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COVER IMAGE

The cover is of the reverse of three banknotes to illustrate how the Secretaría de Hacienda applied a revenue stamp and an individual bank seal to notes before they were put into circulation to show that the bank had paid the necessary duty. The notes are a \$50 Banco Mercantil de Veracruz, dated 15 March 1898 with a 5c 1897-1898 stamp; a \$10 Banco Occidental de México dated 1 March 1904 with a 2c 1903-1904 stamp, and a \$5 Banco de Guerrero, dated 6 December 1914 with a 2c 1913-1914 stamp.

All these notes were produced by the American Bank Note Company and the vignettes it produced are of the ports of Veracruz, Mazatlán and Acapulco respectively.



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THE SECOND INSURGENT ISSUE: REAL DE CATORCE 1811

by Max. A. Keech

Less than two months after Insurgent forces issued their first coinage in Zacatecas, they struck their second in Real de Catorce. Insurgents under Lt. Coronel José Mariano Jiménez captured the Province of San Luis Potosí in early December 1810 and in January-February 1811 struck the very rare Real de Catorce silver eight reales. This coinage has been incorrectly cataloged in most references¹ as a Royal Provisional issue but can now be conclusively attributed to the Revolutionary forces, based on contemporary sources presented below.



1811 Real de Catorce 8 Reales

At the end of October 1810, just six weeks after the revolution began, Royalist General Calleja marched his troops from his base in San Luis Potosí to retake Guanajuato by way of Aculco and Celaya. Shortly after his departure, an insurrection began at the Carmelite convent which succeeded in delivering the unprotected city to the Insurgent cause. Hearing of the successful revolt, revolutionary Insurgent General Iriarte marched from Zacatecas to plunder San Luis Potosí. As in Zacatecas, when word of the Insurgent advance arrived, the Spaniards and loyalists fled with their belongings. They went to Saltillo or the coast taking most of the money in the province with them. Iriarte plundered what was left but quickly returned to Zacatecas. Father Hidalgo placed Lt. Coronel José Mariano Jiménez in command of the province of San Luis Potosí. Jiménez and his Insurgent forces quickly controlled the entire province including Real de Catorce² and Matehuala. Jiménez entered the town of Real de Charcas on 8 December and Matehuala on the 14th. Jiménez issued a proclamation in Matehuala on the same day, inciting the populace to denounce any Spaniard opposing the insurgents, and also denouncing opportunists claiming to support the revolution but dedicated to robbing instead.



Map of San Luis Potosí Province

The goal, as with Zacatecas, was to recruit men and to seize the wealth of the silver mines. Real de Catorce was the most productive mine in the

1. A noteworthy exception is the description of the ex-Huntington specimen sold in 2012 by Jesús Vico.

2. Real de Catorce is a rich mining city 260 km (160 miles) north of San Luis Potosí and about 25 km from Matehuala. It is located at an elevation of 2,743 m (9,000 feet) in the Sierra de Catorce region of the arid Mexican plateau. The name "Royal Fourteen" relates to a platoon of fourteen Spanish soldiers killed here by the native Chichimec Indians shortly after the conquest. Silver was discovered here in 1772 and its mines were among the richest in Mexico.

Province. The remaining population was sympathetic to the movement and Insurgent General Jiménez was successful in recruiting thousands of men.

At Real de Catorce, the mines were opened and the silver obtained there was used to strike a Provisional 8 reales in January-February 1811. Lt. Coronel Jiménez also established foundries to make weapons in Real de Catorce and other locations. On 7 January with a force now numbering 10,000, Jiménez extended his control north to Saltillo. The Insurgents would hold the province until 20 February 1811. After retaking Guanajuato and Guadalajara, the Royalist General Calleja returned to reclaim San Luis Potosí. The Insurgents retreated from the province ahead of his arrival, consolidating north towards Saltillo. Calleja entered San Luis Potosí around 5 March 1811. Based on this time line we can confidently place the Insurgents' 1811 Real de Catorce coinage in the first two months of the year.³

The design is somewhat crude and simple with the obverse legend "EL R. D. CATORC. POR FERNA. VII. 1811" proclaiming for the imprisoned King. The reverse legend simply states "MONEDA PROVISIONAL. VALE. 8. R." As with the Insurgent/Local arms LVO issue, the Proclamation for Ferdinand has mistakenly led to its attribution as a Royalist issue.⁴ Recall that Ferdinand VII was imprisoned by the French and Joseph Bonaparte occupied the Spanish throne. Many mainland Spanish bureaucrats, nobleman and clergy accepted this situation but not the New World inhabitants. They viewed the mainland sympathizers as French puppets. According to Spanish law, in the absence of the King, sovereignty rested with the people to hold in trust until legitimate authority was restored. The Insurgent leadership professed loyalty to their imprisoned King, claiming to hold sovereignty until his return. The revolutionaries marched from Dolores to Guanajuato under Ferdinand's banner. The entire coinage of the Independent Supreme Junta government from 1811 to 1814 would carry the proclamation of Ferdinand, as would the Insurgent issues at Zongolica. It was only later in the war that Morelos would separate himself from other Insurgent leaders by disavowing loyalty to the King.



Real de Catorce, circa 1893

On 21 March 1811, Lt. Coronel Jose Mariano Jiménez was captured with Insurgent leaders Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende, Juan Aldama and over 900 of their men at Acatita de Baján (Wells of Baján). He was taken to Chihuahua to face treason charges where he was convicted and shot as a traitor on 26 June 1811.

Jiménez's trial testimony has survived and provides convincing evidence of the Insurgent origin of the provisional coinage of Real de Catorce. On 22 May 1811 the 30-year-old revolutionary prisoner gave testimony. A summary of the relevant portions of his testimony is as follows.⁵

Jiménez was asked if he understood the reason for his detention, knew who captured him and if he knew the roles the other prisoners (Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende and Juan Aldama) played in the insurgency.

3. In *El Real de Minas de la Purísima Concepción de los Catorces* (S.L.P., 1993, p. 219-221) Rafael Montejano y Aguiñaga correctly attributed this issue to Jiménez but mistakenly assumed it was struck between 20 and 25 December 1810. He concluded this because Lt. Col. Jiménez was known to be personally in Real de Catorce on those dates. By January/February Jiménez had marched towards Saltillo but his forces still controlled the entire province which remained under his command from December thru February 1811: therefore there is no reason to conclude this coinage dated 1811 was struck earlier.

4. "POR FERNA. VII." can be translated as "In support of Ferdinand VII" or "For Ferdinand VII".

5. Pradeau and others have published English translations which vary slightly but not on any significant facts. This summary is based on Pradeau's translation. While not a direct quote, all relevant facts and events are unchanged.

Jiménez replied that he was aware of the cause of his imprisonment and the roles the others had played in the insurgency. He was aware that he was apprehended by Captain Don Ignacio de Elizondo commanding a garrison from the town of Coahuila.

Jiménez was then asked if it was true that he had gathered militias, fabricated weapons, **issued coinage in this province and neighboring areas**, had imprisoned and supplanted the legitimate authorities, had issued proclamations and edicts and had proposed an alliance with the United States.

Jiménez answered that it is true that he had gathered his garrison in San Luis Potosí and added troops in El Venado, Charcas, Matehuala and Catorce. He acknowledged that he had fabricated weapons such as spears and cannons in Matehuala and Catorce and **that he issued coinage in silver of full fineness and intrinsic value in Real de Catorce**. He said that it is true that he imprisoned the legitimate authorities and replaced them with his appointed men, and that he has indeed issued proclamations and edicts. He said that all these actions resulted from his need to preserve his safety by embracing the insurrection despite being well aware of its consequences. Regarding the minting of coinage, he said that **he had only minted coinage following the example of Zacatecas (Insurgent LVO issues) to provide a circulating media, but always being careful of not harming the King's interests by giving it proper weight and full intrinsic value**.

