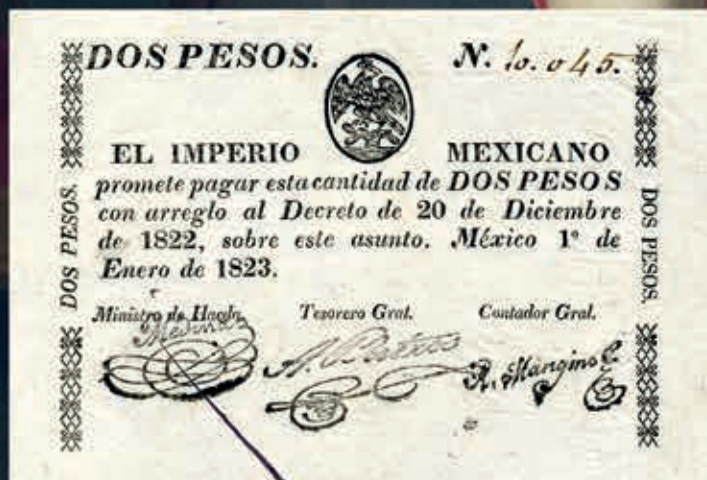


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## COVER IMAGE

The cover image is a portrait by Primitivo Miranda of Agustín de Iturbide who reigned briefly as Emperor of Mexico from 19 May 1822 to 19 March 1823. The \$2 note is from Iturbide's issue of paper currency, discussed in Simon Prendergast's article in this journal.



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**David Lisot**  
**28 January 1958 – 15 October 2022**

It is hard to put into words what the collecting community lost with the passing of David Lisot and the full effect he had on our community. David was by far the biggest content creator our industry has known, meticulously documenting shows and events within our hobby for decades. If you attended a USMEXNA convention in the past years, you certainly met and remember David. He documented our convention each year filming the lectures, awards ceremony and interviewing the attendees.

David was a kindhearted, softspoken person that absolutely loved coins. His enthusiasm for coins and collecting emanated from his videos and interviews. During the last USMEXNA convention we gave a tribute to David and thanked him for the years of supporting our organization. Our organization and countless others have lost a great asset and friend within the community. That said, David's memory and achievements will live on for a long time to come as they are preserved in his videos.

There's an old saying that you die two times after you are born. The first time you die is when you physically pass away, the second time is when the last time a living person speaks your name or remembers you. If this is the case, then David has figured out how to live on forever. Many years from now future generations of collectors and enthusiasts will still be watching his videos and know the name David Lisot. Not only is David himself immortal in a sense, but in filming these videos he has also immortalized and preserved the memory of many other collectors and dealers. His videos are essentially an archive of the coin community over the last decades and much of our life's work has been preserved through his life's work in this manner for generations to come.

If you attended the convention this year, then hopefully you attended the cocktail party and awards ceremony. During the ceremony we paid our respects to David and said some kind words in his memory, at the end of which during the moment of silence we were graced with an overhead view of Elon Musk's rocket launch. After the ceremony people speculated as to what we were witnessing. Some thought it was a comet or a meteor. The moment was reminiscent of ancient Rome when Augustus claimed that a comet that appeared in July 44 BC was the spirit of Julius Caesar ascending into the heavens. After the cocktail party Angela Fagiano (Sal & Barbara Falcones' daughter) said it the best, commenting "I know that's Elon Musk's rocket, but I would like to believe that was David soaring through the heavens looking down".



The following is a link to David's obituary online.  
<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/dallas-tx/david-lisot-10971926>

**Kenneth Tabachnick**  
**13 July 1935 – 9 August 2022**

Anyone who has been involved in Mexican coins for any length of time knows the name Ken Tabachnick or that of his company Blu-Tab which specialized in Mexican numismatics since the early 1960s. Ken was a regular fixture at every Long Beach convention as far back as one can remember, as well as a regular attendee of most shows in Mexico, including Guadalajara, Mexico City and Monterrey. He was a life member of Sociedad Numismática de México and was one of a handful of people to join USMEXNA on the very day it was founded. Ken was approached with the idea and immediately wrote a check for a life membership, stating, "What a great idea, I would be more than happy to support such an organization".

The coin collecting community is filled with a variety of characters, and Ken was no exception. He was one of those larger-than-life characters that was easily spotted at coin shows by his signature beard and Guayabera (Mexican wedding or summer shirt). His knowledge of Mexican coins was highly advanced and expansive, specializing in 20th century, decimal coinage and Mexican paper money. His devotion to the hobby



and general love for coins and paper was easily recognized by the meticulous notes and varieties described on his holders at shows. Ken spent a tremendous amount of time studying and documenting the material and is responsible for several discoveries within the various series.

An old-time collector once said "Do you know what's worse than not finding a coin at a show? It's finding a coin that you need in Ken Tabachnick's case that you're not able to buy". Joking aside, those who knew Ken would often comment about his prices being higher than market. Ken was infamous for having prices that were "ahead of the market". But those who really knew Ken knew of his deep love of coins and paper money and further knew that he really did not want to sell anything unless he got the price he wanted. In the event he did sell something, he could then go out and buy more coins or notes. As a professional psychologist Ken's passion for coins was secondary only to his career helping children.

His obituary that ran in the Los Angeles Times was short and sweet. It spoke mostly of him being remembered by his family, friends, caregiver and the many children he helped. It ended with "If you would like to honor Ken's memory, please treat yourself to a chopped liver and/or corned beef sandwich, on rye of course". So next time you are looking at your Mexican coin or banknote collection and happen across an item you bought from Ken join with us and treat yourself to a sandwich in remembrance of a friend, colleague and staple in our hobby for the last 60 years.

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## CONVENTION AND EDUCATIONAL FORUM REPORT

by Allan Schein

2022 was the 10th year of the US Mexican Numismatic Association's annual convention in Scottsdale, Arizona. It was the best attended event yet, and maybe the most fun too! An excellent showing considering that the Whitman Baltimore Coin Expo was held on the same dates.

I've written the convention report for the last few years, but this year my attendance started out earlier and differently. I drove 11 hours south from Utah the Tuesday before and visited Kent and crew at their Carefree offices. My arrival made for the sixth visitor present, and a few more folks showed up right after me. It was kind of a pre-show gathering and a fun, productive way to start our event. The entire crowd dined together locally and continued again on Wednesday.

Indefatigable and ever reliable Emily was without her associate Peggy who sadly fractured her ankle just a few days prior. I had the day free so helped where I could, claiming the title of "Peggy for a Day". As always, the morning of the show starts by running into other attendees at breakfast. If you stayed at the Scottsdale Hilton, it always happens. Cory Frampton oversaw setup of the bourse with assistance from Adam & Patrick Richey. Every table was occupied and the association will likely require additional floor space next year. The USMEXNA is still growing.

Representatives from the major US auction companies and one from Mexico were in attendance. Cris Bierrenbach of Heritage Auctions and Daniel Sedwick generously provided the appetizers on Thursday evening as we gathered on the patio for the Silent Auction and the annual presentation of awards.

The Silent Auction offered a range of coins, books and vouchers for free gradings (from ANACS and PCGS) and raised an impressive \$5,185. Thanks to everybody who made donations or took part and won items, but particular mention should be made of Mike Dunigan who gave a 1749 Mo Pillar dollar that fetched \$850; Jim Maltbie who donated a 1/4 Real 1813 Mo NGC MS66 (\$675) and an 8 Reales 1888 Zs FZ NGC MS63 (\$370); Cris Bierrenbach who gave five coins and medals including a \$1 1904 Cn H ICG MS63a (\$450) and World Numismatics' 2 Onza Silver 1999 Mo NGC MS68 (\$375).

We had many donations of cash or books this year besides the Silent Auction donations. The Albuquerque Coin Club, Kirk Menczer, John Pullin, John Schuldt, Barry Tatum (of Texican Rare Coin) and John Troschinetz all donated cash and a special thanks to Joann Cross for her very generous donation.

Tom Denly, Stephen Burrington, Wally Myers, Marc Stackler and Terry Stoddard all donated books. Owen Linzmayer donated all the books that he had used for his research on his own *The Banknote Book*. Elmer Powell showed extreme generosity by donating many books and a Dansko album of 20th Century Mexican Type Coins that will be in next years' Silent Auction.



This year awards went to:

Best Article (Spanish Colonial)	Alejandro Martinez Bustos' "Brief Review of the Cast Medals (and Locals) issued in the Colonial Mexico that celebrated the Kings of Spain and the Indies"
Best Article (War of Independence & Imperial)	Max A. Keech's "Insurgent Cast Coinage - Supreme Junta Arms, Morelos and Lva, 1811-12"
Best Article (Republican)	William Sigl's "Rarity Summary by Mint of Mexican Republic 1/2 Reales"
Best Article (Revolution)	Scott Doll's "Obverse Busts of the Revolutionary Coinage of Oaxaca (1915-1916)"
Best Article (20th Century Modern)	Scott Doll's "1987 The Volcanos Edition of the Legends of Mexico Medal"
Best Article (Paper Money General)	Ricardo de León Tallavas' "A New Unlisted Mexican Note tied to Maximilian"
Best Article (Revolutionary Paper Money)	Ricardo de León Tallavas and Emilio Javier Ramírez García's "New Unlisted cartones of Huixquilucan, Estado de México"
Best Overall Article	Jorge A. Proctor's set of articles on "The Assayers of the mint of Mexico during the 16th Century Pillars Coinage"
Annual Jed Crump Award	Elmer Powell
Annual Richard Doty Award	Scott Doll
For services above and beyond award	Peggy Frew



*Alejandro Martinez Bustos*

Sadly, we lost a close friend and annual supporter just a week before the convention. Our videographer David Lisot, the man I referred to as the Mathew Brady of Numismatics, passed away while undergoing a surgical procedure. David was very much loved by our community and his loss touches us all. He will be missed.

Several months prior to David we lost long time dealer Ken Tabachnick of California. Days prior to the show long time Texas coin dealer Bob White also passed. Our condolences to their families and all who knew these good people. They will be missed.

