q' en algunas concesiones de Visítas de ferias, q' avia puesto a Su cuidado, las ha desempeñado, Con todo zelo, aplicasion, y desinteréz, le proponía para el expresado empleo, Y en su Ynteligencia he Resuelto elegir y nombrar (como por la presente elijo, y nombro) a don francisco Herranz por ensayador Supernumerario de mi Casa de Moneda de la Ciudad de Mexico con el sueldo de mill y quinientos pesos al año y obzion a la Vacante de uno de los dos ensayadores del numero de la misma casa, Y el goze de este Sueldo desde el dia, q' justificare haverse envarcado en Cadiz para parsar a el Reyno de la Nueva Spaña . a Servir el Referido empleo..."
- (55) AGI: Contratación, 5488, N. 1, R. 22.

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REVOLUTIONARY PAPER CURRENCY OF DURANGO - PART I

by William Lovett

Durango is remarkable for the number of different state issues made during the Revolution, partly a function of the different factions in the state, and the manner that issues seem to overlap. The notes also enjoyed widespread usage through the northern states, even down to Mexico City, complementing the other revolutionary issues. This is an initial attempt to reconstruct that history. In addition to the basic sequence of events, this history can be garnered firstly from a study of the notes themselves (their appearance, denominations and signatories though with the caveat that a date or printed signatory is only an indication of intent, not a definite statement of fact, and the knowledge that I have not attempted a detailed study of control letters or validations) and then from a study of official documents, newspaper reports and other correspondence.

A basic summary

Within a month of Madero's assassination in February 1913, rebels led by Calixto Contreras and Domingo Arrieta already controlled rural Durango. Three months later they occupied the state capital and were poised to launch an offensive against Torreón that would mark the beginning of the end for the Huerta government far away in Mexico City. The young civil engineer Pastor Rouaix was appointed governor.

Because of personal animosities Domingo Arrieta and his brothers aligned themselves nationally with Venustiano Carranza rather than Pancho Villa. However, they also coveted political power at the state level and as commanders of the military forces that garrisoned the city of Durango in the summer of 1914 openly fought with Pastor Rouaix for control of the state government. In early August 1914 Arrieta forced Rouaix's resignation and assumed the governorship. Despite what was happening elsewhere, Durango then entered a long period of tranquility characterized by minimal levels of political violence.

The rebels divided again in 1914-15 as those under the leadership of Contreras, mostly from eastern Durango, sided with Villa, while a significant minority, mostly from the mountainous western Durango, followed the Arrietas who joined Carranza. Severino Cenicerós became the Provisional Governor and Military Commander of Durango later in the autumn of 1914 after Villa ordered Contreras to expel the Arrietas and their followers from Durango. The last Villista Governor and Military Commander of Durango was General Máximo García.

In contrast to the relative calm of the Villista Durango, the Carrancista era which began when pursuing Carrancista military forces invaded the state from every direction in the autumn of 1915 was experienced by nearly everyone as a time of war, famine, and pestilence. Unlike the Villista armies, the Carrancista forces that invaded Durango were foreign armies of occupation with no local ties, affiliations, or loyalties, except in the state capital and in the towns of western Durango that continued to be garrisoned by Arrieta forces, nominally loyal to Carranza. As a result the people of Durango were more Villista than ever in 1916.

Bonos of the Asociación Duranguense

In the beginning the rebels extorted forced loans from merchants and other well-to-do citizens, many of whom had all their wealth in lands and buildings. As these properties could not be readily sold, a group of businessmen, who called themselves the Asociación Duranguense, made another suggestion.

On 29 July 1913 the Association agreed a contract with Manuel del Real Alfaro, the Director General de Rentas del Estado, for an issue of bonds (*bonos*). These 100,000 pesos, in denominations of 50c, \$1 and \$5, were to be used to overcome the shortage of small change and to pay for the costs of war; they were to be local, of forced circulation and unlimited duration, until the restoration of peace when they would be redeemed in cash. The Association underwrote the issue with properties. Anyone who needed *bonos* could purchase them from the Tesorería in exchange for merchandise or stock. This contract was ratified by the provisional governor, Pastor Rouaix, on 31 July, who declared the notes of forced circulation.