Jiménez's testimony is conclusive evidence that this rare provisional coinage is the second Insurgent issue and it reaffirms that the Insurgent/Local arms LVO of Zacatecas was the first. Interestingly, he places Insurgent General Iriarte near Catorce during this time. While it is uncertain who served as the insurgent mint master and who created the dies at Catorce, you may recall that the silversmith Manuel Ramos served as the Insurgent mint master and die engraver at Zacatecas under Iriarte.⁶ Perhaps Iriarte ordered Ramos to set up the mint and dies at Real de Catorce. Jiménez's testimony about the intrinsic value of his Real De Catorce coinage is an understatement as all known specimens weigh at least 30 grams compared to a Royal standard of 27 grams

Additional contemporary evidence includes an 1811 edict by the Governor of Coahuila, Antonio Cordero y Bustamante, which authorized acceptance of the Insurgent coinage. The relevant portions of the edict, published in the capital city of Monclova on 11 May 1811 are summarized as follows:

The crimes of the insurrection have obstructed and harmed all commercial and mining activities. In order to reestablish order and for the benefit of the people, **the coins minted by the insurgents in Zacatecas, Fresnillo and Catorce are to be**



José Mariano Jiménez (18 August 1781 – 26 June 1811) was a leading figure in the early War for Independence, second only to Hidalgo and perhaps Ignacio Allende and Juan Aldama. Jiménez was born in San Luis Potosí and educated as a mining engineer at the Colegio de Minería in Mexico City where he graduated in 1804. He joined Hidalgo in Guanajuato at the start of the revolution, rising quickly to the rank of Lieutenant Coronel. Jiménez played a key role in the Insurgent victory at the Battle of Monte de las Cruces following which he traveled to Mexico City to ask the Viceroy for the surrender of the City! Shortly after, Jiménez was given command of the Province of San Luis Potosí. After subduing San Luis Potosí and the surrounding provinces, he took Saltillo and then marched on Chihuahua with Hidalgo, Allende, Aldama and a thousand men. He had a reputation for kindness to captured Spaniards and Royalist soldiers, often releasing them with letters of safe passage. After an act of betrayal by a subordinate, Jiménez, Hidalgo, Allende, Aldama and 900 of their men were captured at Baján. Following a trial, he was executed by firing squad, decapitated and his severed head displayed in an iron cage on a corner of the Alhóndiga de Granaditas (Grain House) in Guanajuato along with the heads of Hidalgo, Allende and Aldama. He now rests in a mausoleum at the Independence Column in Mexico City.

6. Manuel Ramos would continue his role as Mint Master in Zacatecas after the Royalist take over. We conclude therefore that he was not considered a revolutionist but rather a technician under orders.

accepted as legal tender in the province under my authority. These coins are to be accepted in addition to the coins of independent American type, and those minted by legitimate authorities in Sombrerete and Durango, with the understanding that when the circumstances permit, the coins of the insurgents will be recalled on account of the King by paying the full face value to their owners.

The Insurgent eight reales of Real de Catorce was plentiful enough to circulate in the province of Coahuila, yet it is quite rare today. With a silver content of nine reales the Insurgents were incentivizing its acceptance. This one real premium was an irresistible attractant to the melting pot and helps explain its current rarity. While a little outside of Gresham's Law's normal application, similar forces are at work (Gresham's Law states that "bad money drives out good"). Incredibly, there are two different types of this very rare Insurgent coinage. The first type of eight reales bears the date 1811 on the obverse and has been plated in all standard references. The second type has an additional date on the reverse with the abbreviated legend PROVIS(IONAL). This second type has not been plated in prior references and its only mention was by Yriarte who states "pieces with date on reverse are known to exist".⁷

To conclude, we can now comfortably move the Real de Catorce coinage from the Royalist to the Revolutionary camp. It is the second Insurgent issue of the War for Independence!

7. José de Yriarte, *Catalogo de los Reales de a Ocho Españoles*, 1965, p.122.

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A 40-YEAR STORY: THE REVENUE STAMPS ON MEXICAN BANKNOTES ISSUED BY THE PRIVATE ISSUING BANKS - PART II

by Cedrian López-Bosch Martineau

In Part I of my article, published in the March 2021 issue, I explained the creation and early adoption of the Stamp Revenue in banknotes issued by private banks in Mexico, as well as the establishment of the Stamp Printing Office, and ended with the stamps that would be affixed on the notes of the two banks with privileges of nationwide acceptance. However, the banking system expanded on a regional basis and state banks also had to abide by the Revenue Stamp Law. In the following pages I present the evolution of these stamps until the last issue of those private banks at the beginning of the Mexican Revolution.

Banknotes dated between 1887 and 1889 of five pesos and above from the Banco Comercial de Chihuahua (M83-M88), Mexicano (M122-M126), Minero (M131-M137) and de Chihuahua (M76-M78), as well as those of the newly created banks in Durango, Nuevo León, San Luis Potosí, Sonora, Yucatán and Zacatecas from the following years also have the Revenue Stamp. With the creation of additional banks and the increasing issue of banknotes, there are more banknotes to analyze and from this moment on it is relatively easier to confirm the existence of different values of the Revenue Stamp printed on banknotes, as well as to see the annual changes to the stamps themselves. Nevertheless, the small number of high value banknotes did not allow me to confirm whether there are other values. So far, I have been able to confirm stamps of two cents on the 5 and 10 pesos banknotes; five cents for fifty pesos and ten cents for 100 pesos. Unlike previous years, those paying two cents, rather than having two one cent stamps, have only one stamp with the two cent value on them. I still need to confirm whether 500 and 1,000 pesos banknotes bear the 50 cent and 1 peso stamps.

Interestingly, unlike previous and later years, between 1886-1887 and 1892-1893, all the stamps less than one peso have the same color, making it more difficult to distinguish the denomination in worn notes.

				
1888-1889 Benito Juárez 21 x 27 mm (DO#145 2¢, 147 5¢ and 148 10¢ all red)	1889-1890 Miguel Hidalgo 23 x 29 mm (DO#157 2¢, 159 5¢ and 160 10¢ all orange)	1890-1891 Francisco Xavier Mina 29 x 33 mm (DO#169 2¢, 171 5¢ and 172 10¢ all green)	1891-1892 Miguel Lerdo de Tejada ²⁹ 20 x 27 mm (DO#181 2¢, 183 5¢ and 184 10¢ all brown)	1892-1893 Ignacio Comonfort 21 x 26 mm (DO#193 2¢, 195 5¢ and 196 10¢ all blue)



1891 Banco de Zacatecas five pesos

29. Richard Stevens in *The Revenue Stamps of Mexico* (1979) identifies the portrait as J. de la Fuente and Michael D. Roberts in *Mexico's revenue stamps* says it is Sebastián Lerdo de la Fuente. I have not found anyone under this name and I do not think it is either José Antonio de la Fuente, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs or President Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, but might be his brother, Miguel.

The 1893 Federal Revenue Stamp Law established new rates, but without significant changes for banknotes. It only extended the exception of the Banco Nacional de México to those banks that had specific franchises in their concessions, implicitly recognizing the preferential right of payment of the Banco de Londres y México:

Up to twenty pesos	\$0.02
Exceeding this amount, for every fifty pesos or fraction	\$0.05

Banks that have obtained some franchises with respect to Revenue Stamp in their respective concessions will be governed by these.

The 1 and 2 peso notes issued until 1897, as well as those of 5, 10 and 20 pesos, continued to pay a fee of 2 cents; those of 50 pesos, 5 cents; the 100 pesos, 10 cents; and, the 500 pesos 50 cents. I have not been able to see 1,000 peso bills but they must have paid a 1 peso fee.

In spite of my best effort to illustrate the most clear stamps and banknotes in the best condition, in several cases it is very difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the value of the stamp or the stamp itself, either because of the wear or lack of contrast. This was not foreign to the Printing Office which suggested to the Ministry of Finance in 1889 to indicate to the banks for future issues the convenience of having a blank space on the reverse of the banknotes, in order to be able to print the stamps clear and clean.

			
1893-1894 José María Arteaga Magallanes 22 x 29 mm	1894-1895 National Arms 22 x 28 mm (DO#217 2¢ yellow brown and 219 5¢ lilac- brown)	1895-1896 Head of Liberty (small bust) 21 x 25 mm (DO#229 2¢ vermilion, 230 5¢ blue-green, 231 10¢ blue)	1896-1897 Head of Liberty (large bust) 20 x 25 mm (DO#239 2¢ blue, 240 5¢ orange and 241 10¢ red- brown)

Although the banks had already been complying with this obligation from what was defined in the Revenue Stamp Law, the General Law of Credit Institutions of 19 March 1897 confirmed their obligation to comply with the payment and print a stamp on the banknotes:

Article 26. No banknote shall be put into circulation without the corresponding stamp, which will be engraved on the same banknote by the Stamp Printing Office. The order will only be issued by the Ministry of Finance, after verifying that the amount of banknotes fits within the limits set for issuance in the first part of the article 16.