One of the quirky behavioral patterns of the shows is the ebb and flow of attendees. Each year the USMexNA presents six educational sessions with speakers on various numismatic topics. When a session begins, the bourse floor empties and the seminar room fills. When the seminar ends, everyone flows back onto the bourse. This year's seminars were well attended. A past favorite has been the session on counterfeits, which was conspicuously absent this year. In the absence of David Lisot, Adam Richey diligently recorded each seminar in its entirety. I am told the plan is to have them available for viewing on the USMexNA website shortly.

But we went six for six on quality for 2022. The following is my recap of each session.

Matthew Ruttley lectured on "*JB Frener; Central America's Most Prolific Engraver.*" Juan Bautista Frener was a Swiss born (1821) artist, engraver and sculptor who in 1853 became the chief engraver for the mint of the newly founded Republic of Guatemala. He designed the new Coat of Arms for the nation which is still used today. In 1874 he was appointed director of the Casa de Moneda. During his career he designed numerous denominations of coins for Guatemala and Honduras, as well as currency designs. He was suspected of foul play and implicated in the bombing death of General Barrios in 1884 and exiled to Chile and Panama for nearly two years. Upon return to Guatemala he formally retired with a pension.

Max Keech gave a detailed presentation on "*War of Independence - Insurgent Cast Coinage.*" with emphasis on casting stamps versus counter stamps. Casting stamps are exactly that, stamps incorporated into a coin when it was being cast



as part of the manufacturing process. Specific stamps were only used for casting as opposed to counter stamps which were used for validation which was done from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Casting was done by the Supreme Junta allied forces from late 1811 to mid 1812. Max further explained positioning of the casting stamps.



Max Keech presenting



Hilton Lucio, who with Claudio Angelini has authored the book *The Dutch Obsidional Coins in Brasil 1645 - 1646*, presented on the "Dutch Occupation of South America and Caribbean.", most specifically in Brazil. The Dutch established trading posts primarily to trade in sugar and had no aspiration to conquer. The presence of the Geoctroyeede West-Indische Compagnie (GWC) is documented on gold and silver coins bearing the GWC logo. In 1648 the Dutch ship *Utrecht* was sunk in battle by Portuguese galleons off Bahia State, and the survivor coins are considered siege or obsidional coins, most having been re-discovered with the discovery of the *Utrecht* in 1981. These coins are found in various denominations, in gold and silver, and are square cut with scissors and bear the year and name BRASIL on one side surrounded by a ring of "pearls". The reverse has the GWC logo with Roman numeral denomination above it, again surrounded by a ring of "pearls". All are extremely rare with extremely low known populations.

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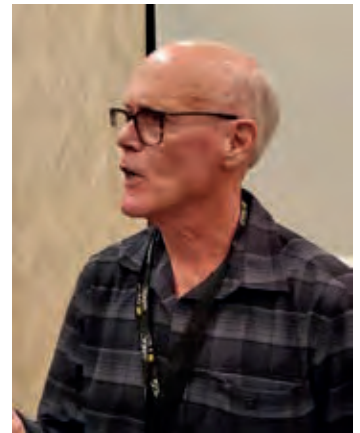
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Kirk Menczer presentation, *"Republic Gold 5 Pesos - The Ultimate Challenge"*, informed us that the Gold Five Pesos of 1870 - 1905 are extremely rare and is believed to be the least collected gold coin, and possibly the least collected of any Mexican coin. This is evident when looking at an NGC population chart. From 1870 thru 1877 there is not a date or mint with more than nine coins graded until the 1877 Zacatecas, and not again until several dates in 1900 and after. Most unusual is that for such a rare coin auction prices are surprisingly reasonable. Obviously, this is due to small demand. I suspect this will not be the case going forward.



*Kirk Menczer*

Bill Sigl presented *"What's so Exciting About Mexican Republic 1 Reales?"* Bill, like many at the USMEXNA convention, has been a regular attendee. For years I have seen him bent over a box of coins looking at each for varieties and anything unusual. In this presentation he demonstrates his keen eye with examples such as four different variations of the eagle on the one peso series.

Brett Irick presented on *"Republic Half Escudos"*. Half Escudos were struck from 1827 thru 1870 with a weight of 1.69gms at a wide range of mints throughout Mexico. Add a plethora of assayers and there are numerous coins to attempt a complete set. All the "Open book" half escudos are in the KM-378 series. Specifically there are seven major design varieties. KM-378, KM-378.1 thru 378.6. These are mixed throughout the various mints and assayers making for numerous combinations. Durango mint for example used mainly the KM-378.1 varieties. Brett was kind enough to have a display at USMEXNA this year, and his half escudos filled the better part of two display cases. A truly impressive collection in a series where numerous coins are extreme rarities.



*Brett Irick*

Other displays were of Revolutionary memorabilia assembled by Elmer Powel, including a rare receipt from Pancho Villa for money purloined from the Banco Minero in Parral, and by Kirk Menczer, related to his talk.

Kent Ponterio's Pinball Party was held on Friday at his home, as it has been in past years. Two busloads of attendees visited and spent the evening eating, drinking, socializing and playing arcade games until about midnight. The food went so fast pizzas were ordered for essential sustenance. Thanks go to Cris Bierenbach for the 19 pizzas of every combination he had delivered to feed us hungry folks. Our thanks also go out to Kent and Trish for opening their home and their hearts to us all.

Saturday was the last day and in the morning there was steady traffic, gradually dwindling on into late afternoon. Dealers began to pack up in preparation of leaving, and by dinner time there was only a small group remaining. That was a wrap for the 2022 Convention as all who remained toasted another successful show with a shot of Tequila, accented by a flashing LED light mounted to the bottom. Tasty and trippy; to reach back to a 60s expression. Thanks to all who put in the effort to make this show the go-to event annually for Mexican and Latin American coins and currency. Thanks also to all who traveled near and far to attend and be part of this fabulous community and club. We hope to see everyone again in 2023.

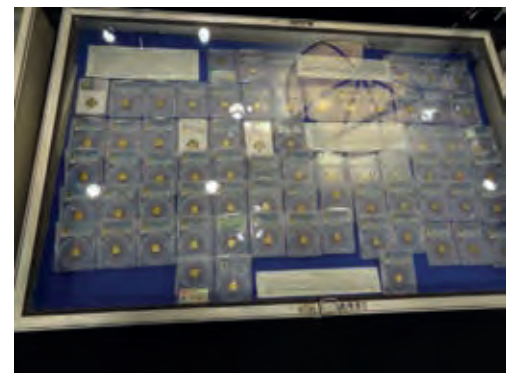
*Allan Schein*



*Reception*



*The Silent Auction*



*part of Brett Irick's display*





*Jim Anderson and Kent Ponterio at World Numismatics*



*Arthur Morowitz of Champion Stamp*



*Jim and Peggy Elmen of World Wide Coins of California with Adam Biagi*



*Daniel Sedwick of Daniel Frank Sedwick LLC*



*David Wagner, Kirk Menczer and Bill Sigl*



*Bob, Fily and Tony Briggs of Monedas Briggs with Scott Doll*



*Joe Lang and Paul Montz of Stephen Album Rare Coins with Tom Jensen*



*Daniel and Jennifer Whyman*



*Matthew Ruttley, Thomas Ribiero and Cris Bierrenbach*



*John and Joann Cross*



*Mike Ontko, Greg Meyer and Jeff Stahl*



*The Albuquerque Coin Club members:  
Stephen Acre, Kevin Tessneer, Daniel Garcia  
and Rod Frechette*





*Sophie Duncan, Thomas Ribiero, Cris Bierrenbach and Max Keech*



*Alejandro Martinez Bustos, Cory Frampton and Tony Briggs*



*Barbara Falcone, Sal Falcone and Angela Fagiano*

**THE NEXT CONVENTION WILL BE HELD FROM THURSDAY 26 TO SATURDAY 28 OCTOBER 2023.  
MARK THE DATES IN YOUR DIARY.**

## **A NEW DIE COMBINATION OF AN ESTADO DE OAXACA DOS PESOS**

by Terence Stoddard



I have been aware for a number of years that two of the Oaxaca Dos Pesos coins in my collection were probably undescribed and not listed in *La Ventana*. Recently I was informed that one of them had been described by Angel Herrera in the Sept 2015 issue of the USMEXNA journal. This encouraged me to see if the other coin was also undescribed. Pictures were sent to Angel and he agrees that this is the case, so I am now presenting this coin. It has the reverse of LV 106 and LV 107 but an undescribed obverse. This obverse is pictured along with the reverse and a blowup of the signature S in PESOS.



The reverse has the signature S in PESOS and also has the same striations between the scroll and the right half of the scale as LV 106 and LV 107. The obverse has a complete O in ESTADO so this coin is not LV 106. The obverse also does not have the comma after OAXACA or the period after the date (1915), so this is also not LV 107. This die combination is not listed in *La Ventana*.

Another feature of the reverse of these coins is the more or less horizontal striations in LV 107 and the coin described herein. LV 106 also has these striations plus additional vertical striations which indicate it was reworked and produced after LV 107 and my coin.



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## THE ASSAYERS OF THE MINT OF MEXICO DURING THE 16TH CENTURY PILLARS COINAGE, - LATE SERIES, ASSAYERS L AND O

by Jorge A. Proctor

In this final section I conclude the history of the first assayer of the Mexico City mint, with the continuing litigation over the posts of assayer and smelter.



*Doña Joanna of Austria, Princess of Portugal, c. 1557*  
by Alonso Sánchez Coello  
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provided a list of character witnesses that could attest to him having the skill and competence to exercise the post ceded to him by his brother; these witnesses were: Gabriel Díaz, Lieutenant Treasurer of the Mint; Francisco de Salazar and Juan Ramírez de Alarcón, both merchants; and Juan González de Arenas, a silver merchant of the Mint.

Following the public audience, on the same day, Alonso de Zorita, the Mexican *Oidor* who was given the responsibility to gather the needed information, appointed Juan Caro as the scribe who would record it. Then, Juan Caro, in turn, called Attorney General Maldonado to assist.