On 13 September, because of the shortage of small change, Rouaix agreed that the Association could replace \$5.000 in \$5 notes with a similar amount in 20c notes, so there were four different values.

These notes carried the signatures of Manuel del Real Alfaro as Director General and Juan M. Olagaray as Collector of contributions (Recaudor de Contribuciones). On the back they carried the first two articles of the 31 July decree and four clauses from the agreement with the Association.



20c and \$5 of the August 1913 issue



A second issue of 20c, 50c and one peso notes was decreed on 3 October 1913. They are of the same design but have the overprint '2a. Emision', and the new date on the face and reverse.

These Durango bonds were also made of forced circulation in other states, for example by the Jefatura de Armas in Torreón, Coahuila, on 18 October 1913.



At the same time, in October 1913, in Gómez Palacio in the northeast of the state (and in nearby Torreón, Coahuila) the various banks issued bank-on-bank checks as a way of satisfying the revolutionaries' demand for currency without the need to hand over hard cash

\$1 of the October 1913 issue

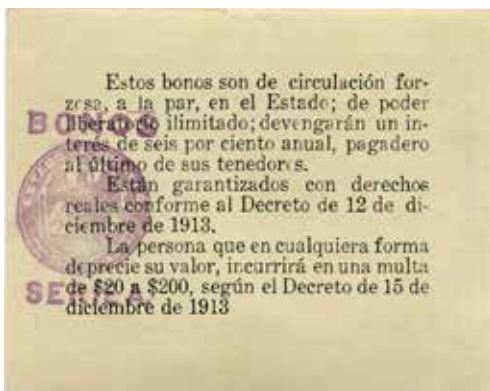
Decree of 12 December 1913

Several later issues refer to a decree of 12 December 1913. No text of such a decree survives though from the text on the following notes it seems that it guaranteed issues with rights over real estate (*derechos reales*). On 13 December Pastor Rouaix did issue a decree that made the bonds issued by the government and by Constitutionalist forces authorized by it of forced circulation throughout the state, under the threat of a fine.

First Estado de Durango notes

These were issued in accordance with the decree of 12 December 1913. They were to carry an annual interest of 6%, and guaranteed by rights over real estate, as stated on their reverse. They bore a single signature, that of del Real Alfaro.





Much later, on 4 April 1916, the then interim Director General, V. M. Castaños, produced the following analysis of issued notes.

	Series	Number	Total
10c	A	100,000	10,000
	B	100,000	10,000
50c	A	100,000	50,000
\$1	A	100,000	100,000
	B	100,000	100,000
\$5	A	15,680	78,400
			\$348,400

50c, \$1 and \$5 notes were counterfeited. According to one notice bogus \$1 notes were almost always 'aged' to hide their weak colors, and some were copies on India paper, touched up in pencil and with paper stuck on the back. The bogus \$5 notes were notably larger, the printing cruder, the lithographed signature of del Real Alfaro was poorer but most obvious was that the '\$5' in the lower left corner was thicker and larger. Finally the deep pink background was poorly imitated. Both denominations lacked the embossed seal and the rubber stamp on the back was badly done. Another notice highlighted the different endings of del Real Alfaro's signature.



A genuine and supposedly counterfeit \$5 note

Carranza's authorisation

On 27 December 1913 Pastor Rouaix told Carranza's agent, Rafael Zubarán, in Hermosillo that his government had just issued paper money guaranteed with future tax receipts which it reckoned it could do in the face of the normal costs of the war. However, the unexpected withdrawal from Torreón had made his government hesitate to take on responsibility for redeeming its notes without a guarantee. Zubarán replied that Carranza suggested Rouaix issue paper money which would be redeemed with a special law once order had been restored.

So, in the next issue, one value had a specific guarantee whilst the others had a more general, indefinite backing. These had the customary oblong shape, were dated January 1914 and had the signatures of Rouaix as Governor, F. Rios Laurenzana as Secretary of State and del Real Alfaro as Director General de Rentas.



Pastor Rouaix



50 centavos note with eight-line inscription

The legend on the back of the 50c notes originally stated that “*Estos bonos son de circulación forzosa, a la par, en el Estado, de poder liberatorio ilimitado; devengarán un interés de seis por ciento anual, pagadero al último de sus tenedores. Están garantizados con derechos conforme al Decreto de 12 de diciembre de 1913. La persona que en cualquiera forma deprecie su valor, incurrirá en una multa de \$20.00 a \$200.00 según el Decreto de 15 de diciembre de 1913.*” so they carried an annual interest of 6%, payable to the final holder, and were backed by taxes, but the interest clause was dropped and the taxes (*derechos*) specified as property taxes (*derechos reales*) on later series, in a shorter inscription.