The Revenue Stamp Law also kept in its wording the incremental tariff every fifty pesos, as in previous years: however, from 1897 the 50, 100, 500 and 1,000 peso notes had a single stamp of 5 cents each, since the new banking law established in its article 124:





Banknotes, mortgage bonds, certificates of deposit and cash bonds that credit institutions put into circulation, as well as the checks that they issue and those that are drawn at their expense, will bear the stamp that the stamp laws determine; *but with the limitation that, whatever the value of the said titles or documents, that of the stamp will never exceed five cents.*

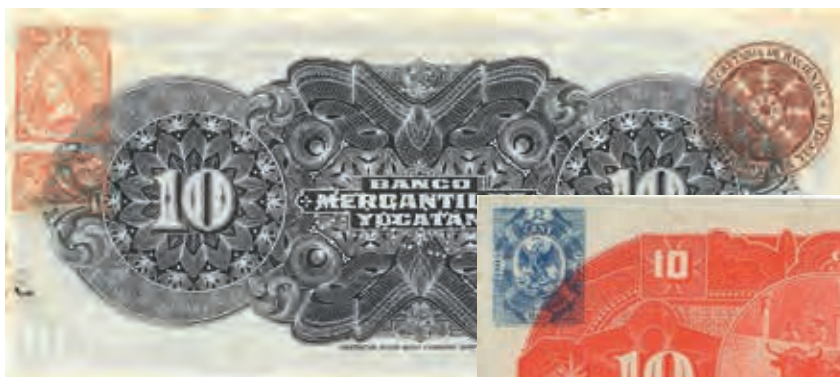
The Ministry required inspectors to sign the banknotes, not only to certify compliance with issue requirements, but also as a security measure. However, with the growing volume of banknotes in circulation, it authorized the Printing Office, in addition to the guilloche and the Revenue Stamp, to also print the facsimile of such signature on five and ten peso notes. Thus, it confirmed its intention to use both the guilloche and the Revenue Stamp as instruments to authenticate and prevent counterfeiting.³⁰

Banknotes continued to bear the Revenue Stamps year after year in denominations of 5 pesos onwards and it is relatively common to see all the stamps with better or lower quality and, with few exceptions, the stamps used correspond to the fiscal year. The low denomination banknotes, one peso and below, were withdrawn in the next five years.

30. SHCP, Memoirs of the Ministry of Finance 1897-1898, p 10

				
1897-1898 National Arms 21 x 25 mm (DO#249 2¢ vermillion or rose 250 5¢ brown and 253 50¢ emerald)	1898-1899 Aztec Calendar and Eagle 20 x 25 mm (DO#259 2¢ ultramarine and 260 5¢ orange)	1899-1900 Justice 20 x 25 mm (DO#269 2¢ orange-red and 270 5¢ blue)	1900-1901 Matías Romero 20 x 25 mm (DO#279 2¢ blue and 280 5¢ green)	1901-1902 José María Morelos 20 x 25 mm (DO#289 2¢ blue green and 290 5¢ yellow- brown)

			
1902-1903 National Arms 20 x 25 mm (DO#299 2¢ green and 300 5¢ ultramarine)	1903-1904 Liberty 20 x 40 mm (R#226 2¢ orange and 227 5¢ brown)	1904-1905 National Arms 20 x 25 mm (DO#323 2¢ rose and 324 5¢ violet-brown)	1905-1906 National Arms 20 x 25 mm (DO#335 2¢ blue and 336 5¢ green)



1904 Banco Mercantil de Yucatán 10 pesos and 1906 Banco de Chiapas 10 pesos

Interestingly, in the fiscal year 1903-1904 rather than using the Books and Documents, the Revenue Stamps printed on banknotes were the Internal Revenue ones, with the bust of the republic, with the stub (*talón*) included.

The last Revenue Stamp Act applicable to banknotes was the one issued on 1 June 1906. There was no change in the rates applicable to these documents:

Up to twenty pesos	\$0.02
Exceeding this amount, for every fifty pesos or fraction	\$0.05
The banks that have obtained some franchises regarding stamp duty in their respective concessions, will be governed by these	

The 1907 financial crisis produced a relatively low number of issues in 1908 and 1909, but these resumed and increased in the following years.

			
1906-1907 Miguel Hidalgo 20 x 25 mm (DO#347 2¢ orange-red and 349 5¢ blue)	1907-1908 Ignacio Allende 20 x 25 mm (DO#360 2¢ green and 362 5¢ brown)	1908-1909 National Arms 20 x 25 mm (DO#373 2¢ red brown and 375 5¢ blue)	1909-1910 José María Morelos 20 x 25 mm (DO#386 2¢ brown and 388 5¢ green)

		
1910-1911 Miguel Hidalgo 20 x 25 mm (DO#399 2¢ slate and 401 5¢ bistre)	1911-1912 Escudo nacional 20 x 25 mm (DO#413 2¢ slate and 415 5¢ blue)	1912-1913 Escudo nacional 20 x 25 mm (DO#426 2¢ green and 428 5¢ vermillion)



1910 Banco Oriental de México 10 pesos

	
1913-1914 Mariano Matamoros 20 x 25 mm (DO#438 1¢ olive, 439 2¢ green and 441 5¢ orange)	1914-1915 Arms and child 20 x 25 mm (DO#452 2¢ green and 454 5¢ orange)

On 11 October 1913 Victoriano Huerta granted himself extraordinary powers under which he issued various decrees with the aim of obtaining resources to maintain his government afloat and fight Constitutionalist forces. On 5 November he suspended the obligation of the issuing banks to redeem their banknotes in cash, that is, it imposed their compulsory circulation and, on 19 November, he allowed these banks to also issue 1 and 2 peso banknotes and days later also 50 cents notes, although only the Banco de Jalisco managed to put the latter into circulation. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in the decree, the one and two peso bills of around a dozen banks put into circulation between the end of 1913 and 1914 bear a one cent Revenue Stamp. Most of them bear the stamp of Mariano Matamoros, but those dated from July 1914 such as that of the Banco de Coahuila (M175), Guanajuato (M348a) and the Banco Minero de Chihuahua (M130d), even some of the latter dated in June, also were printed with the one with the arms and child but it is not easy to distinguish.

A lesser-known decree, at least among the numismatic community, was also published on 19 November, by which Huerta created and increased

various taxes.³¹ According to the recitals, these measures sought to address the increase in expenses, the depreciation of the currency, the increase in debt service and would be reversed or eliminated when circumstances permitted. Article 1 doubled the tariffs indicated in art. 14 of the Revenue Stamp Law, among which banknotes were included. According to the transitory articles, when stamps were printed on stocks, bills, bonds and other documents, the fee would be paid on the date of request for the printing of said stamps, regardless of whether the date of said documents was earlier. This situation may explain why two stamps of two cents each appear on the 5-peso banknotes issued by the Banco de Hidalgo dated 1 December 1913 (M369b) and in those of 5 and 20 pesos from the Banco Oriental de México on 3 January 1914 (M460c and M462c, respectively) instead of just one. However, not all the banknotes from that time fall into this case; those of 1 peso of the Banco de Yucatán dated 30 November, those of the Banco Nacional de México of 6 December, have only one like almost all those issued in 1914 including the 5 pesos of the Banco de Hidalgo of 21 April 1914. However, the Banco Oriental notes represent an even more interesting case, given that there are 5 and 20 peso notes with one and two stamps and other denominations of the same date with only one³². Surely the measure was quickly reversed although I have not yet found a reference to it.

In the following years, during the Revolution, there were multiple issues of paper money, issued normally only backed by the political force of the military authorities in turn, however there were also commercial issues that paid the Revenue Stamp, not printed directly on them like banknotes, but with adhesive stamps on the reverse, but those pieces merit a separate study.

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31. Official Gazette, 19 November 1913 pp 158-160

32. After a careful review of the banknotes in the numismatic collection of the Banco de México I managed to see that two stamps are seen on five peso banknotes within the 410,000 to 509,000 serial number range, and beyond 510,000 they normally only have one stamp (it must be said that there are few outliers). Likewise, in the 20 pesos banknotes, there are two stamps on those ranging 45,000 to 53,000, and only one stamp beyond 55,000 (to 69,000). Probably, a counter order arrived when they were sealing those notes.

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A VERY HIDDEN CORNER: THE STORY OF A 1943 ISSUE IN MONTERREY

by Ricardo de León Tallavas

If you collect Mexican paper money you most certainly have seen in the catalogs the checks issued in different parts of Mexico in 1943. Their denominations are two - 25 and 50 centavos, and the reason for their existence can be guessed: shortage of small change. But why did this whole ordeal happen on a national scale? The answer is both simple and complex: World War II and local, specific circumstances associated to this worldwide event. Several Mexican states issued them, and the information published regarding their existence and circulation, and redemption, is very scarce. Here is the case of Monterrey, which could serve as an example of what might have happened in other parts of the country at this time.

On 28 May 1942 the Declaration of War that Mexico issued against Germany, Japan and Italy after the torpedoing of a couple of Mexican ships in the Gulf of Mexico took effect. For the first and only time in the 20th century Mexico issued a Declaration of War. This caused an altered state of things in quiet Mexico, and the hoarding of precious metals began, slowly at first and more aggressively in 1943. 50c coins had not been produced since 1939 and in 1942 the production was very limited (800,000 pieces).

By 1943 the systematic hoarding of silver coins was the norm, particularly those of 50 centavos and the remnant of the silver 20 centavos coinage. In Monterrey the situation got very acute by August: these denominations simply vanished from circulation and commerce in general became crippled by the lack of small change. Soon after, the one peso and even the nickel coins also suffered from hoarding; the situation was getting out of hand. In Monterrey the first sector that felt this lack of change was the public transport drivers, so the first complaints came from there. On 17 August the ten public transportation companies issued a communique explaining that under no circumstance could the public ride without paying the fare. They explained that being short of change was no excuse. Two alternatives were given to solve this situation. The first one was to purchase in advance sheets of six (for 50 cents) or 12 tickets (for one peso). The second one was the very first hint of the public checks that are the central subject of this article: "We are in advanced arrangements to issue public checks for 50 centavos".