On 17 May 1559, all four witnesses were able to appear in Mexico before *Oidor* Zorita and Alonso Gutiérrez, where they provided testimony in response to nine questions asked in relation to a previous deposition provided by Alonso Gutiérrez. Nine days later, on 26 May, Pedro de Requena, Scribe of the Chamber (*Cámara*) of the *Audiencia* of Mexico, upon request of the President and *Oidores*, brought out the original of the testimonies gathered, and after being corrected and discussed, this was then remitted to the Council of the Indies. It is probably around the time that these papers were being prepared for shipment that news arrived from Spain, informing the officials from Mexico of the 1558 ruling in favor of Luis Rodríguez, a ruling which would have displaced Alonso Gutiérrez whom we know to have then traveled to Spain at the time of this trial.<sup>(3)</sup>

On 19 February 1561, through a decree signed by King Philip II in Toledo, Luis Rodríguez was subpoenaed once again by the Council of the Indies. It seems that new questions had arisen about the provision that had granted the office of smelter to Luis Rodríguez in 1558, and now that Alonso Gutiérrez was attempting to claim this same office which had been left to him by his brother Juan, Luis was being asked to respond to Alonso's new protest.<sup>(4)</sup>

Alonso Gutiérrez, who had been serving the post of smelter for his brother at the mint for some time now, had received the renunciation to his brother's post on 13 June 1558.<sup>(1)</sup> But this was just the first step of the transfer, which still needed to be presented before the *Audiencia* of Mexico and the Royal Council of the Indies in Spain, for their consideration.

After his brother's death, Alonso went before the Town Council of Querétaro where Juan Sánchez Alanís, Deputy Mayor (*Teniente de Alcalde Mayor*) of the town and provinces of Querétaro and Jilotepec ("*Xilotepeque*"), conducted proceedings and gathered information from witnesses to record this event. This testimonial was probably gathered for the Viceroy, Don Luis de Velasco, who later provided Alonso Gutiérrez with a commission and temporary appointment, so that he could continue working the post of smelter while the matter was presented to the courts.<sup>(2)</sup>

On 4 April 1559, by advice of his attorney, Alonso Gutiérrez appeared before the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia* of Mexico in a public audience, bringing with him the copies of the proceedings and information gathered in Querétaro. With this information, Alonso also



*Don Luis de Velasco y Ruíz de Alarcón, 2nd Viceroy of New Spain*  
Oil on canvas, attributed to Simón Pereyñs ©  
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As we remember, the initial ruling in Luis Rodríguez's favor had been based on the argument that since the posts of assayer and smelter had always been together, then he should be given the appointment to the office of smelter, as he already had that of assayer. As part of this ruling it had been said that the office of smelter would not carry any additional rights, as it was part of the joint office of assayer and smelter.

But now this ruling was being disputed by Alonso Gutiérrez, who said that Luis Rodríguez had been given the previous provision without it being understood that although the offices of assayer and smelter had always been together, in this case these had been purposely separated. The separation of these offices was said to have occurred to prevent notorious grievances on Alonso Gutiérrez, who at the time was already working the post of smelter under an appointment given to him by his brother, Juan. It was also said, as part of this complaint, that it was necessary that the post of smelter be held by a person who did not occupy himself with any other office, and who should carry the rights as had been held by the predecessors of his brother Juan, as well as him, as not doing so would cause for the King's fifths and tenths (the Royal taxes) to be defrauded.

With the new arguments it was now said that the only reason why Juan Gutiérrez had ceded the office of assayer to Luis Rodríguez had been because in Juan Gutiérrez's conscience it was understood that he could not serve those two offices well, for which he then implored that by such renunciation, he be given the office of smelter, as otherwise it would be left empty, or to do as they saw fit.

Now, as it was done before, Luis Rodríguez was once again provided with a period of eight months in which to appear before the Council of the Indies, in person or by proxy, to present any argument he wanted considered. But, unlike last time, where it was only said that the eight months were to start from the moment that this order was presented to him, this time the decree was specific in saying that the period would begin from the day that the letter was notified to him, in person if possible, and if not, to the doorsteps of his house where it would be said or made known to his wife and children, if there were any, and if not, to one of his servants or neighbors, or to other neighbors nearby, so that they could know it and notify him, and with this, ignorance on his part would be prevented.

It is conceivable that this new order arrived in Mexico sometime in late 1561, and that this coincides with the appearance of a new assayer-mark, which was first identified by Mr. Francisco de Paula Pérez Sindreu as that of Bernardo de Oñate,<sup>(5)</sup> serving as lieutenant of Luis Rodríguez (this assayer chose as his assayer-mark the letter O). Although the earliest reference to date for Bernardo de Oñate working as the assayer on record at the mint during this time dates from 1564, it is likely that his participation as Luis Rodríguez's lieutenant began much earlier, as he had been working as his assistant since as early as 1550.<sup>(6)</sup> This new impending legal proceeding might have been what prompted Luis Rodríguez finally to promote Bernardo to the status of lieutenant assayer, where he would have then been allowed to use his own identifying mark, while Luis could have then taken the necessary time to formulate a response to the new deposition.

The scarcity of information on this new trial prevents a further study. But Alonso Gutiérrez's return to Mexico in 1562 seems to indicate that the deliberations were fairly quick.<sup>(7)</sup> At the end it appears that Luis Rodríguez won the argument once again, as not only was there a presentation of his title, yet again, on 10 September 1565,<sup>(8)</sup> but we are told later that he was holding both posts by the time the office was sold, following Luis Rodríguez's death in 1569.<sup>(9)</sup>



*Image A: - 4 reales coin - Assayer L over O  
Image B; - 2 reales coin - Assayer O over L  
(Images courtesy of Kent Ponterio)*



The existence of over assayers coins, L/O and O/L, indicate that Bernardo de Oñate and Luis Rodríguez alternated back and forth during the last years of the pillars and waves coinage. This occurrence is explained by a portion of a testimony provided by Esteban Franco, the former assayer of the foundry, on 14 January 1568, which states that although Luis Rodríguez had previously served as the Mint's assayer himself, he was now serving this office through a lieutenant due to his ailments.<sup>(10)</sup> It seems that Bernardo de Oñate, having shown that he was a capable assayer, was called upon to take on the post of assayer as Luis Rodríguez's lieutenant, while Luis' health deteriorated.<sup>(11)</sup>

Luis Rodríguez's health continued to decline, prompting him by the end of 1567 to present a renunciation of his office of assayer in favor of his 28-year-old son (his eldest), Cristóbal Rodríguez. Being presented before the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia*, this was read on 22 December 1567,<sup>(12)</sup> and shortly after, as was customary, one of its *Oidores*, Doctor Pedro de Villalobos, was tasked with interviewing witnesses that could attest to the merits and demerits of both Luis Rodríguez and his son Cristóbal; to Cristóbal's legitimacy as son of the legal marriage of Luis Rodríguez and Ana de Toledo; to Cristóbal's skill and competence to exercise the post of assayer being ceded to him by his father; and, if they could, to provide information on the current value of this office.

The Scribe, Juan López Tavera documented the statements from the witnesses testifying before *Oidor* Villalobos between 14 and 16 January 1568, and recorded the inquiry as concluded on 26 January. Later, on 28 March 1568, Gordian Casasano, Scribe of the Chamber of the *Audiencia* of Mexico, upon request of the President and *Oidores*, brought out the original of the testimonies gathered, and after being corrected and discussed before the witnesses present, this was then remitted to the Council of the Indies in Spain.

On 26 November 1569, with Luis Rodríguez now sick in bed and nearing the end of his life, the Scribe, Pedro Sánchez de la Fuente, went to his house where, again, he recorded Luis Rodríguez's renunciation of the office of assayer to his son Cristóbal Rodríguez, a renunciation first presented to the *Audiencia* of Mexico in December 1567, asking that this be ratified so that with it Cristóbal could continue taking care of his mother and siblings.<sup>(13)</sup>

Luis Rodríguez died shortly after<sup>(14)</sup> whereupon, under a new Royal decree from 21 August 1565,<sup>(15)</sup> a direct transfer to Cristóbal Rodríguez was no longer guaranteed. Spain now had the right to determine the value of this office and then Cristóbal, if approved, would have to commit to pay this amount to the Spanish Crown. In addition to this, the Viceroy

of Mexico, following what he saw as Spain's prerogative, decided to test the market, advertising the offices of assayer and smelter individually, to see if separating them would bring more money.<sup>(16)</sup>

The Scribe, Juan de Cueva, wrote on 15 December 1569, that the office of assayer, about which he had previously sent information to the King, with the intent that it be passed on to Luis Rodríguez's son through the renunciation, had now been vacated by the death of Luis Rodríguez. The King had already sent correspondence to Juan de Cueva to let him know that this was already being discussed.<sup>(17)</sup> But now, with the death of the owner, Juan de Cueva was suggesting to the King several choices of what he could do with this office, including giving it to Cristóbal Rodríguez through the renunciation, after paying a healthy sum for it; renting it; talking to his friend Don Ruy Gómez de Silva, the Prince of Éboli,<sup>(18)</sup> so that he could request it, retain it, and benefit himself from its rents; or, if he chose, to sell it, for which Juan de Cueva said it to be worth as much as 15,000 ducats in Mexico.<sup>(19)</sup> Sending this notice, Juan de Cueva was sure the King would do what he liked most.

On 19 December 1569, Cristóbal Rodríguez, still seeking to procure the office of assayer, prepared a document of authority to ensure representation in Spain, assigning as his representatives: Alonso Puente de Herrera, Solicitor of Lawsuits (*Solicitador de Pleitos*) of the Council of the Indies; Alonso de Vides, neighbor of the city of Seville; and

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Antonio Rodríguez del Padrón, his brother.<sup>(20)</sup> As early as 14 January 1570 we start hearing from possible buyers,<sup>(21)</sup> while back in Spain, in 1570, King Philip II signed a decree on 8 March for the change in design of all coin dies for the New World<sup>(22)</sup> and on 31 May the Council of Indies officially notified the King of the passing of Luis Rodríguez through a letter written by the Mexican Viceroy, Martín Enríquez de Almansa, on 20 January 1570.<sup>(23)</sup>

From the guidelines of the new decree, the new coins were now to bear as their new design on all 4, 2, and 1 reales<sup>(24)</sup>, on one side a crowned Habsburg Shield (the Arms of the reigning monarch), and on the other side castles and lions (the symbols of the kingdoms whose union was considered the building blocks for what later became known as the Kingdom of Spain.) Where the shield would have been, the half real incorporates the name of the king in the form of a monogram, with the same reverse as that of the other denominations.