50 centavos note with seven-line inscription

The \$1 and \$5 notes carried the magical formula that they were authorized by the Primer Jefe of the Ejército Constitucionalista (i.e. Carranza) and would be changed at par for the coins that the Constitutionalist Government would issue.



In reponse to a request by Pastor Rouaix, 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. So this issue was legal currency in various states and is known revalidated by the Jefatura de Hacienda in Guadalajara, Jalisco.



Again, interim Director General, V. M. Castaños, produced the following analysis.

\$5 note with Jefatura de Hacienda, Jalisco revalidation

	Series	Number	Value
50c	B	100,000	50,000
	C	100,000	50,000
\$1	A	91,400	91,400
	B	100,000	100,000
	C	100,000	100,000
	D	100,000	100,000
	E	90,000	90,000
	F	100,000	100,000

	Series	Number	Value
\$1	G	100,000	100,000
	H	100,000	100,000
	I	100,000	100,000
	J	100,000	100,000
\$5	A	96,000	480,000
	B	100,000	500,000
	C	100,000	500,000
	D	100,000	500,000
			\$3,061,400.00

More fractional currency



Obviously more fractional notes were needed as 10c and 50c notes were issued in March 1914, though a newspaper reports says that few 10c notes were issued and people did not expect change when they tendered a \$1 note. The Director General was now signing per pro the state government, and on the reverse it stated that these notes were authorized by the Primer Jefe of the Ejército Constitucionalista and would be changed at par for the coins that the Constitutionalist Government would issue.

On 2 June Carranza, while in Durango, authorised Pastor Rouaix to issue \$1,500,000, in addition to the \$1,000,000 already issued with his approval. Then on 24 June, by which time he had moved on to Saltillo, Carranza

confirmed his authorization to Durango to issue up to \$2,000,000 in *vales*. These were to be of forced circulation throughout the Constitutionalist territory.

Domingo Arrieta issues

The Arrieta brothers, from the Sierra Madre of Durango, were among the first to take up arms in 1910 in support of Francisco Madero. Then after Huerta's *coup d'état* in February 1913 they rebelled again. On 18 June their forces captured the city of Durango, and installed Pastor Rouaix as provisional governor. Domingo Arrieta met with Carranza in Durango in August 1913, and was appointed a General and Comandante Militar of the state.

Domingo Arrieta took over as provisional governor from Pastor Rouaix on 14 August 1914.



That month there was another issue of \$5 and \$50 notes, with the same design and with Carranza's authorization still on the reverse, but with the signatures of Arrieta as governor, José B. Fuentes as secretary and Juan Clark as Director General de Rentas. On 22 September Carranza, perhaps retroactively, authorized Arrieta to issue up to a million pesos for the forces under his command.



In November 1914 Zacatecas included in its list of forced issues the \$5 Series E (*sic*) and \$50 Series A, issued in August and a similar pronouncement was made in San Luis Potosí. However, by mid December 1914 businesses in Durango

were refusing Arrieta's notes. By this time Arrieta had been forced out of the capital, so two other issues cannot be definitely located as to time and place. The first was four similar denominations (50c, \$1, \$5 and \$10), Series F, dated December 1914, ordered through General Enrique Nájera and printed by the firm of J. M. Iguiniz of Guadalajara, Jalisco.



A telegram to Secretary of Finance Villarreal in Mexico City, on 21 December 1914, reported that there were 10,000 Series A notes, and 100,000 Series E notes. The writer did not know the amount of Series F since the forces had sacked the press on leaving. So matters were so confused that the writer did not know the providence of these Series F notes.

On 1 December the Chihuahua government prohibited Arrieta's notes but when Emiliano G. Saravia consulted Villa he was told that this was due to a misinterpretation. Only the Series F were invalid, as unauthorised, but a fortnight later Villa said that he was merely thinking of withdrawing the notes and replacing them with notes of other issues, so Saravia declared the notes still of forced circulation. On 26 February 1915 the Durango newspaper *La Voz de la Revolución* reported that Arrieta, who still considered himself governor, had made the later issue, which was only good amongst the troops under his command. To forewarn the public it described the differences (date, printer's imprint, etc) though Arrieta used the same template.