Two days later, on 19 August, Mr. Refugio Nosedal, Manager of the National Chamber of Commerce in Monterrey, declared that this crisis was not provoked by the lack of minting of silver 50c and 20c coins, but rather by some speculators privately and also publicly buying these denominations at a rate of 5c to 10c over their face value. By then, the Cervecería Cuauhtémoc, the local brewery company, had already, since 12 August, privately issued 50c checks to their employees in their different factories. These checks were readily accepted and did not need any legal regulation as they were a private way of dealing with an issue that directly affected their employees. These checks circulated on a very small scale, but they became the perfect trial of what was to come.

The checks issued on 12 August came from the Cervecería, but also from the satellite companies derived from the elaboration and commercialization of beer: Hojalata y Lámina (tin sheet factory), Cartón Titán (cardboard factory) and Vidrio Plano (glass factory). These checks were drawn "on a special account" at the Banco de Nuevo León.



A 50c check from the Cervecería Cuauhtémoc dated 12 August

On 19 August the manager of the Banco de México in Monterrey, Mr. Manuel M. Ortiz, declared that the mint was working day and night coining the silver 50c and copper 20c coins. Mr. Ortiz also declared that talks were very well advanced on "soon-to-be issued 50 centavos checks". Five local banks (Banco Nacional de México, Crédito Industrial, Banco Mercantil, Banco de Nuevo León and Banco Comercial) were going to exchange these checks and the National Chamber of Commerce's Office in Monterrey would deposit the necessary funds in advance to pay these checks.

The local newspapers mentioned that the brewery factories' checks were being subjected to some but no major reticence from the public: I assume that because people were not told in advance about their existence they took the majority by surprise. The press stated that the public had begun using entire sheets of bus tickets as money, just as in the Revolution a couple of decades earlier. The newspapers added that the real problem was really the missing 5c, 10c and 20c coins, which testifies to a more complex problem than just the 50 centavos coins been missing from circulation.



A 50c check from the Cámara Nacional drawn on the Banco de Nuevo León dated 19 August



A 50c check from the Cámara Nacional drawn on the Crédito Industrial de Monterrey dated 20 August



A 50c check from the Cámara Nacional drawn on the Banco Comercial de Monterrey dated 28 August

On 22 August there was written reassurance of the public welcoming these checks, testifying to their effectiveness in smoothing the blatant problem of lacking small change. The public was so eager to acquire these checks that many requests were made by various sources. The National Chamber of Commerce in Monterrey directed the public to get as many of these checks as they wanted directly through the different banks that were distributing them. The press note assured the public that they were as good as silver as the funds had been deposited in full in such coin in advance.

In the following days the situation was not getting any better; people were constantly hoarding small change. Promises of the shipment of small change were assured by the Banco de México, but the coins simply were not coming. The handwritten notes hung on each commercial entrance or bus, reading "No hay cambio" (there is no change!) were now part of everyday life. By 28 August, barely a week after being placed into circulation, the Post Office was refusing to accept these checks. To aggravate the situation some of the small private commercial stores issued their own IOUs

(which more than likely would have been blank pieces of paper with a handmade number and a commercial stamp of some sort). Complaints about the acceptance of these checks were numerous. On 29 August the hectic circulation of these checks was again blamed for the hoarding of silver coins. The Federal Offices were still refusing these checks, fueling the skepticism. One proof that speculation affected everyone is the fact that the distributors of sugar refused to sell their product unless payment was made exclusively by silver coin or banknotes of five pesos or more. They would not even accept the \$1 banknotes from the Banco de México because they were still paper.

Many times the National Chamber of Commerce in Monterrey gave assurance of the checks being backed by silver deposits, but people still refused them, selectively in certain transactions more than others, but as a general practice. Nonetheless, an interesting twist appeared that complicated this game, the apparition of checks from out of town. On 30 August newspapers reported the presence of checks from the neighbor states of Coahuila and San Luis Potosí, particularly ones issued in the city of Torreón. The general public and banks simply did not know what to do with them; eventually it was agreed to pay them at the banks as out-of-state checks and take a commission of 25 centavos of the 50 centavos face value. By 30 August the last consignment of checks was issued, completing a total of 100,000 pesos, or 200,000 checks that absolutely flooded every social and economic aspect. That day, the Banco de México assured that a shipment of 450,000 pesos in 50c silver coins was being collected and would show up very soon in Monterrey. Mr. Miguel Margáin again reassured that each check was backed up by silver coins already deposited in the banks and reluctantly public offices began to accept these checks again, forced by the statements made by the Banco de México. A week later there was still no shipment of small change and things were not getting any better with speculation or rejection of these checks.

Things turned to the worse by an unforeseen miscalculation that made these checks doomed from start: their paper. Checks are normally made for circulation in a single, maybe two, transactions, but not for a regular daily circulation by many holders. These checks very quickly became rags and people refused to accept them on the fear that banks would not exchange them. The banks started a crusade to exchange at least the more damaged ones, trying with this move to stop the massive refusal. News of the proverbial shipment of coins were made until October, with the National Chamber of Commerce promising to “continue issuing and printing these checks”, however there is no record of a single check over the 100,000 pesos already authorized, which leads one to believe that they meant to use some checks set aside at the banks. On 16 September a bitter comparison was made between the Banco Nacional de México in Mexico City and their branch in Monterrey; while the one in the south was freely giving small change to anyone that wanted it, serious problems were faced in the north as the local branch was unable to do just that.

On 24 September the long-expected shipment of coins finally reached Monterrey, enough to start immediately recalling the checks. This was the beginning of the end. The first mass rejection of the checks after this shipment was announced happened with the bus companies, to the extent of making the public ask for those bus lines that were not obeying the law and accepting them as emergency legal tender until being exchanged to be disenfranchised. By 24 November the checks were still in circulation but the Banco de México announced that all coin shipments had reached Monterrey and that the checks should be on their way out. On 7 December these “pachucos” (a nickname that they received in Monterrey that means “flashy” but also “tacky”) started being exchanged after a little over three months of very hectic and intense circulation. The plan was for people simply to exchange them at the different banks that issued them in the first place, but the Banco de México decided also to accept them and become a point of exchange.

The last mention of these checks appeared on 11 March 1944. The National Chamber of Commerce issued an announcement:

URGENT NOTICE.

As the circumstances that motivated the issue by this Chamber of 50c bearer checks has disappeared, we ask those that still hold any to please turn them in for immediate exchange to the bank that issued them within the stipulated term which will end on 30 April 1944.

Monterrey, N. L., 11 March 1944

NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF MONTERREY.

These interesting checks have become extremely rare and they are very collectible, their prices skyrocket whenever they have appeared on the market. I have not yet found yet any balances to see how many could have escaped from being exchanged and destroyed. Do you own any of them?

THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY CORNER

by David Hughes

Copper Oaxaca 50-centavo pattern

Another piece from Oaxaca, originally described by Don Bailey and Joe Flores in *Viva La Revolución, the Money of the Mexican Revolution*, is a copper pattern strike of the 50-centavo series. Per the April 1915 Oaxaca Mint Report, 320 large 28mm 50-centavo coins were struck, each around 10.3g of 0.25 fine silver. The issue was not released, and subsequently melted down for new coins: however, a few escaped to become the RRrare OAX-72 (GB-342).

In May 1915, there was an incursion by Carranza forces, eventually expelled by Oaxaca state forces. When the State Mint reopened under a new government, a smaller 22mm silver 50-centavo coin massing approximately 4.4g, the same diameter as the copper 5-centavo, was prepared.



This is a copper pattern from that time, a OAX-UNL-(16/77), using the Juárez pointed bust die previously used on the 5-centavo OAX-16, and the reverse die of the silver 50-centavo OAX-77. The Juárez pointed bust die was used in the early (April 1915) Oaxaca mint issues, and not continued on later coins. This is the only pointed bust strike known on a 50-centavo.

The coin did not appear to strike up well. It is not known in silver, possibly a rejected die combination.



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THE SONORA JOLA

by Dr. Guzmán Sánchez-Schmitz



The “oldest coin of Sonora” was revealed to the world in 1959 by Dr. Alberto Francisco Pradeau in *The Numismatist* (Vol. 72, No. 4); it was the only specimen known of this rare Cuartilla for almost two decades, included in multiple catalogs ever since, and ultimately in the Banco de México’s National Numismatic Collection (*Moneda Nacional* No. 14944). In August 1977, a second coin came to light in an article written by Carlos Lucero Aja in the magazine *Siluetas* n°17 of the newspaper *El Imparcial* of Hermosillo¹. By comparing these two specimens, Mr. Lucero deciphered for the first time the entire legend: QUARTO D. R. AYUNT. D. P. — short for “QUARTO DE REAL AYUNTAMIENTO DEL PITIC” (¼ Real Town Hall of Pitic).