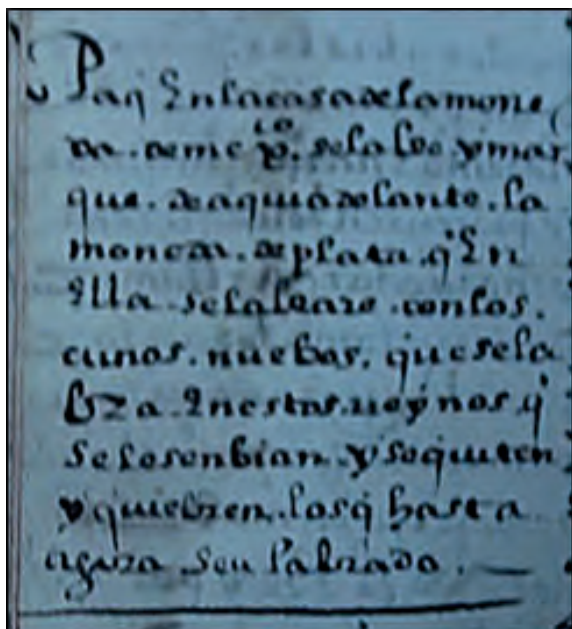


*By decree of 8 March 1570, the design of the coinage of the Americas was changed to what is today referred to as the Habsburg Shield design. Pictured here are enlarged images of a 4 Reales of Mexico (Coin A), showing the new design used on the 8, 4, 2 and 1 reales denominations of Mexican coins, and a half real (Coin B) with the design of the monogram of the King's name (in place of the shield used on the larger denominations).*

*((Image of coin A courtesy of Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC, and coin B by the author))*

Between 18 March and 28 June 1570, the sculptor Juan Paulo Poxini received payments for the new punches he was now ordered to prepare for the mints of Lima and Mexico.<sup>(25)</sup> On 13 January 1571, the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia* of Mexico acknowledge receipt of the order for the changeover of the Charles and Johanna coinage, to that of the Habsburg shield design.<sup>(26)</sup> As part of this document the Charles and Johanna dies were ordered to be taken off production and broken-up immediately and replaced with the new dies sent from Spain (the dies with the new Habsburg shield design).





Transcript from the original document (left):

"Para q En la casa de mone-  
da .de mexico. se labre y mar-  
que . de aqui adelante . la  
moneda . de plata . q' En  
Ella . se labrare .con los .  
cuños . nuevos . que se la-  
bra .En estos rreynos q'  
se les enbian y se quiten  
y quiebren. los que hasta  
agora se a labrado . \_\_\_\_\_"

Above: From the margin of the important document from Mexico, dated 13 January 1571, one can read where the mint of Mexico is being ordered, from this day forward, to mint and stamp their silver coinage with the new dies (the ones with the Habsburg shield design), and that the previous dies used until now (the Charles and Johanna dies), be removed and broken.



Don Martín Enríquez de Almansa, Fourth  
Viceroy of New Spain

Oil on canvas, artist unknown

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By 1571, the office of assayer had sold in Mexico. Now Viceroy Martín Enríquez de Almansa writes to the King on 4 April 1571 with a summary of how things had gone with the sale of this office.<sup>(28)</sup> According to this letter, their attempt to split the office of assayer and smelter, and sell them as two separate offices, had been a failure. When Luis Rodríguez had previously won the argument that the post of smelter was part of that of assayer, it was agreed that this being the case, he should work the post of smelter without receiving any salary for it, as he was already getting a salary for the office of assayer. But now, splitting these two posts also meant that the post of smelter had to be given its own separate salary, which was said to amount to four maravedis per Mark of silver.

For this new salary to be justified, the salary of the assayer would now have to be lowered and this was creating serious problems with the sale of the office of assayer, estimated to be worth some 25,000 ducats (when retained as assayer and smelter together). After the split, the most that anyone was willing to offer for the post of assayer alone was only 16,000 ducats;<sup>(29)</sup> this being the offer made by the merchant Diego Alonso Larios on 14 January 1570, who wanted to purchase the office for his son with the same name.<sup>(30)</sup> At the end, not only was the office of assayer and smelter kept as one, but it was also agreed by the Viceroy that whoever did purchase it did not need to have the skill to work it himself and could exercise the post through a skilled lieutenant, further opening the pool of prospective buyers. With this in place, the office was now sold in 1571 to the Scribe, Juan de Cueva, for 29,100 ducats,<sup>(31)</sup> who in turn kept Bernardo de Oñate as his lieutenant, where he became the assayer in office at the time of the change to the coins with the new design decreed for the Indies

in 1570. Bernardo de Oñate remained as the mint's working assayer until sometime after 22 December 1578,<sup>(32)</sup> when he was replaced by Luis de Oñate,<sup>(33)</sup> possibly his son,<sup>(34)</sup> who continued using the same assayer-mark O that his predecessor had used.



Initial	Name	Began on	Left office on
O	Bernardo de Oñate	Possibly in 1561 (?) only and then starting again in 1564 (?)	Some time after 22 December 1578

- Owner of the office: Luis Rodríguez until sometime in late 1569.
- Oñate is best known for the replacing ailing Luis Rodríguez. He started working as an apprentice or assistant of Luis Rodríguez around 1550. It is possible that he served an early tenure as lieutenant of Luis Rodríguez in 1561 (?), and then worked again as lieutenant of Luis from 1564 (?) to 1569. After the death of Luis Rodríguez he was retained in office as the mint's working assayer. The ownership of this office remained vacant between 1569-1571. During this time the office was up for sale and the rents were collected by the Royal officials.
- In early 1571, Juan de Cueva becomes the owner, and retains Bernardo de Oñate as his working assayer (his lieutenant.)
- To date, the earliest documentary reference of Bernardo de Oñate the assayer on record at the mint is dated 4 June 1564 and his latest 22 December 1578.
- Mexico started minting coins with the Habsburg Shield design under this assayer (possibly as early as 1571.)
- His latest tenure ended around 1580, when he was replaced by Luis de Oñate, who continued using the same assayer-mark O. Luis de Oñate is presumed to be the son of Bernardo.

### Endnotes:

- (1) This was well within the requirements of the Spanish laws, which required that for a transfer to be considered, a title holder must cede his post to a capable individual more than 20 days prior to his death.
- (2) Archivo General de Indias (AGI): México, 205, N. 27.
- (3) L. Romera Iruela, and M. del C. Galbis Díez, *Catálogo de Pasajeros a Indias-Siglos XVI, XVII, XVIII*. Vol. IV (1560-1566), Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos; Archivo General de Indias, 1980. p. 198, No. 1590 and p. 287, No. 2354. AGI: Contratación, 5537, L. 2, F. 184v and F. 253v. Although we do not know the date that Alonso Gutiérrez traveled from Mexico to Spain, we do know that he was in Spain at the same time this trial took place through the book of passengers to the Indies, which shows him attempting to return to Mexico in November of 1561 (his license is recorded on 3 November, 1561). Not able to make this trip in 1561, his license was then reinstated on 12 March 1562.
- (4) AGI: Patronato, 286, R. 33.
- (5) J. Pellicer i Bru, *Glosario de Maestros de Ceca y Ensayadores (Siglos XIII-XX)*. 2nd Edition. Madrid, 1997, p. 285; AGI, México, 210, N. 30. The identity of this assayer has been known since the discovery of a reference from 4 June 1564 by Mr. Francisco de Paula Pérez Sindreu (AGI: Escribanía, 272A). This has now been further confirmed by the author through a later document where he was providing testimony as assayer of the mint on 22 December 1578 (AGI: México, 210, N. 30). The earlier reference from June 1564 identifies Bernardo de Oñate as the assayer on record at the mint by this date.
- (6) AGI, (op. cit., n. 5). Enquiry by request of the Treasurer of the Mint, Francisco de Quintana Dueñas, regarding the convenience of having black workers in charge of beating the metal for coining at the mint ("*ynformacion hecha a pedimiento del thesorero de la casa dela moneda de mexico antel Virrey en diziembre 1578 sobre q conviene q haya negros braçajeros en la casa y que no se quiten*"). As part of this enquiry, Bernardo de Oñate was called upon to testify on 22 December 1578, where he said that he had been assaying silver at the mint for some 28 or 29 years prior to this date. Since no assayer-mark O specimens were recovered from the 1554 Fleet off Padre Island, Texas, then we have a clear indication that Bernado de Oñate must have first started as an apprentice and/or assistant of Luis Rodríguez, then being promoted to the status of lieutenant at a later date. Bernardo's testimony is as follows: "...*en la dicha. çiudad de mexico en este dicho dia Veinte y dos de deçienbre del dicho .año (1578)...presento por testigo a bernardo de oñate ensayador de ladicha Casa...*(referente a los dichos negros) *se ha entendido ser neçesario bolber a la dicha .casa para que trabajen y ayuden al despacho como de presente lo haçen y esto es muy notorio en la dicha Casa y entre las personas que dello tienen .notiçias como este testigo que ha sido ensayador y ha ensayado plata en la dicha casa del dicho tiempo de veinte y ocho /o veinte y nueve .años aesta parte y es la verdad para el Juramento q ffecho tiene y firmolo de su nonbre que es de hedad de çinquenta y cinco años antes mas que menos...*"
- (7) Romera Iruela, and Galbis Díez, (op. cit., n. 3), p. 198, No. 1590 and p. 287, No. 2354; AGI: Contratación, 5537, L. 2, F. 253v.
- (8) Archivo General de Simancas (AGS): Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda (C.J.H.), leg. 76,; AGS: C.J.H., leg. 89, fol. 80. (Documents discovered by Glenn Murray.)
- (9) AGI: México, 19, N. 58 (Mexico, 6 April 1571). This document states: "*El offiçio densayador se vendió en veynte y nueve mil y cien ensayador ducados como lo tenía Luys Rodriguez que Juntamente usava del offiçio de fundidor sin derechos...*"