So these Arrieta notes, which were so similar to the earlier Pastor Rouaix notes, entered a sort of legal limbo when Arrieta was driven out by the Villista forces.

The other issue comprises notes with legends referring to both Topia, in the northeastern Sierra Madre, and Durango. They consist of a \$1 from Topia and a \$5 and \$10 from Durango dated December 1914 and another \$1 from Topia and \$5 and \$10 (two types) from Durango dated March 1915.



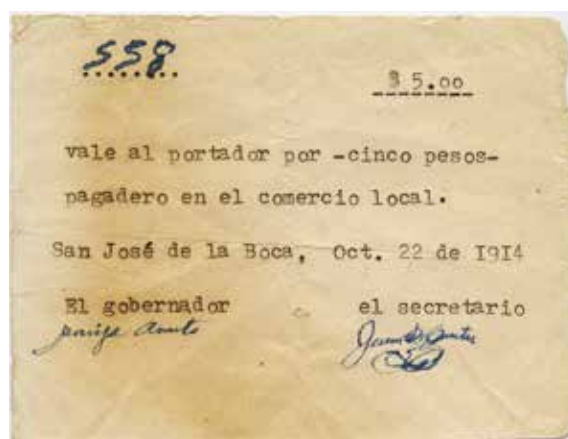
\$1, Topia, December 1914



\$5, Durango, March 1915

All are very primitive, with simple typefaces, handwritten numbers and a 'Gobierno Constitucionalista' validating seal on a blank back. They carry the names of Arrieta, as governor, and Juan B. Fuentes, as secretary. Some values have the letter 'S. B.', 'S.C.' or 'S.D.' which suggests at least four S[eries] (-, B, C, D). Possible reasons for these makeshift issues are a failure of the Guadalajara firm to deliver, or to the primitive resources some of Arrieta's supporters found at their disposal.

Also, recently a typewritten five peso voucher from nearby San José de la Boca, dated 22 October 1914, and signed by Arrieta and Fuentes, has appeared. This is a companion to the ten peso voucher that was already listed in catalogs.



(to be continued)

DI SOTTO IN SU

by Dr. Luis M. Gomez Wulschner

Introduction

The present work has to do with a curious detail which appears at the base of the Bourbon crown stamped into the Spanish coat-of-arms of a few coins of the 1821 RG Zacatecas mint. The detail I am referring to is the double arc, also known as the secondary or inferior arc (Gilboy, 1999:61), which may be seen directly below the small basket of the crown, which is named "di sotto in su" and is translated from Italian "from below, upwards", and which in the decorative arts of the XVII and XVIII centuries in Italy was used to paint roofs in perspective. That is, the fact that the double arc exists at the base of the crown lends itself to the optical illusion of seeing it in perspective. Practically all the coins struck in Spain as well as in New Spain do not show this characteristic, except for a few

examples. Such are those coins of Philip V minted at Segovia and Valencia and those pillar type half-reales struck at the Mexico City Mint from 1732 to 1771.



Crown with a double arc, di sotto in su, on a Zs 1821 RG coin



Reverse of a 4 Real Pillar Dollar (Philip V) and an 8 Real bust coin (Ferdinand VII) struck at the Mexico City Mint. Both without the double arc

Nonetheless, another case took place in New Spain at the Royalist Mints of Guadalajara and Zacatecas. Of the former, not all the dates bear this characteristic on the crown, but only the silver coins dated 1818, 1821 and 1822 FS and the 1821 gold coins. The following figure shows the reverse of an 1814 and 1821 eight real coin and an 1821 eight escudo piece struck at the Guadalajara mint bearing both types of crowns.



Normal crown (1814) and double arc crowns, di sotto in su, on silver and gold (1821) Guadalajara mint. Reverses of an 8 Real and 8 Escudos

The logical question is: why did this characteristic appear on coins struck at the Guadalajara mint in 1818, and later, on a few assayer RG Zacatecas pieces? The hypothesis I have, and which I will try to explain in this brief work, has to do with the presence and work of a very interesting personage, Dionisio Sancho, who was a draftsman, engraver and chamber sculptor, appointed by his Majesty Charles IV in 1795 (Fernandez y Mantilla, 2003:77).