Artwork banner celebrating the Bicentennial of the Sonora Jola 1821 (by Mr. Lucero)

1. also, in the bulletin *Numisnotas* of 1989 produced by the Numismatic Society of Sonora, A.C.

As of today, eight examples of this rare coin are known, all poorly struck, some corroded and none showing a complete legend; despite these limitations, their key identifiable features have been clearly ascertained. Centered inside of an inner ring, the general design of the obverse shows a relatively large crowned date 1821. (with an ending dot), situated over a range of three hills tilted to the left. Some examples show portions of a second ring enclosing the legend that runs all around in capital letters. Perhaps the design always included this outer ring but it was not always achieved due to flan inconsistencies and improper hammering technique.



Best-known examples of the Sonora Jola 1821

Despite there being only eight specimens, different dies can be discriminated. There are significant variations in the size and alignment of numbers — clearly illustrated by the “21” being above one or two hills — and in the orientation of the legend relative to the central elements — one example clearly shows the letters “NT” (of “AYUNT.”) instead of “QUART” at the right side. Some small elements seem fused — as with the dots on the crown — suggesting die wear. The reverse shows only the word “PiTic.” with capitals only for “P” and “T”, in various sizes. In some examples, the dot at the end seems missing. Measurements from four examples indicated a range of 20 to 22mm in diameter, 1.3 to 1.75mm in thickness, 3.25 to 4.55gr in weight and plain edge.

The term “Jola” was commonly used in the 19th century throughout the northern provinces of New Spain (later, Mexico) to refer to all kind of small copper change in circulation. Dave Busse and Thomas Reid in *Numismatic Terms of the República Mexicana* described it as: *a term for privately issued tradesman’s tokens*. The *Mexicanisms Dictionary* of 1895² says: *Jola (chih.), af. money, coin. “Is a man of many jolas,” as for “Is a rich man” ...; Jo (Sin.), sm. Cuartillo (coin valued at three cents of a peso; its second edition of 1898 reads: Jola (Dur.), sf. Peso, coin. In Chihuahua, people use jola for tlacos and cuartillos.*³ The word Jola (Joles or Jolas, plural) is an apheresis of the Latin word

2. Feliz Ramos I. Duarte and Ricardo Gomez. *Diccionario de Mexicanismos*, 1st ed. 1895; 2nd ed. 1898, Mexico.

3. “jo” is short for “Jola”, “chih.” for “Chihuahua”, “Sin.” for Sinaloa” and “Dur.” for “Durango”

“Pecuniola” (small money), survivor of the Castilian Latin used by Jesuit missionaries of the northern provinces of New Spain, where the Latin “i” of “lola” became a written consonant “j”⁴. While at least ten states, uncountable municipal governments and an endless number of trades (professions, stores, haciendas, bridges, plazas) struck copper coins locally throughout Mexico with diverse names and values — *tlacos*, *señales*, *cacharpas*, *clacos*, *pilones*, *avitos*, *prietos*, *brujes*, *güitones*, *chavos*, *tanteos*, *tareas*, *chicas*, *fichas*, *butuchis*⁵ — some northerner towns in the 19th century seems to have favored the appellative “Jola”.



Commemorative medals of the 10th anniversary of The Numismatic Society of Sonora

The term “Jola” is found in Northwestern American and Mexican newspapers. The *Sacramento Daily Union* of 12 January 1861 reads: *The Currency of Sonora.*— A correspondent of the *Bulletin*, writing from Hermosillo, Sonora, November 28th, says: *Pesqueira is still here, and employed in arranging the momentous affairs of the “jolas,” which has occupied the undivided attention of the mercantile community for the last week. ...;... The alleged condition of the contract with the Mint, which will begin coining to-morrow, is the issue of \$60,000 in jolas, at one dollar per pound.* The Sonora newspaper *La Estrella de Occidente* of 22 March 1867 reads: *The Jolas, Commerce and the poor. Hermosillo, March 20th 1867. The scarcity of Jolas is insufferable and even more with the low value commerce takes them ...;... Commerce is without a doubt the major tyrant oppressing the poor, and the copper coinage is a very good venue to dissimulate this tyranny. The big merchants speculate so much with the jolas, it makes me wish the government could remove them for good.* Early travelers of Mexico such as Josiah Gregg in his “Commerce of the Prairies (1831-1839)”⁶ wrote: *The Mexican money table is as follows: 12 granos make 1 real; 8 reales, 1 peso, or dollar. These are the divisions used in computation, but instead of granos, the copper coins of Chihuahua and many other places, are the claco or jola (1/8 real) and the cuartilla (1/4 real).*

In his classic article of 1999, James Ehrardt writes about another copper coin called Jola: **The Texas Jola**. Here a Spanish document describes how these Jolas were petitioned to the local authorities of the presidio of San Fernando de Bexar — capital of the colonial province of Texas in 1818: *This shall be the equivalent of the 2nd stamp of the Señor don Fernando the 7th, year of 1818. Señor Governor: don Jose Antonio de la Garza, Postmaster of this city, appears before your lordship and states that the extreme scarcity of small change which we are experiencing in this land results in a notable harm to the public. Inasmuch as I wish to provide for this lack in so far as my means will permit, I have decided to make up to the quantity of five hundred pesos of small change in copper coins called jolas, which shall circulate only through the town with values of one half of a real each. These shall be engraved with the first letters of my name and surname and the year of this date. For this purpose I shall give the necessary bonds on the terms your Lordship should order. I entreat your Lordship to be pleased to grant me the necessary permission, if there should be no just cause to hinder it, so that this may be carried out, and this money may circulate as soon as possible. San Fernando de Bexar, November thirtieth of one thousand eight hundred and eighteen. Jose Antonio de la Garza.* Six Texas Jolas dating 1817 are known and about 100 dating 1818⁷. Despite their exclusive local appreciation, these Jolas circulated throughout the regions of the newly independent Mexican Republic. The first 1817 Texas Jola was discovered in the state of Guerrero in the 1960s. Other Texas Jolas have been found in Goliad (Texas).

4. Horacio Sobarzo. *Vocabulario Sonorense*, Instituto Sonorense de Cultura, Sonora, 1991.

5. Alberto Francisco Pradeau. *Historia Numismática de México de 1823 a 1950*, Tomo II. 1st. ed. Mexico, 1960.

6. Reuben Gold Thwaites. *Early Western Travels 1748-1846*, vol. II, Arthur H. Clark Company, Ohio, 1905.

7. Mauricio Fernandez Garza. *Las Monedas Municipales y su contexto historico*, 2nd. ed. Mexico, 2014.



*Texas Jola 1818 (1/2 real, José Antonio de la Garza initials [KMTn1])
[Heritage Auction #1298]*

The “Statistical Memorial of the State of Occidente” published in 1828⁸ mentions **another colonial Jola**: *In all the province of Sinaloa circulates, for the small traffic, the copper coinage made in Durango with the name of jolas or tlacos.* These Jolas made at Durango are the copper Octavos we know today (1/8 real KM60) carrying dates from 1812 to 1818. José Antonio Juárez Muñoz, in his book *Reseñas Históricas de la Casa de Moneda de Durango. 1811-1877* (Historical reviews of the Durango Mint), transcribes a fraction of a Spanish document regarding these Jolas: *In fulfillment of the order of your superiority of the 23rd of the current month requesting information about the matter of the Tlacos, here I provide with this letter a document showing the cost and gains that resulted from the 525 pesos that you ordered coined at the Mint under my charge; coins that were brought to the Caja Real, as I was able to verify on 26 February of this year, and got credited by the receipt of the ministers of the Royal Treasury. God save your superiority many years. Durango, 27 March 1813. Director. Manuel de Escárzega.* Juárez Muñoz extends on the matter based on another document found at the State Archives indicating that the government ordered the striking of 2,000 pesos more in copper Tlacos, coinage that was ultimately relocated to the Public Treasury of the city on 8 October 1813⁹. If we consider the die-making process and striking time, the production of the 33,600 Jolas mentioned in February of 1813 might have started in 1812 (likely carrying that date). In contrast, the other 128,000 octavos finished before October of 1813 would correspond to Jolas carrying the date 1813.

Juárez Muñoz also transcribes a note — apparently from the same 1813 archive — indicating the shipment of provisional Durango coins to the mining center of Cosalá in the nearby state of Sinaloa: Provisional Mint, file regarding the packaging expenses for 10,000 pesos in coins, sent from this Caja Real to the one located at Cosalá. Durango Jolas — as called in Sinaloa — show a crowned monogram of King Fernando VII on the reverse and were produced under the Royalist governments of Don Bernardo Bonavía (1813) and Don Alejo García Conde (1813 to 1817)¹⁰.