- (10) AGI: México, 209, N. 58. A portion of Esteban Franco's testimony, dated 14 January 1568, states that Luis Rodríguez held the office of assayer at the mint which he had worked, but was now exercising through a lieutenant due to his ailments. On this same date Martín de Gaona also alluded to the fact that by now Luis Rodríguez was no longer working the post of assayer himself, as he says that he had seen him exercising the office "at the time he was healthy". Gaona's testimony reads: "...en el oficio de ensayador dela Real casa . dela moneda desta çiudad de mexico en el tiempo que estuvo sano el dicho Luis Rodriguez el a visto este testigo serbir bien y fielmente..."
- (11) L. Romera Iruela and M. del C. Galbis Díez, *Catálogo de Pasajeros a Indias-Siglos XVI, XVII, XVIII*. Vol. V (1567-1577). Tomo I (1567-1574), Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos; Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain, 1980. p. 95, No. 612. AGI: Contratación, 5537, L. 3, F. 242v. News of Luis Rodríguez' decline in health might have prompted another one of Luis Rodríguez sons, Antonio Rodríguez del Padrón, to travel to Mexico in June of 1567 (his license to travel is dated 19 June 1567). The connection of this individual to the mint's assayer is certain. His license includes that he was an inhabitant of Mexico, son of Luis Rodríguez and Ana de Toledo.  
AGI, (ibid, n. 10.). This document confirms that Ana de Toledo was the wife of Luis Rodríguez, the assayer. We further know that by December of 1567 Luis Rodríguez was already sick, as he mentions this in a document from AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, fol. 255 and that Antonio Rodríguez del Padrón was brother of Cristóbal Rodríguez, the pretender to the post of assayer after Luis Rodríguez's death, as this is mentioned in AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, fol. 257. (The last two documents from AGS mentioned here were discovered by Glenn Murray.)
- (12) AGI, (op. cit. n. 10.
- (13) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, fol. 255.
- (14) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, fol. 257; AGS: C.J.H. leg. 109, núm. 1 (sin folio) – These two documents were found by Glenn Murray. Although it has been previously published that Luis Rodríguez died on 14 January 1570, this is not correct. On AGS: C.J.H. leg. 109, núm. 1, the Scribe, Juan de Cueva, informs the King that the office of assayer had been vacated by the death of Luis Rodríguez (Juan de Cueva dates this portion of his letter on 15 December 1569). In addition to this, on 19 December 1569, Cristóbal Rodríguez also tells us that Luis Rodríguez had already passed away by this date: "...Xpobal Rodríguez, vezino que soy desta gran çiudad de México desta Nueva España, hijo ligitimo de Luys Rrodríguez, difunto, que esté en gloria, ensayador que fue por Su Magestad de la Casa de la Moneda desta dicha çiudad..."
- (15) *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 entitled "La Época de Gestión Delegada, 1535-1572", by Agustín Pineda Aguilar, Madrid, Spain, 1997, p. 54. This book states: "Treinta años después de fundada la casa mexicana y de haberse creado sus oficios, una R.C. de 21 de Agosto de 1565, mandó que los mayores y menores pudieran venderse, según fueran vacando los titulares en turno (lo eran hasta su muerte), beneficiándose la Corona con el producto total de aquellas ventas." With this new decree of 1565, the Crown now needed to establish the price of the office, as the person who the office was ceded to, if approved, was responsible for paying the Crown the price specified, if agreed upon. If no agreement was made, then the office could be put up for sale to the highest bidder at public auction.
- (16) AGI, (op. cit. n. 9.)
- (17) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 109, (op. cit. n. 14.)
- (18) Don Ruy Gómes de Silva, the 1st Prince of Éboli, was born on 27 October 1516 in Chamusca, Portugal, the son of Portuguese nobility. He came to Castile in 1526 as part of the entourage of the *Infanta* Isabella (*Isabel*) of Portugal, who traveled to Castile for her marriage to King Charles I of Spain (also known since 1519 as Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire). He served as a page to the infant Prince Philip (the future King Philip II), becoming Philip's friend and one of his main advisers. Although Philip did not bestow him with the office of assayer of the Mexican Mint, he did elevate him to grandee status as Duke of Pastrana in 1572. Ruy Gómes died in Madrid, Spain, on 29 July 1573.
- (19) It can be presumed that when Juan de Cueva quoted the value of the office of assayer at 15,000 ducats, this was for the office of assayer alone, without taking into consideration the added value brought to this by the post of smelter. Not only was this something later explained in 1571 by the Viceroy to the King (for the textual Spanish explanation from the Viceroy see endnote 29), but it is important to know that this is the same Juan de Cueva who ended up buying the joint office of assayer and smelter later for almost double this amount (for more on this see endnote 31.)
- (20) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, (op. cit. n. 14.)
- (21) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 106, núm. 9 (sin folio). (Document discovered by Glenn Murray.)
- (22) T. Dasí, *Estudio de los Reales de a Ocho* (Valencia, Spain, 1950), Vol. II, pp. IX and XVIII, No. 370 and 391. The shield-type coins were authorized by decrees of 23 November 1566 (for Peninsular Spain) and 8 March 1570 (for the Americas.)
- (23) José Toribio Medina. *Las Monedas Coloniales Hispano-Americanas*. Santiago de Chile, 1919, p. 43; AGI: Indiferente, 738, N. 121. Although José Toribio Medina does include the information from this document in his monumental work, the date is incorrectly reported to be 30 May 1570 (the correct date is 31 May).

- (24) The 8 reales denomination was not currently being minted in the New World at the time of this decree. But when this denomination was later added, this followed the same design as used on the 4, 2, and 1 reales.
- (25) AGI: Indiferente: 426, L. 25, F. 55r (18 March), F. 62r (20 May), F. 64r (7 June), and F. 68v (28 June). All four of these documents from the year 1570 include payments made to a Juan Paulo Poxini for the punches made for the mints of New Spain (Mexico) and the City of Kings (Lima); R. I. Nesmith, *The Coinage of the First Mint of the Americas at Mexico City 1536 - 1572*, Reprint of original published in 1955 by the American Numismatic Society as Numismatic Notes and Monographs #131, Rockville Centre, NY, 2001, p. 39. Only the document dated 28 June 1570 was known when Nesmith documented this information, taking the name from José Toribio Medina's work as ROXINI, but he indicates that Adolfo Herrera in the book *El Duro*, Vol. 1, writes this name as PROXINI. The discovery of the other three documents helped to clarify the correct spelling of the name for this sculptor as POXINI.
- (26) J. A. Proctor, Plvs Ultra Newsletter, "The Start of Production of the Habsburg Shield Coinage in Mexico in 1571 Confirmed!" (West Palm Beach, Florida, 2016), Vol. 34, No. 4, 4th Quarter, p. 11.

Archivo General de la Nación de México, Instituciones Coloniales, Gobierno Virreinal, Reales Cédulas Originales y Duplicados (100), Reales Cédulas Duplicadas, Volumen D47, Título Expediente 247, Volumen y Fojas 150v, Royal decree from Cordoba, Spain from 8 March 1570, and its acknowledgment of receipt in Mexico on 13 January 1571. From the original: "*Nuestro bisorrey . presidente y oidores. dela nuestra audiencia..rreal que rreside en La çiudad de mexico . de la nueva spaña. y' a sabeis. como. por las ordenanças de la casa. de la moneda de Esa çiudad. mandamos q' los rreales y otra moneda . de plata .que en ella se labrare fuese con ciertos. cunos macas. y armas que en ellas. se os declara y porque Agora en las casas. de moneda. destos. nuestros. rreynos Avemos hordenado y mandado. q la moneda .de oro. y pláta .que en ellas se labrare. De aqui adelante Sea con otros. nuevos cuños. punzones. y armas. de las con tramj . que asta Aqui Se abia hecho .y hazia .y mi boluntad es . q' lo mismo se haga .En las casas .de moneda. de Las . nuestras yndias. en La moneda de plata . que en ellas. se labrare bos mando . q' luego .que ésta beais . deis orden .como que se quiten .quiebren y rremachen todos .Los. punçones. cuños marcas .y armas.con que en La dicha casa. de moneda . de Esa dicha ciudad. se obiere labrado .y labrare . al presente .La dicha. moneda . de plata de ma- nera .q' con ellos. no se pueda Labrar. mas. y probeais. como . de aqui adelante la dicha .moneda. de plata. que se obiere. de labrar .y labrare. En esa. dicha casa. Sea com punçones.marcas. y armas conforme A los q' con esta .se os enbiaran .los . cuales. son .como. los con que .se labra .en Las dichas casas. de moneda. destos dichos. nuestros .rreynos. y los admitireis. y admitid. En esa tierra. lo q Lansi hazed E' cumplid . sin dilaçion alguna y de como. ansi se cumple .nos dareis abiso. Fecho En cordoba .a/ocho .de março de mill .E quinientos y Setenta años. yo el rrey, por mandado. de su magestad. francisco de heraso/ Va raydo o diz traminobala en La zibdad. de Mexico. treze dias. del mes. de henero. de mill E quinientos E setenta y un años. los . señores . presidente y oidores . del audiencia. rreal. de la nueva españa rre- cibieron. esta çedula .rreal de su magestad. la qual por ellos vista la obede- çieron con el acatamiento .y rreberencia debido . y en quanto. Al cumplimiento della dixeran q haran y cumpliran lo q' por ella su magestad. les enbia a mandar. paso por Ante mi Sancho Lopez de agurto"*