Provisional Mints

Practically since the Royal Mexico City Mint began to operate, the master dies used to create the punches were sent from Spain. When the war for Independence began in 1810, the routes and tracks used for silver transportation were seriously threatened and therefore it became necessary to open several provisional mints (González, 1997:225). Thus, the hegemonic Mexico City Mint gave way to the establishing of provisional mints at the principal mining centers in New Spain: Chihuahua, Durango, Guanajuato, Sombrerete and Zacatecas in 1810; Guadalajara and Real de Catorce in

1811; Oaxaca in 1812 and Valladolid in 1813. The last three did not prosper and produced very limited mintages. During the first years of operation of these provisional mints, the engravers cut dies in a very rudimentary fashion. Later on, the master dies would be sent from the Mexico City Mint.

The Guadalajara Mint

Field Marshal José de la Cruz, who at that time was provincial governor, military commander and president of the Guadalajara tribunal court, on 20 May 1911, convoked the advisory board of the Royal Treasury to found and establish a provincial mint in that city. It was located at the lower part of the parliament building and José María Zavala was named director and Manuel Rivera, assayer (Sánchez, 2003:53).

Toward the end of 1813 the new director was Juan José Jiménez Sandoval. Due to distrust generated between the Royal Treasurer and the assayer, among other vicissitudes, such as the circulation in the region of counterfeit coins from Durango, Guanajuato and Zacatecas as well as insurgent counter-stamped coins, the Guadalajara Mint was closed by order of the viceroy on 30 March 1815 (Medina, 1909:64). Nevertheless, this disposition was not applied until 30 April (González, 1997:239; Pradeau, 1950:148). The assayer, Rivera, was removed from his post and imprisoned for his shady dealings and the director, Jiménez, resigned one month after the mint was closed (Sánchez, 2003:59).

On 6 April 1816, Viceroy Félix María Calleja appointed the architect, engraver and professor of sculpture at the Royal Academy of San Carlos, Dionisio Sancho, director of the Guadalajara mint.

The reconstruction of new minting machinery and remodeling of the building were undertaken immediately, and what is perhaps the most important for us was the cutting of new dies and punches taken from the master dies obtained from the Royal Mexico City Mint. All these works were concluded by December that same year (Sanchez, 2003:60).

What was the reason for the arrival of Dionisio Sancho in New Spain? Due to Napoleon's invasion in 1808 and the ascension to the throne of José Bonaparte, the situation became difficult for Sancho: therefore he moved from Seville to Madrid where by royal order of 20 August 1810 he was appointed Director of Sculpture at the Royal Academy of San Carlos. Thus, with this appointment and a recommendation addressed to the secretary of the academy, Don Antonio Piñero, he migrated to New Spain on 16 February 1811. At the meeting of the Superior Governing Board (Junta Superior de Gobierno) the appointment granted by his Majesty was read, but, since that position had already been taken by the eminent Manuel Tolsa, the board decided to transfer him to the position of Director of architecture, which had been vacated when Francisco Clapera died. When his advanced attributes and knowledge of the noble arts became evident, as well as his experience engraving punches and dies, Viceroy Calleja did not hesitate to send him to Guadalajara to organize and reopen that mint; he assigned him an annual salary of 2,000 pesos (González, 1997:239). However, due to the incompetence of the deputy assayer, the mint did not operate again until February 1818, when Francisco Suárez, also appointed by Félix María Calleja, became the new assayer.

As mentioned before, the master die, from which the engraver produced the punches to cut and complete the die, was sent by the Royal Mexico City Mint to the provisional mints.

Once installed in Guadalajara, Dionisio Sancho engraved the punches and dies to produce the brilliant eight Reales coins that were to see the light dated 1818.

If one compares these pieces with the previous 1815 issues, the outstanding quality which Sancho achieved on these coins with the new machinery and dies is clearly discernible; to such an extent that the chief engraver of the Realm and the Royal assayer had a coin tested from each provisional mint. The result indicated that both in regard to its fineness of silver and the high-quality of its production, no defect could be found in the coin struck at the Guadalajara mint (González, 1997:241).