Durango Jolas years 1812 (7) and 1813 [Numista.com] ([KM60], 1/8 real)

8 Pradeau. *ibid*.

9. José Antonio Juárez Muñoz. *Reseñas Históricas de la Casa de Moneda de Durango. 1811 - 1877*, Conaculta, 2014.

10. Luis Navarro García. *Los Intendentes de las provincias internas de Nueva España*, Temas Americanistas, 2007.

Spanish documents authorizing the coinage of the **Crowned Jola of Pitic 1821**, remain to be found. At this point, we only know about their destruction in 1828 by the newly created state of Occidente. On 15 September 1828, the Occidente Legislature replaced the old name of the “Town of Pitic” with the new “City of Hermosillo”, in honor of the independence hero José María González Hermosillo¹¹; by 18 December 1828, Occidente issued a decree ordering the removal of old copper coinage¹²: *Supreme Government of the State of Occidente.- being currently minting copper Octavos ordered by the sovereign decree #49 of Congress issued on 23 February, in consequence to enable its legal circulation in the state of my command I have agreed on ordering the following precautions: 1ª.- Starting ten days after the publication of this decree in each town of the State, all copper Octavos of Durango circulating here will be collected by the first local authorities affiliated to the Town councils. 2ª.- Equal collection will be performed for those coins that have circulated with the title of Jolas in the city of Hermosillo, as well as any other coin of that kind introduced by other states. ...;... 4a.- The quantities of collected coins will be exchanged with Octavos sent from this capital by the General Treasury to all administrations for its circulation. 5a.- Those copper Jolas and Octavos that have circulated until today in many towns of the State, considered false by the first local authorities in agreement with a special envoy to be named for this recognition, will not be exchanged and will be destroyed in the presence of all interested parties. ...;... God and Liberty. Concepcion of the Alamos (then the capital of Occidente), 19 December 1828. Jose Maria Gaxiola, Governor. Jose Francisco Velasco, Secretary. Importantly, this decree called “Jolas” only those circulating at Hermosillo (Pitic), making a clear distinction from the “Octavos of Durango” and “any other coin of that kind introduced by other states”. Despite lacking information, the only choice for a locally circulating jola at Hermosillo before 1828, is the Pitic Cuartilla of 1821 that we know today.*

The current scarcity of Pitic Jolas suggests that most of them were gathered and melted down to make the new Octavos of Occidente in 1829. Evidently, this new republican government was keen on the prompt removal of all the offensive Royal coinage. Since Occidente Octavos [KM335] are smaller (17-18mm) and lighter (2-3gr) than Pitic Jolas, it is unlikely they were used as blanks for re-striking, as Chihuahua mint seems to have done with some Occidente Octavos in 1833 [DB510]¹³. From surviving specimens of the Sonora Jola we know that some of them circulated beyond 1828, and were demonetized by piercing or devaluated to 1/16 of a Real, as it happened to “Santoyo Cuartillas” [1832-1836, KM-364] after 23 July 1837¹⁴.



Demonetizing punches and 1/16 real devaluations on Pitic and Santoyo Cuartillas

Jose Francisco Velasco — the secretary that wrote the previous 1828 decree — chose his words carefully when addressing the inhabitants of Sonora; he distinguished “Hermosillo Jolas” from Durango octavos and other coins of the kind. According to Almada’s biographic dictionary¹⁵, Velasco was president of the municipal council of Pitic in 1821. Indeed, government acts of Pitic confirm Velasco was Constitutional Major in 1821: *...At the Presidio of Pitic on 17 March 1821, before me, Don José Francisco Velasco, Sub-Delegate of this Presidio and Constitutional Major of first vote, appeared Don Juan Guati, passerby merchant from Durango... ; ...At the Town of San Pedro of the Conquest of Pitic, on 24 April 1821, before me Don Francisco Velasco, Sub- Delegate and Constitutional Major of first vote*¹⁶. Did Velasco witness or sanction the creation of these Jolas in 1821? We do not yet know but it seems he was especially

11. Gilberto J. López Alanís. *Diccionario de la Independencia en las Provincias de Sonora y Sinaloa (1800-1831)*. Sinaloa, 2010.

12. Pradeau. *ibid*.

13. Don Bailey. *State and Federal copper and brass coinage of Mexico, 1824-1872*. 2008.

14. Pradeau. *Ibid*.

15. Francisco R. Almada. *Diccionario de Historia, Geografía y Biografía Sonorenses*. Instituto Sonorense de Cultura. Sonora, 1990.

16. Fernando A. Galaz. *Dejaron huella en el Hermosillo de ayer y hoy. Crónicas de Hermosillo de 1700 a 1967*. , 2nd ed. Hermosillo, 1996.

aware of these Jolas and certainly not happy with them. In his *Noticias Estadísticas del Estado de Sonora* (Statistical News of the State of Sonora) of 1850, Velasco complained: *The hardship offered by the Joles, that is the copper coinage, to commerce is by all means ruinous and without parallel.*

Was the Sonora Jola issue by a Spanish Royalist authority or by an Independent pro-Bourbon First Mexican Empire? To answer we must consider that: 1) Velasco was municipal head of Pitic in 1821 and distinguished these Jolas in his decree of 1828; 2) Pitic publicly swore allegiance to the independence on 13 September 1821¹⁷; 3) the *Imperial Gazette* of 17 November 1821 decreed the election of provincial representatives to the Imperial Constituent Congress and the renewal of all municipal authorities by 24 November — accredited by the retiring authorities the same day; and 4) the new municipal authorities of Pitic had until 28 January 1822 to elect the provincial representatives to the Imperial congress. Everything indicates that this “crowned Cuartilla” of 1821 was issued under a still Spanish Royalist “War for Independence-period” municipal government. Of note, the Internal Occident Provinces of Sonora and Sinaloa elected Juan Miguel Riesgo (or Riezgo), Salvador Porrás, Manuel José Zuloaga and **José Francisco Velasco**¹⁸.

As in the cases of Texas and Durango, Sonora Jolas should have been a response to the local scarcity of fractional money — likely hastened by distance and road insecurity. It is not farfetched to imagine that any arrival of out-of-state Jolas would have inflicted not just a challenge to pride and economy but a reminder to local authorities of their right to strike copper money. The Village of Pitic was promoted to Town status on 29 August 1783¹⁹, and with that, the Monarchical Spanish Constitution — reinstated in June of 1820 — gave authority to its municipal government to procure its own funding¹⁵. By 15 September 1820, Pitic was showing new constitutional authorities: *At this National Presidio of Pitic, before me Don Manuel Rodríguez, Constitutional Major of first vote... ; ...At the Presidio of Pitic Town of San Pedro of the Conquest, before me Ignacio Monroy, Constitutional Major of 2nd vote, this 26 of December of 1820*²⁰. Sonora Jolas should have been made at a local blacksmith’s workshop in Pitic, in the same way as hundreds of other towns and haciendas did throughout Mexico in the 19th century. The 35mm crude silver medals of Pitic — made to commemorate Iturbide’s ascension to the imperial throne of Mexico in 1822 — attest for the artisan capacity of this **primitive mint of Pitic in 1821**. Comparing two examples publicly known²¹, the deciphered complete legend of the reverse reads at center: JURADO EN 6 DE OCTUB^r. (Swore on 6 October); all around: MONVMENTO DE FELICIDAD DEL PITIC (Monument to the happiness of Pitic). The obverse at center has a crowned eagle standing over a nopal cactus and all around: AGVST. I. EMPERADOR D. MEXIC. 1822 (date reads upside down).



Grove's 41a



Vogt R-41



Interestingly, Jose Francisco Velasco — as part of the Imperial Constituent Congress — was one of the congressmen that urged Iturbide to seize the crown and later joined his National instituting Council²². He was at Pitic — acting as a lawyer and witness²³ — at the time of Pitic’s ceremony swearing loyalty to Iturbide on 6 October 1822. Of note, there is a remarkable resemblance in the simplicity of designs and traces between the Crowns of:

18. José Luis Soberanes Fernández. *The first Mexican Constituent congress*, UNAM, 2012.

19. Flavio Molina Molina. *Historia de Hermosillo Antiguo*, 1st ed. Hermosillo, 1983.

20. Galáz FA *ibid*.

21. Frank W. Grove. *Medals of Mexico*. vol II. 1972; Geo. W. Vogt. *The Standard Catalog of Mexican Coins, Paper Money and Medals*, 1978.