- (27) AGI, (op. cit. n. 9.)
- (28) AGI, (ibid, n. 27). This document states: "...teniendo puesto el officio densayador en veynte y cinco mil ducados visto q' se dividia bolvieron a dar diez y seis y no pasaba nadie de alli y asi se ovieron de vender entrambos Juntos como los tenía Luys Rodriguez que usava en hambos offiçios y el de fundidor sín derechos..."
- (29) AGS, (op. cit. n. 21.)
- (30) AGI, (op. cit. n. 9); AGI: México, 217, N. 17. On 6 April and 4 May 1571 Viceroy Enríquez de Almansa notified the King that the office of assayer and smelter had been sold for 29,100 ducats, without mentioning the name of the buyer. For an example of one of his statements, the document from 4 May 1571 reads: "*El officio densayador ya escriví a .Vuestra. magestad como se avia vendido officio ensayador en veynte y nueve mil y cien ducados y por esa secutoria vera Vuestra magestad como el ensayador es obligado a aZer officio de fundidor sin llevar derechos por ello.*" We finally discover the name of the buyer, this being Juan de Cueva, through a document dated 22 December 1583, which reads: "...*abra doze años poco mas /o menos que por mandado de su magestad se vendio En publica almoneda El ofiçio de Ensayador y fundidor de la casa de la moneda desta çiudad y se rremato en el dicho juan de cueva En veynte E nueve mill y çien ducados quel dicho scrivano es publico pago con ayuda de algunos amigos . E se puso En cabeça de joan de cueva . su hijo. que a la sazón . hera muchacho . de siete u ocho años...*"
- (31) AGI, (op. cit. n. 5.).
- (32) F. de P. Pérez Sindreu. "Ensayadores de la Ceca de México, Siglos XVI y XVII," in *Gaceta Numismática de la Asociación Numismática Española*, No. 135 (Barcelona, Spain, December, 1999), p. 33. Luis de Oñate's involvement is known from a reference discovered by Mr. Francisco de Paula Pérez Sindreu in the General Archive of the Indies (AGI: Escribanía, 273A). According to Pérez Sindreu, the reference to Luis de Oñate, dated on 9 July 1608, states that he had been working for "more than 30 years in this post of assayer" ("*más de 30 años en este puesto de ensayador*"). It is more than likely that Luis de Oñate, as Bernardo had done before him, started as an apprentice or assistant, later being promoted to the status of lieutenant.
- (33) Some have stated that Luis de Oñate was the son of Bernardo de Oñate. But the family relationship between these two assayers has not yet been established through documentary sources, for which this assumption, although likely, is currently only hypothetical.



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Ancients: Maximian, First Reign  
(AD 286-310). AV aureus  
NGC Choice MS★ 5/5 – 4/5, Fine Style



Australia: South Australia. British  
Colony - Victoria gold "Adelaide"  
Pound 1852  
MS62+ NGC



Ancients: Otho  
(15 January-16 April AD 69).  
AV aureus  
NGC Choice VF 5/5 – 4/5



Austria: Salzburg. Franz Anton  
Furst von Harrach gold 25 Ducats 1709  
MS61 NGC



Ancients: MYSIA. Cyzicus.  
Ca. 500-450 BC. EL stater  
NGC Choice XF 5/5 – 3/5, marks



Ancients: BRUTTIUM. Caulonia.  
Ca. late 6th century BC. AR stater  
NGC Choice AU★ 5/5 – 5/5



Poland: Lithuania. Stephan Bathory  
gold Ducat 1586/5  
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Great Britain: George IV gold Proof  
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## **TWO UNKNOWN PROCLAMATION MEDALS OF VALLADOLID DE MICHOACAN: FERNANDO VI (1747) AND CARLOS III (1761)**

by Ricardo Vargas

Continuing my research on the proclamation medals of my beloved Michoacán, I stopped again in the city of Valladolid, today called Morelia, to investigate the oath to Fernando VI in 1747 and the ones to Carlos III in 1760 and 1761. The stories of the oaths to the kings are truly interesting, colorful, detailed and full of symbolism and, when it comes to numismatics, there are always small details that generate great revelations.

Before delving into the oaths of Fernando VI and Carlos III, I must mention that I was able to find evidence and documentation of acts of proclamation in Valladolid since Felipe IV in 1621 through Carlos II<sup>1</sup> in 1666, Felipe V in 1701 and Luis I in 1724. All of those acts took place even when Pátzcuaro held the capital of the province of Michoacán. Valladolid had to wait for Pátzcuaro to hold its festivities first to be able to carry out the proclamation and with ceremonies of much smaller magnitude than those that took place in the lake city. For none of those proclamation acts did I find evidence of any medals made for the oath.

Since the beginning of the 18th century, to be precise in 1701, Valladolid and Pátzcuaro began a legal and propaganda war<sup>2</sup> trying to be recognized as the capital of Michoacán. Although Pátzcuaro<sup>3</sup> won the battle with regard to the swearing-in of Felipe V and Luis I, it would end up losing the war since Valladolid would definitively be crowned as the capital of Michoacán after the oath to Fernando VI.

### **The Oath to Fernando VI**

The last battle between the cities occurred after the death of Felipe V. Both cities sent their arguments to the Viceroy so that he could decide who should take the oath (and be the capital of Michoacán); however, with little patience and the desire to succeed, the provincial mayor of Valladolid, D. Miguel Antonio de Pagola, explained to the Valladolid council that, regardless of the decision that would be made by the Viceroy as to the capital of Michoacán, Valladolid should do the proclamation *"because His Majesty has not declared one way or the other whether the city of Pátzcuaro is to be the capital, it does not prevent each one of the cities from recognizing its King and Lord as it should"*<sup>4</sup>.

The members of the Cabildo approved the motion made by Pagola and immediately got down to work collecting money and requesting reviews of the swearing-in made in Mexico City and Puebla, in order to take those festivities as a basis for planning the swearing-in of Ferdinand VI at the bicentennial Valladolid.

It was on 3 December 1747, when the people of Valladolid, at 4:00 in the afternoon, began the parade of the royal flag, led by the Regidor Decano, Colonel D. Luis Antonio Correa, who delivered the harangue from the platform:

*"Castile, Castile, Castile, New Spain, New Spain, New Spain; Valladolid de Michoacán, Valladolid de Michoacán, Valladolid de Michoacán, for our undefeated King and natural Lord D. Fernando Sexto of this name, may God keep many years... to which the crowd would respond while the provincial mayor D. Miguel Antonio de Pagola, unveiled the royal portrait "Long live, long live, long live"*<sup>5</sup>.

---

1. Morelia Municipal Historical Archive (AHMM), Manuscript Books, No. 2 (1616-1729), fs. 127-130v.

2. The propaganda war was reflected in the *Gazetas de México* No. 60, 79 and 80, an information medium for all of New Spain.

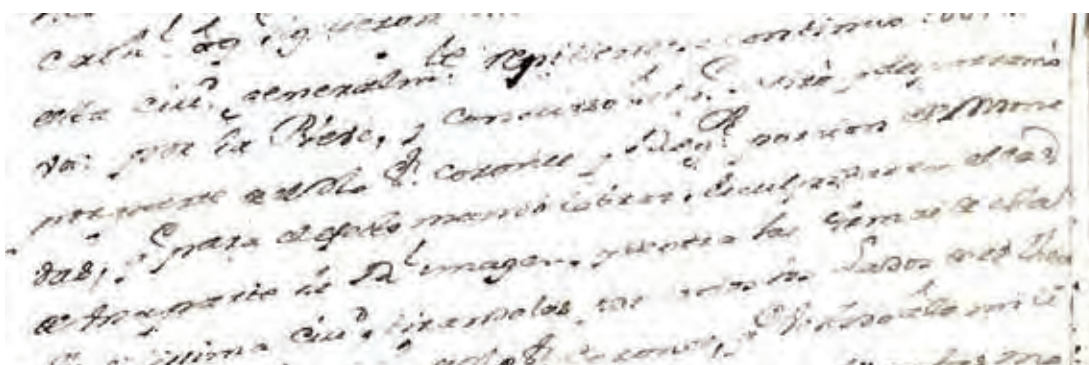
3. Soto, Henry, *Fiestas Reales y ontificias en Pátzcuaro*, CREFAL, Pátzcuaro, Mexico., 1991, p. 16.

4. AHMM, Manuscript Books No. 22 (1742-1759) fs.84-85.

5. AHMM, Manuscript Books No. 22 (1742-1759) fs.84-85. You can also find it in Rivera Cambas, Manuel, *México Pintoresco, Artístico y Monumental*, Volume 3, Facsimile Edition, Editorial del Valle de México, 1989, pp. 448-451.



Guns were fired, rockets were launched, bells rang, and cheers were repeated over and over again as the Colonel and Aldermen launched:



"... portion of coins that were carved for this purpose, having the royal Image carved on the obverse and the arms of the city on the reverse..." Extract from the original book.

"A boy son of the colonel who was presented dressed as a military man for this act, threw those coins everywhere in the theater, and having thrown the coins, he also threw the chiseled silver tray ... on which they were carried" <sup>6</sup>.

The text specifies that the coins thrown were carved for this purpose, the Oath, and also describes them in a very concise but clear way: Fernando VI would be on one side and the coat of arms of the City on the other. In the image on the right you can see a coat of arms of Valladolid dated in 1767 to get an idea of how it looked on a "close" date.

Until today, there is no catalog that mentions a medal that commemorates the proclamation of Fernando VI in Valladolid de Michoacán, nor have I been able to locate a single image or drawing of the medal. I am not aware of the existence of any surviving piece.

The manufacture of the piece must have been of cast silver, as was customary at the time. We know that Valladolid requested the reviews of the oaths from the cities of Mexico and Puebla, places where they also made medals in honor of Ferdinand VI and of which we do know survivors such as this specimen, cataloged in Grove as F6-3, from Mexico City. I think that this coin could probably have been the inspiration for the unknown medal of Valladolid.



Current Arms of the City of Michoacán<sup>7</sup>



Proclamation Medal of Mexico City to Ferdinand VI – Col. Alejandro M. Bustos

I hope that if any of our colleagues know of any surviving medal of Fernando VI in Valladolid, they will share it with us to increase everyone's knowledge.

6. *Idem*.

7. Collection of arms and coats of arms of the Hispanic monarchy in America. Fernando Martínez de Huete 1767. Royal Historical Archive of Latin America and Spain.

## Oath to Carlos III

After the death of Fernando VI, his half-brother, Carlos III, came to the Spanish throne, and the news quickly spread throughout the empire. In Valladolid Carlos III was sworn to twice; once on 24 November 1760, and the other almost a month and a half later, on 12 January 1761. For both swearing-in, proclamation medals were made, both of them cast, a technique widely explained by my very good friend Alejandro M. Bustos, in different conferences and in his article "Brief review of the cast medals (and locals) Issued in the Colonial Mexico that celebrated the kings of Spain and the Indies"<sup>8</sup> published in this journal in December 2021.