Master die with a crown, numbers and letters



Master die with towers and lions to form the Spanish coat-of-arms



Guadalajara 8 Reales, 1822 FS. Crown with the double the arc, di sotto in su. Obverse and reverse

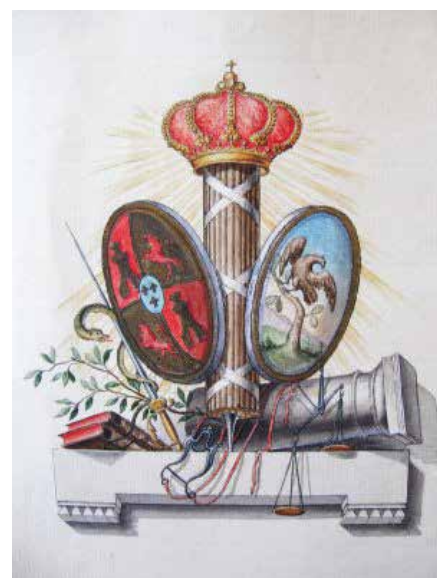
For some unknown reason, our personage, Dionisio Sancho, engraved the double arc “di sotto in su” on the chief punch or master die, a step previous to the production of the final dies, a characteristic which may be seen on practically all the gold and silver coins struck at the Guadalajara mint during 1818, 1821 and 1822. Why he engraved the lower part of the crown on the chief punch will always be a mystery; nonetheless, it caused the reproduction of this detail on all the dies used for different mintages, and, since this peculiarity appears on the reverse of the coins, it forms part of the design of all the dies, time and again, regardless of the date of issue. Having said this, it is also inferred as such,

with the presence of this detail on some Zacatecas 1821 RG coins precisely upon his arrival at the Zacatecas mint.

Despite the success obtained as director of the Guadalajara mint, Dionisio Sancho was obliged to leave the city toward the end of 1820 because of a long, painful legal case that had lasted three years, which had been initiated by the public prosecutor of the Royal Court of Guadalajara, Vicente Alonso Andrade, and Manuel Mendiola, the prosecutor of this crime. According to prosecutor Alonso, in the recent decoration of the court hall, a work entrusted to Dionisio Sancho while he was in charge of the mint, the artist had painted subversive elements next to the Spanish coat-of-arms, such as an example of an “Insurgent eagle”, similar to that which appeared on coins issued by the American Congress (Fernandez y Mantilla, 2003:78-80).

Dionisio Sancho in Zacatecas

During the last months of 1820 Manuel Ramos was still the chief director of the Zacatecas mint, and the coinage until then had been known for its lack of quality, practically since its beginning. In order to remedy this problem the viceroy consulted Dionisio Sancho who had perfected coinage production at the Guadalajara mint; he asked him for his opinion regarding the possibility of reforming the Zacatecas coinage. Sancho considered the coinage to be deplorable, even suggesting it to be an offense to his majesty. He answered that it would be possible to do it without requiring extensive financial investment and he, himself, would commit to undertake the task (Matamala, 1998:178). Dionisio Sancho was appointed by the Viceroy to be Director of the Zacatecas Mint and was confirmed by royal order on the first of January 1821.



Coat-of-arms painted by Sancho in the Sala de Audiencias at Guadalajara

It is probable that Sancho arrived at the Zacatecas mint with the necessary set of tools in order to carry out his work effectively. Perhaps, among his tools there was a punch or die with the double arc crown or in perspective “di sotto in su”. Thus, the conclusion is that, only a few coins, always cataloged as rare and even as errors (Levy, 2002:73), dated 1821 and with assayer letters RG (José Rodríguez Gallinar) bear the characteristic of the double arc at the base of the crown.

“Di sotto in su” on the 1821 RG coins of Zacatecas

During the year 1821 the Zacatecas mint produced ½, 1, 2 and 8 Reales coins. There were three assayers: AG, RG and AZ on the one and two Reales, while there were two assayers, AG and RG, and RG and AZ on the one-half and eight Reales respectively. It is worth mentioning that the production was considerably high that year, with over 2.4 million pesos minted (Pradeau, 1950:155). Perhaps this is why there were three assayers, a unique situation among the provisional mints during the war for Independence.