22. Francisco R. Almada *ibid*.

23. Galáz F A *ibid*.

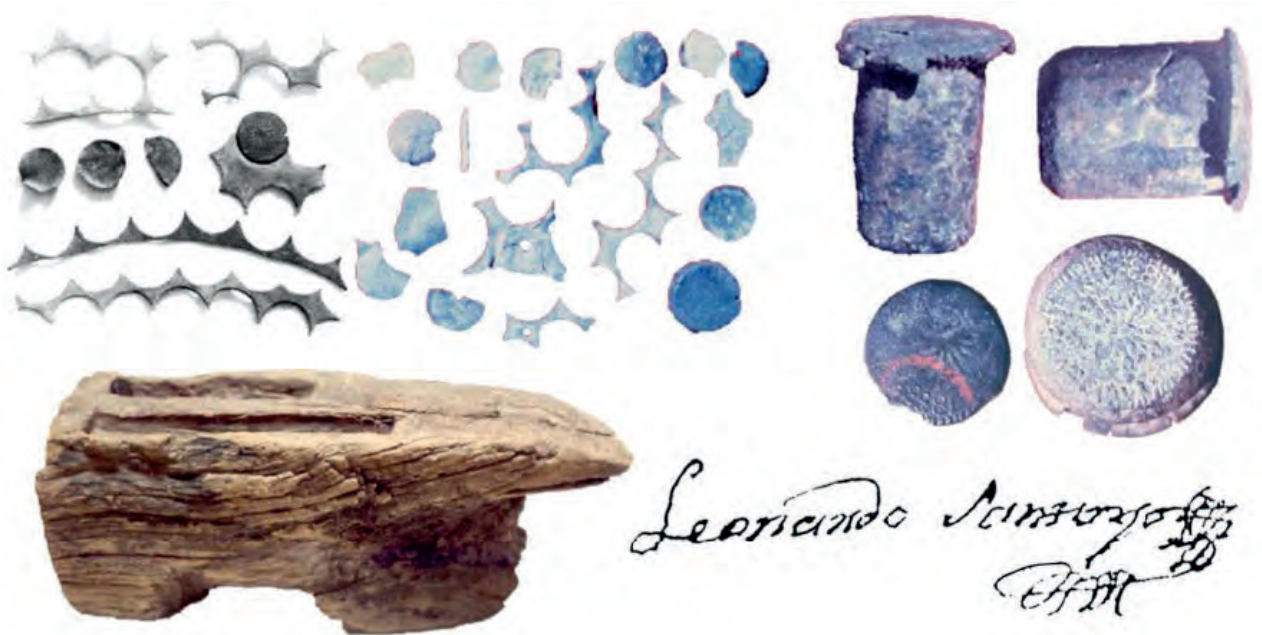


Royalist Pitic Jola 1821



Imperial Pitic Jola 1822

It has been argued that Pitic Jolas could have been ordered from the mint of Durango. This hypothesis has been supported by the fact that Leonardo Santoyo — who later opened the mints of Occidente (at Alamos in 1828) and Hermosillo (around 1831) — was commissioned by Pedro Celestino Negrete to restore the mint of Durango before 19 October 1821²⁴, and was the fifth director of the mint acting from 1823 to 1824, just after Julián de la Barraza (1822) and Manuel de Escárzega (1813-1822)²⁵. Santoyo himself may have taken charge of destroying the royalist Jolas of Pitic and Durango to make his new republican 1828-29 Occidente Octavos in Alamos. If the manufacture of Santoyo Cuartillas is known to have required simple manual tools, as shown by the fact that they were heavily falsified in caves nearby Hermosillo — why could Pitic Jolas not be made at Pitic in a similar way?



Metal scraps and tools to strike Santoyo Cuartillas found at Arbolillo's cave near Pitic (C.L.A)

The municipal government of Pitic would have been better off by striking its coin locally instead of choosing economic dependence on another state, risking illegal overproduction and counterfeiting. While Juárez's research on Durango mint archives did not produce evidence for Pitic, he did find documents relating to the creation of private Tlacos for José María Rivera in 1812, the Jolas of 1812-1818 and the New Viscaya coins of 1821-1823. Durango's House of Representatives decided to order Imperial copper coins on 2 October 1821²⁶. These coins made at the Durango mint — with Santoyo's help — carried an Imperial Crown over the arms of the province of New Viscaya.

Here is a last thought: Since Sonora and Sinaloa constituted a single colonial province in 1821, with its capital in Arizpe, and were not separated until 19 July 1823²⁷, should this Jola be also considered part of the numismatic history of Sinaloa?

[Author's note. This article is part of a large book project on Sonora coinage. I would like to thank my dear friends and numismatists Carlos Lucero Aja and Dr. Rafael Apolo Zarate for providing invaluable insight. Readers' comments are appreciated and can be emailed to: guzmanss@hotmail.com]

24. Pradeau *ibid.*

25. Juárez Muñoz *ibid.*

26. Juárez Muñoz *ibid.*

27. Flavio Molina Molina *ibid.*

THE BATTLE FOR MATAMOROS 1836

by Elmer Powell



The Battle of Matamoros was a naval engagement during the Texas Revolution which occurred on 3 April 1836 near the mouth of the Rio Grande. The *Invincible* approached the *Montezuma* (also named *Bravo* or *General Bravo*) and raised the Texas colors and Captain Jeremiah Brown ordered broadside fire and continued firing broadsides while sailing circles around the Mexican vessel. The Texas ship carried much smaller cannon (two 18-pounders, two 9-pounders) and a much smaller crew than the Mexican vessel which carried 32-pounder guns and a larger crew of 75 men. The *Invincible* outmaneuvered the *Montezuma* which damaged its rudder hitting a sandbar and, in flames, ran aground. It was abandoned on a sandbar (Boca Chica) and the crew escaped. Following a 1999 hurricane the ribs of the *Montezuma* can still be seen protruding through the sand. Disruption of the Mexican army's maritime supply chain by the Texas Navy led to its later defeat at San Jacinto on 21 April 1836.



The Star for the Defense of Matamoros 1836, measuring 33mm x 33mm, is mounted in gilt bronze and white enamels. The obverse is a five-pointed star with a central medallion of an eagle, surrounded by a band bearing "MATAMOROS - EN 1836". The reverse has the six lines legend "COMBATIO POR LA INTEGRIDAD DEL TERRITORIO NAL. (fight for the integrity of the national territory)". This example has its original green-white-red ribbon.



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A PRACTICAL STUDY OF THE DECREES OF THE 20TH CENTURY COINAGE

by Pablo Luna H.

In order for a coin to circulate, the government's approval is necessary. This process ends when the coin specifications are published in the official gazette and then the coin production can start at the mint facilities. In Mexico the *Diario Oficial de la Federación* (Official Journal of the Federation) or DOF is the place where all the decrees that contain the coin weight, diameter, metal, fineness, design, edge, etc. are published. In the official web site of the DOF a definition is granted:

The Official Journal of the Federation is the institution of the Constitutional Government of the United Mexican States, that have the function to publish in the national territory: laws, regulations, orders, agreements, circulars, and others acts issued by the Federal branches, with the purpose that all these acts be observed and enforced correctly in its respective areas of competence.

However, when studying contemporary Mexican Numismatics, the researcher realizes that on some occasions, despite the existence of a decree, (previously approved by the National Congress -Senate and Chamber of Deputies - and then ratified by the President) the coin ends in circulation with different characteristics than those originally stipulated in the coining decree, or even that the coin never came into existence.

Why does this happen? One factor is that the Mexican Treasury (*Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público*) used to have discretionary and special powers granted by each coining decree (In nearly all of the 20th century - until the Mexican Central Bank became an autonomous organism in 1994 - the Treasury Department had more power than the Central Bank and the Mexican Mint. Thus, it was able to modify the coins issued from the coinage decrees, in order to reduce costs or increase efficiencies in their production). For example, the decree of 22 May 1933 says:

The striking of silver and bronze coins, nonetheless the denominations, can only be decided by the Mexican Central Bank, [...], but the resolution taken by the Bank can be vetoed or changed by the Minister of the Treasury.

Even more, article 2 of the 30 December 1983 decree states:

The Mexican Treasury, with the proposal of the Mexican Central Bank, will determine the weights and alloys of the coins [...] choosing any of these proposals or changing the options for others, taking into consideration the cost and nation's supply of metals.

As described, the Mexican Treasury used to have the last word in the coining process. Furthermore, since the Coinage Reform of 1905 and until 1986 the Mexican Mint was only an administrative branch of the Ministry of Treasury: also the Mexican Central Bank since its foundation in 1925 and until 1993 was subordinated to the Treasury.

Let us review 16 cases of coins approved by the Congress, that did not reach circulation, either because of the Mexican Treasury exerted its discretionary powers or for other reasons, such as issuing paper money instead, the existence of enough inventories of coins with the same value, or other unknown reasons.

It is interesting to add that in the majority of the examples there are patterns known, that may bear similar or different specifications to those of the decree. These are interesting samples because they show that in some cases the planning moved forward at the mint but did not necessarily result in issued coins. On the other hand, there are some cases in which not even metallic patterns were created, and we only know of some sketches or in other cases we have no graphic information at all.

1.- Decree of 19 September 1947.

Authorized coins: \$5 Cuauhtémoc, 1947-1948 (KM #465) and \$1 Morelos, 1947-1949 (KM #456).