There are two Valladolid medals for Carlos III listed by the most important authors on the subject. The first, from 1760, cataloged by Grove: K62, Medina: 121, Herrera: 105 and Betts: 503, was last sold in January 2015 by Heritage (Lot 1031), for \$10,575 USD.



Valladolid 1760 Cast Silver – Grove K62

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**JUAN FELIPE RAMIREZ**

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This specimen, in addition to being the only known, was in César Hernández collection. It is in an excellent state of preservation and with unsurpassed quality in its casting and brushing, with complete legends and without any wear. This medal is the one ordered by the Valladolid City Council for the swearing-in ceremony that took place on 24 November 1760.

**OBVERSE :** The armed bust of Carlos III looking to the right, wearing the Order of the Golden Fleece surrounded by the legend, whose reading begins at 6:00 o'clock in a clockwise direction: \* **PROCLAMAT. REG. D D. CAROL. III. ANNO. 1760.** The year is in the opposite direction to the reading. Between the legend and the bust we have three fleurs-de-lis flanking it at 3, 6 and 9 o'clock.

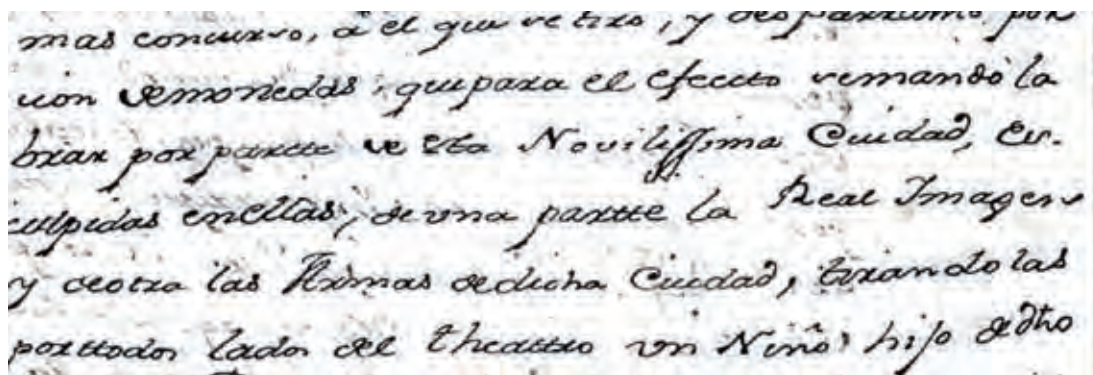
**REVERSE :** In the center, the shield of Valladolid in its most minimal version, the heads of three kings within a crowned shield. Surrounding it, the phrase: **VALLISOLETI. MICHOACAN: 24 NOVENB. \* \* \* \***

8. Bustos, Alejandro M., "Brief review of the cast medals (and locals) issued in the Colonial Mexico that celebrated the kings of Spain and the Indies" *USMEXNA Journal*, December 2021, pp. 8-16.



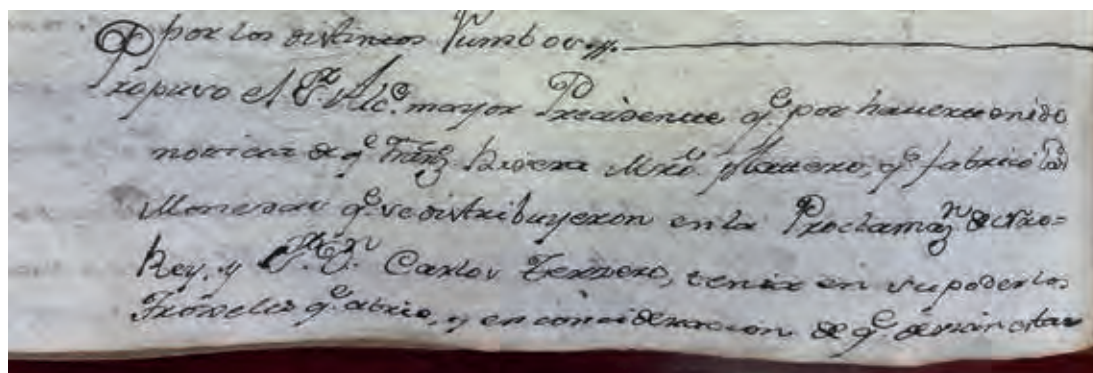
Fortunately, I was able to locate a very important document from 1760 in the Municipal Historical Archive of Morelia: *Actas de Cabildo* #28, a book in which is recorded the “Proclamación y jura Carlos III en Valladolid de Michoacan”. This book recounts everything from the preparations to the expenses, highlighting at all times the central figure of the swearing-in, alderman Miguel Antonio de Pagola, Provincial Mayor of the Holy Brotherhood, who served as Ensign carrying the royal flag and in charge of the swearing-in<sup>9</sup>.

Miguel de Mafrá Bargas, royal scribe, recounts the moment in which the medals were thrown to the people and briefly mentions that the pieces were carved for that purpose and describes them:



“... and scattered a portion of coins that for this purpose was ordered to be carved by the Most Noble City, sculpted on them, on one side the Royal Image and on the other the Arms of said City...”<sup>10</sup>

The fact that the medals were described made them undoubtedly a central part of the celebration: however, for us numismatists, we find something truly valuable on page 58 of this book, since in it we meet Francisco Rivera, who was the silversmith who was commissioned to make the dies and cast the medals, which would be equivalent to the engraver for the case of the medals minted at the Academy of San Carlos, as was Gerónimo Antonio Gil for the medals of Carlos IV, and Francisco Gordillo for those of Fernando VII.



“... for having obtained news that Francisco Rivera Master silversmith who made the coins that were distributed in the Proclamation of Our King and Lord Don Carlos the Third, had in his possession the dies that he opened...”

To give us an idea of the importance of this piece of information (the identity of the master silversmith), of the little more than 90 cast proclamation medals that are known to date, I have not found in any other city and for any other king any reference that provides the name of the local silversmith or engraver who made the medals.

The exception that we could try to fit in is on the medals of the oath of Carlos IV of Guadalajara elaborated by Antonio Forcada y la Plaza, one of the best silversmiths of New Spain and chief assayer. These medals, although of local manufacture, do not correspond to the type of cast medals, since they were minted and subsequently punched with the crowned GA mint and with the engraver’s surname: FORCADA.

9. Morelia Municipal Historical Archive. *Cabildo Minutes Book*, No. 28: p. 28-34.

10. *Ibid.*



Charles IV 1789 – Guadalajara  
Proclamation Medal



Detail of the mark FORCADA

Grove C-67 Punch <sup>11</sup>. Auctioned in 2021 by Stacks Bowers, lot 41161,  
sold for \$5,040 USD

In a strict sense, Forcada is not a local character, nor a town silversmith, since he was named marker of the Caja Real and chief assayer of the Mint: "For the silversmiths those charges represented the most important authority" <sup>12</sup>.

### The second oath to Carlos III

Not satisfied only with the oath made in November 1760, the people of Valladolid celebrated the monarch again on 12 January 1761, as stated in the pamphlet published on 21 April 1761, by Juan José Moreno Pizano: "*Real proclamación a nuestro invicto monarca el señor D. Carlos III (que Dios guarde), que celebró en el día doce de henero de 1761, D. Joseph María de Lyra Sánchez Bustamante y Tagle, Arteta y Berganza, Sámano y Medinilla; en la ciudad de Valladolid cabeza de la Provincia de Michoacán*", a document printed in Mexico City by the Oldest College of S. Ildefonso <sup>13</sup>.

During said oath, organized by the Ecclesiastical Council, coins were also delivered to the public. They had been previously documented by Grove: K-63, Medina: 122, Herrera: 106 and Betts: 504, all of them mentioning the size of 28 millimeters in cast silver. Despite having been cataloged by all of them, it is only in Grove's book that we find a drawing of the piece:



Grove illustration: K-63.

11. Grove, Frank, *Medals of Mexico Vol.1, Medals of the Spanish Kings*, 1976, p. 71.

12. Anderson, Lawrence, *El Arte de la Platería en México*, Porrúa, Mexico., 1956, p. 301

13. Other pamphlets and prints of the time referring to the Jura of Carlos III in Valladolid, cited in the Biblioteca Hispano Americana Septentrional de José Mariano Beristain de Sosa (1816) are:

1. Castro, Agustín, "*El Nuevo Ulises: Poema de la proclamación de Carlos III en Valladolid de Michoacán*" printed in Mexico City. in 1762.
2. "*Relación Histórica de la solemne Proclamación del señor D. Carlos III, Rey de España y de las Indias, hecha en Valladolid de Michoacán por el Alférez Real D. José de Lira*" printed in Mexico City in 1761.
3. "*Relación de las fiestas de la Ciudad de Valladolid de Michoacán en la Jura de Carlos III de España*" printed in Mexico City in 1761.



Betts, in the supplement<sup>14</sup> that he published to his book *"Some Undescribed Spanish-American Proclamation Pieces"*, adds this piece, asserting that it has no corded edge and that it belonged to George Friederich Ulex, a collection that was sold at auction in 1908 in Frankfurt<sup>15</sup>. The lot number 1700 represents the first and only time this medal has been offered for public auction.

1700 Morelia (früher Valladolid). Karl III. Proclam.-Med. 1761. CAROLVS • III • D • G • HISPA • ET • INDIARVM • REX Brustb. r. Ry. .... GAL SIGNO DE ..... im F. JVRADO / EN / VALLADO<sup>2</sup> / ANO / 1761 Herr. 106. F. 6928 (dessen Exemplar, ein anderes ist nicht bekannt). Mm. 28. 6,5 Gr. Orig.-Guss. Gel., g. e.

*Excerpt from the auction catalog of the Ulex collection*

From this catalog we can discover that its weight is 6.5 grams and it clarifies that no other specimen is known. Unfortunately, in the six pages of plates presented for this auction, this particular medal was not photographed.