It is strange that only a handful of coins with values of one, two and eight Reales bear the described characteristic at the base of the crown on the shield of Spain.



One, two and eight Reales 1821 RG Zacatecas coins. Double arc crowns, di sotto in su, reverses

At this time I have been unable to find an example of a half Real with this peculiarity; also, specialized books only catalog the eight Reales (KM-111.6) lacking the indication of this variety on one and two Reales coins (Harper, 2002:480).

Since the double arc exists only on a few coins of Zacatecas, as we have indicated, no doubt this peculiarity was on the working die, while in the case of Guadalajara it obviously was on the chief punch and thus it was reproduced on the dies and, therefore, on all the coins of that mint during the specified years.

In a visual inspection of 1821 RG 1, 2 and 8 Reales coins of Zacatecas we can confirm the obvious difference of the "normal" crowns and those with "di sotto in su".



Normal crowns of 1, 2 and 8 Reales 1821 RG Zacatecas coins



Double arc crowns, di sotto in su, on 1, 2 and 8 Reales 1821 RG Zacatecas coins

It is not known why this variety did not continue on the coinage of Zacatecas while it continued until 1822 at the Guadalajara mint, despite the fact that Sancho had left that mint since the last part of 1820. I dare say the high mintage had much to do with it. That is, while the Guadalajara mint struck a little more than 255,174 pesos in 1821, during the same period the Zacatecas mint struck 2.4 million pesos (Orozco y Berra 1993: 109 and 111). Probably, once the dies with the perspective "di sotto in su" crown had worn out, they were replaced with the chief punches that the mint possessed bearing the ordinary based crown.

During the six years that Sancho was in charge of the Zacatecas mint, he achieved important technological advances: he introduced three smelting furnaces, one laminating machine valued at 18 thousand pesos (his project) and a total of three screw presses. In regard to the administrative aspect, in October 1826, he drew up the bylaws of the Zacatecas mint, which were approved and decreed the following year by the Free and Federate State of Zacatecas.

Conclusion

The appearance of the double arc at the base of the crown coincides with the arrival of Dionisio Sancho as director of the Guadalajara mint, and later at that of Zacatecas. We must not forget that Sancho had knowledge and expertise in engraving punches and dies, as well as in the improvement and construction of minting machinery. This explains the high quality of Guadalajara 1818 coinage and that of Zacatecas in 1821.

Regardless of the reason that caused the appearance of the “di sotto in su” crown, or who gave the order to do it or engrave this peculiarity on the chief punch (at Guadalajara) and on the working die (at Zacatecas) a double effect was achieved: one is the production of 1818, 1821 and 1822 coins with this characteristic at the Guadalajara mint while the other is the fact that a small number of rarities were created at the Zacatecas mint.



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THE CASE FOR THE EXISTENCE FOR THE ASSAYER VARIETY C/F H OF THE 1862 ½ ESCUDO FOR THE MEXICO CITY MINT

by Dr. Javier Bolaños Meade

In his description of the 1862 ½ Escudo from Mexico City (½ Escudo 1862 Mo CH) Richard Long mentioned that "in 1958 and 1961 Henry Christiansen had a Fine coin with assayer initials FH, not CH. And a C/F has been reported in just a few dealer descriptions. A student of the ½E series reports that both his C/F and his other coin purchased as a normal CH coin shows a faint F beneath the C" and "...recent catalogs list only the normal coin" (referring to the CH). Indeed neither NGC nor PCGS describe any other assayer variety but CH for the 1862 Mo specimen. I would argue that the C/F variety does, in fact, exist.

A ½ Escudo (NGC AU58 2803312-002 labelled as assayer C H) can be seen here.



On detailed inspection on magnification it can be clearly seen that the top of C has a straight horizontal line (vertical arrow), and the inferior arm of an F (horizontal arrow) .

While I have never seen an FH variety, I would argue that the 1862 Mo C/FH variety should be recognised and included in catalogues as well as population reports of grading services. This of course would increase to different 97 coins (and maybe 98 if at some point in time the FH variety emerges) the ½ Escudo series. The 1862 Mo ½ escudo is easily available, and the frequency of CH and C/FH varieties remains to be determined.

Reference:

Richard A. Long, *Gold Coins of the Early Mexican Republic 1823-1873*. Published by the author. Langlois, OR, 2004.



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