Unissued Coins: \$0.50 Juárez, (PL-15 // KMPn# 192 // B/H# A123). The decree established a diameter of 25 millimeters, and a weight of 7 grams, the fineness would be 0.500 silver, 0.400 copper. 0.60 nickel and 0.40 zinc). The engraver of the three coins was Manuel Luna Negrete.



Sample of the unissued coin

In the annual report of the Mexican Treasury, it can be read that on 15 September 1949, President Miguel Aleman sent to the Congress a new initiative to change the Monetary Law, creating new coins. At the bottom of this bill, in the third transitory article, there is a [confusing] mention of the 50 cents coin (that was never minted for circulation), specifying that no more coins of this type will be produced, despite the nonexistence of that denomination.

2.- Decree of 30 September 1949.

Authorized coins: \$1 Morelos, 1950 (KM #457), \$0.50 Cuauhtémoc, 1950-1951 (KM #449), \$0.25 Balance, 1950-1953 (KM #443), \$0.05 Josefa, 1950 (KM #425), \$0.01 Wheat, 1950-1969 (KM #417).

Unissued Coins: only a \$0.10 Juárez. A copper chiseled sheet is known, engraved by Lorenzo Rafael "El Viejo" (the father). The coin specifications are a diameter of 23.5 millimeters, a weight of 5.5 grams and an alloy of 0.750 copper and 0.250 nickel.



Sample of the unissued coin

A second coin for this same decree is a two centavos coin, with a diameter of 19.5 millimeters, a weight of 3 grams, and an alloy of 0.850 copper and 0.150 zinc. The design of the obverse was to be a corn with its leaves open, the denomination centavos abbreviated to "Cs".

3.- Decree of 30 December 1969.

Authorized coins: \$25 Juárez, 1972 (KM #480), \$5 Vicente Guerrero, 1971-1978 (KM #472), \$1 Morelos, 1970-1983 (KM #460), \$0.50 Cuauhtemoc, 1970-1983 (KM #452), \$0.05 Josefa, 1970-1976 (KM #427), \$0.01 Wheat, 1970-1973 (KM #418).

Unissued Coins: \$0.25 Madero, similar to KM #444 struck in 1964 and 1966, (PL-35 // KMPn# - // B/H# 135), the decree considers a diameter of 22 millimeters, a weight of 5.25 grams, and an alloy of 0.750 copper and 0.250 nickel.



Sample of the unissued coin

A second coin approved by the same decree was a \$0.10 with the portrait of Ignacio Allende. The decree mentioned a diameter of 23.5 millimeters, a weight of 5.5 grams and an alloy of 0.850 copper and 0.150 zinc, (PL-34 y 34A // KMPn# 206 // B/H# 131). Two patterns are known, the first with the above-mentioned alloy and a second in brass.



Sample of the unissued coin

4.- Decree of 7 January 1980.

Authorized coins: \$0.50 Palenque, 1983 (KM #492), \$0.20 Olmec head, 1983-1984 (KM #491)¹

Unissued Coins: \$1 Eagle Knight, (PL-53 y 53A // KMPn# 219 // B/H# -). The decree stipulates a diameter of 24.5 millimeters, a weight of 5.9 grams and an alloy of 0.920 copper, 0.060 aluminum, 0.020 nickel. It is important to acknowledge that the patterns known so far are of brass and pure aluminum, neither of the alloy approved by the decree. Furthermore, samples of a similar design have been known since 1979, as well as trial-strikes. The engraver commissioned for these coins was Ricardo Luna Vasco.



1. From another perspective all three coins of this decree could be put as examples in this text, inasmuch that all the denominations were approved in 1980, but started circulating in 1983, and patterns of previous years and multiple alloys are known for all the values. See my *Las Pruebas de la Moneda Mexicana del Siglo XX* pages 191 to 200.

In the National Numismatic Museum in Mexico City the official drawings of all the coins approved are on display, with the signature of President Jose López Portillo.

A different and interesting situation happened with these coins: A subsequent decree nullified the authorization for this \$1 coin, ruling that the \$1 coin already in circulation (since 1970) (KM #460) would continue to be struck, while confirming the production of the \$0.50 and \$0.20 coins.



Sample of the unissued coin

5.- Decree of 30 December 30, 1983.

Authorized coins: \$1 Morelos, 1984-1987 (KM #496), \$5 Monogram, 1985-1988 (KM #502), \$10 Hidalgo, 1985-1990 (KM #512), \$20 Guadalupe Victoria, 1985-1990 (KM #508), \$50 Juárez, 1984-1992 (KM #495), \$100 Carranza, 1984-1992 (KM #493)

Unissued Coins: \$2 Monogram. The decree mentions a diameter of 15 millimeters, a weight of 1.5 to 2.0 grams and an alloy of multiple metals including chromium, nickel, carbon, silicon, manganese, sulfur, phosphorus, and iron. No minted coins are known, only a drawing by the engraver.

The same situation occurred with a second unissued coin of \$200 with the portrait of Emiliano Zapata: the diameter was 29.5 millimeters, the weight 10.6 to 17 grams, and two alloy options, the first of 0.750 copper and 0.250 nickel and a second the same as the \$2 coin above.



Sample of the unissued coin

6.- Decree of 9 January 1986.

Authorized coins \$10 Hidalgo, 1985-1990 (KM #512), \$50 Juárez, 1984-1992 (KM #495), \$500 Madero, 1986-1992 (KM #529). Of these only the \$500 entered circulation.

Unissued Coins: \$1 Morelos SUD, (PL-63 A 63I // KMPn# 233 a 235 // B/H# 141). The decree mentions a diameter of 15 millimeters, a weight of 2.2 grams, and three different alloys, the first two an assortment of different metals such

chromium, nickel, carbon, silicon, manganese, sulfur, phosphorus, iron, and the third a composition of 0.750 copper and 0.250 nickel. However, ten different alloys are known, dated in 1985 and 1986, despite the decree date.



Sample of the unissued coin

7.- Decree of 9 January 1986.

This is a second decree of the same date.

Authorized coins: None.

Unissued Coins: The Libertad Platinum series, 1oz, with a diameter of 31 millimeters, a weight of 31 grams; ½ oz, diameter of 24.5 millimeters and weight of 15.55 grams; ¼ oz, diameter of 20 millimeters and weight of 7.76 grams. All the coins were to be of an alloy of 0.999 platinum.

8.- Decree of 5 January 1990.

Authorized coins: None.

Unissued Coins: The Libertad Platinum series, 1oz, with a diameter of 31 millimeters, a weight of 34.5 grams; ½ oz, diameter of 29 millimeters and weight of 15.55 grams; ¼ oz, diameter of 23 millimeters and weight of 7.76 grams; 1/10 oz, diameter of 16 millimeters and weight of 3.1 grams; 1/20 oz, diameter of 13 millimeters, weight of 1.5 grams. All the coins were to be of an alloy of 0.999 platinum.

These last two decrees contain interesting details. First, the 1990 decree said that the physical characteristics of the platinum coins would be “modified”, assuming that the coins had been struck since 1986, despite this never happening. Second, from our understanding of the text we presume that the design will be the same as the current gold and silver issues, for that reason we can use as an example the 1989 private issue of platinum, - the origin and purpose of this piece is totally different to that mentioned above.



closest sample of the 1986 and 1990 decrees.

Synthesis of all the coins addressed:

	Decree:	Coin:	Patterns known?
1	19 September 1947.	50 centavos Juárez 1947.	Yes.
2	30 December 1949.	10 centavos Juárez 1950.	No. (only a drawing)
3	30 December 1969.	25 centavos Madero 1970.	Yes.
4	30 December 1969.	10 centavos Ignacio Allende 1970.	Yes.
5	7 January 1980.	1 peso Eagle Knight 1980.	Yes.
6	30 December 1983.	2 pesos Monogram 1984.	No. (only a drawing)
7	30 December 1983	200 pesos Zapata 1984.	No. (only a drawing)
8	9 January 1986.	1 peso SUD 1985 and 1986.	Yes.
9	9 January 1986.	1 oz Libertad platinum 1986.	No.
10	9 January 1986.	½ oz Libertad platinum 1986.	No.
11	9 January 1986.	¼ oz Libertad platinum 1986.	No.
12	5 January 1990.	1 oz Libertad platinum 1990.	No.
13	5 January 1990.	½ oz Libertad platinum 1990.	No.
14	5 January 1990.	¼ oz Libertad platinum 1990.	No.
15	5 January 1990.	1/10 oz Libertad platinum 1990.	No.
16	5 January 1990.	1/20 oz Libertad platinum 1990.	No.

Conclusions:

The analysis and study of the coining decrees are a very important and useful source of information, that I believe needs a major scrutiny in Mexican numismatics, inasmuch as its content can tell us data of coins from a different approach. Now we know that not all coins approved by the Government end in our hands, or that the final product can be very different from the original project. If the readers want to know the original texts of all the decrees quoted and even more, a list is available at <https://eldatonumismatico.wordpress.com/decretos-de-moneda-mexicana-del-siglo-xx/>

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