Last year, while reviewing some old inventories, I found that in the Mexican Mint, known today as the National Numismatic Museum, there was a piece from Valladolid 1761. I immediately requested the images and thanks to the support and efforts of Ricardo Vázquez, they sent them to me. To my surprise (and everyone's, I think) when I received the images, I noticed that the obverse of the piece is totally different from the drawing presented by Grove, and much more similar to the designs used in Mexico for Fernando VI, as in the case of the piece F6-3 that I presented earlier. The specimen is described as cast bronze; however, I think it is cast silver with a deep ocher patina. It is pierced at 12:00 o'clock and has notable wear.



*Proclamation Medal for Carlos III in Valladolid Michoacán 1761  
(Image provided by the Museo Numismático Nacional de la Casa de Moneda de México)*

I could not say that Grove's drawing is mistaken: however, after reviewing the reverse and seeing that most of the elements are identical, including the same missing areas on the coin, it seems unlikely that two different obverses were made. It would be very important to find the Ulex specimen and have the full panorama since I do not think that this medal is the same specimen from that collection; the description of the piece in the auction catalog does not state that it had a hole.

14. Betts, Behjamin, *Supplement to some undescribed Spanish-American Proclamation Pieces*. American Journal of Numismatics, Vol. 34 No. 2. , 1899, pp. 39-44.

15. Münzen und Medaillen verschiedener Länder: Sammlung eines süddeutschen Antiquitäten-Händlers; Reformations-Münzen und - Medaillen, Sammlung eines sächsischen Freiherrn; Münzen und Medaillen aus verschiedenem Besitz zum Theil aus dem Nachlasse eines preussischen Prinzen; numismatic Bücher; Versteigerung: 29. Oktober und folgende Tage. (1902) (Bd. 1902.10.29). Frankfurt, M.: Hess. <http://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.18170>

To the best of my ability I will try to describe the obverse and reverse of this extraordinary piece, whose photograph appears for the first time, to the delight of all numismatists and historians.

#### OBVERSE



In the center we can see half the body of "Carlos III" designed in the style of the medals of Fernando VI, where you can see his two hands, wig and coat dress.

On the periphery, the legend that begins to read at 1:00 clockwise seems to say: **CAROLUS III DG HISPAN ET INDIAM REX.** The legend is double and in some places it is more difficult to read than in others.

#### REVERSE



In the center is the legend in five lines: **JURADO / EN LA / VALLADO. / AÑO / DE 761.** Note that the word DE is monogrammed and that the number "1" does not appear in the date.

On the periphery another legend is outlined that runs around the entire perimeter of the coin, it can barely be read: " ....UE .....SIDV.... REGAL. SIGNIT. DE ". All the descriptions of the books present this incomplete legend, I think that in this copy we can appreciate more letters than have been previously described.

With this article I conclude my investigation of the proclamation medals of Valladolid prior to Ferdinand VII, surprised to have found data on a new medal in honor of Ferdinand VI and happy to have been able to locate a piece of Carlos III, of which until now we did not have photographs and that, probably, may even be a variant of the previously cataloged one. Finding the specimen from the Ulex collection would greatly help to clarify the doubts as to whether it is a new piece or a known error in the drawing. In any case, finding two new specimens of Proclamation Medals for Michoacán in the twenty-first century, is an invitation for other numismatists to do more research.

I would like to thank my numismatic friend Jaime Alberto Vargas Chávez and Melba Maya Guz for all their support with the visit and digitization of the manuscript books of the colonial collection of the Historical Archive of the Municipality of Morelia.





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## COUNTERFEITS OF ITURBIDE'S PAPER MONEY

by Simon Prendergast

On 19 May 1822 Agustín de Iturbide, the victor in the War for Independence, was proclaimed "Agustín the First, by the Grace of God Emperor of Mexico" and later, on 21 July of the same year, he was crowned in pomp and splendour with the growing enthusiasm of his followers: the conservative circles, the army and the general populace.

Because of the catastrophic economic situation that the new government faced, the Minister of Finance (Ministro de Hacienda), Antonio de Medina, requested authorization to issue paper money and on 20 December 1822 authorized the issue of *cedulas*, in \$1, \$2 and \$10 denominations, for the total amount of four million pesos. The decree specified that these new notes should be valid from 1 January to 31 December 1823, and a later clarification stipulated that they should be gradually withdrawn from circulation, by being received by the tax collection offices and cancelled by means of a diagonal cut in de Medina's signature.

This paper money supposedly circulated in all the vast Empire from the immense territories in the North (including California and Texas) to its provinces in Central America. A total of \$1,535,000 was put into circulation, comprising 797,000 \$1 notes, 184,000 \$2 notes and 37,000 \$10 notes.

However, from the very first the notes met with repugnance and distrust from all strata of the population. Then, after Iturbide was forced to abdicate on 19 March 1823, the issue was suspended. Congress ordered the complete destruction of printed notes and the remaining blank paper, as well as of the plates that had been used for their impression, and issued orders calling in all the paper money that was in circulation or in the local government treasury offices so that it be accumulated in one place and destroyed. As of 3 November 1823 \$245,131 remained in circulation but there were further exchanges thereafter.

Little was written about this issue although Carlos Gaytan had an image of a (possibly counterfeit) \$2 note on his first catalogue in 1965 and recorded that they were very rare. Then in April 1965 the *Boletín Numismático* of the Sociedad Numismática de México, no. 47, included an article by José Tamborrel, jr., "Shocking Forgery" (available at the USMexNA online library), warning of modern forgeries (though Tamborrel did give not all the information he had as a result of his research).

Soon after, a sizeable quantity of notes appeared on the market. Richard A. Long reported that in late 1968 - early 1969 he was offered singles and quantities, including sheets, and naturally was suspicious (whether genuine or not, a hoard would depress the market, so Long was not interested in buying the notes at any price) and on 28 July 1969 Carlos Gaytan wrote *"As to the Iturbide one and two peso notes, ... Mexico is now flooded with them. When I say flooded I mean hundreds. Three or four months ago, a friend of mine was offered forty sets of one-two Iturbide, plus 40 two peso notes for thirty thousand Mexican pesos. He was assured he could easily make a hundred thousand pesos profit. But my friend was wise and declined the offer. A month ago I was offered a set of one-two Iturbides for three hundred pesos," a special price for me". I declined and was asked if I thought that the notes were forgeries, and WHY. I refused to answer. Undoubtedly, the forgers were trying to find out about the flaws detected by collectors so as to correct future issues."* On 16 October 1969 Eduardo Rosovsky wrote *"In the last two years, I have seen or heard or even have had personally, about a total of 45- 50 sets (ONE & TWO pesos) and I have some by now. But there is another dealer who has also a small quantity. And that is all: nobody, besides both of us, has or can have more than ONE set... But there must be some (maybe 25, perhaps 40 Or even a little more— ONE peso single. About the TEN pesos Iturbide notes, I must call your attention that I am the ONLY ONE that has them, since I had discovered them in some familiar archives; at first, it was one single piece; but I "mobilised" the whole family, and then obtained another three pieces; since then -a year ago-, I have tried unsuccessfully to get more, but without any success, ... You see; the TEN pesos Iturbide note, has been known only by the Decree, but NOBODY had ever seen a single one."*

After being offered a sheet of four notes the American numismatist, Ed Shlieker, became interested, particularly in the idea that most of these notes were counterfeits, and tried to arrange a committee under the auspices of the International Bank Note Society to decide the matter. Some of the subsequent correspondence, available as part of the Eric P. Newman correspondence at the Newman Numismatic Portal at Washington University in St. Louis reveals a world





not only of co-operation in the leisurely era of letter-writing and black and white photocopies but also of bruised egos, rifts and backbiting. It also gives an insight into a time when less attention seems to have been paid to historical sources than to the pieces in hand.

Shlieker meticulously examined his notes and recorded his findings as to paper, ink, watermarks and method of production. He was particularly interested in their fresh appearance and the quality of ink and paper, believing that 146 year old notes would show signs of aging. *"It is impossible for me to believe that all these notes were maintained in a peak of preservation, unless they are not 146 years old". "The ink inscriptions are in a remarkable state of preservation, not faded or blurred with age; fact is they are brilliant as though written yesterday".* This is persuasive (compare the images of the Iturbide notes in *Mexican Paper Money* in contrast to those of the Tesorerías de la Nación from the same year) but ignores the fact that the notes were withdrawn within 100 days and many were never issued. Shlieker wanted to date the ink through Carbon-14 but was told this was impossible.

Shlieker sent his findings to the Institute of Paper Chemistry and on 9 July 1969 they replied *"If the Imperial Iturbides were circulated, or valid, for only 100 days, it could be possible that all of the notes were printed on paper from a single supplier. It is likely also that there would be only one watermark. It is likely that the furnish (raw materials used to make the paper) is the same. If any records can be found to determine the supplier of the paper, or if it could be determined what the general source of paper for the Mexican Government in those days was, considerable information could perhaps be found that would have a quite convincing bearing on the question of the paper used. If the source of the paper, in view of the very short time that the notes were printed, could be determined, much time might be saved in providing valuable evidence for authentication of the notes.*

*The watermark you describe and the "horizontal lines" might also be very significant. The "horizontal lines" are very likely what we refer to as "chain lines." These result from the construction of the screen, or wire, on which the paper was formed either in a hand mould or on a machine. Again, if you could get a note known to be authentic, details of both the watermark and the screen markings might provide a basis for authentication. The difference in distance between the "chain lines" and the watermarks and the situation of the deckle edges between the single note and the sheet of uncut notes you mention in your letter makes it difficult to believe they are both authentic."*

However, Shlieker's argument about appearance was challenged by others, such as Carlos Gaytan, who paradoxically suggested that counterfeits were produced using paper from the era. *"There are, all over Mexico, thousands of books on sale at the second hand stores, which were printed in the first half of the XIX Century; those books have, invariably, the first and the last leaf entirely without printing. Well, the forgers tear off those pages and use them to print their one and two peso Iturbides. So, the paper used in the forgeries is one hundred per cent genuine, that is, MORE OR LESS of the same quality of that used by the Imperial Iturbide Government. This MORE OR LESS may be our only way to differentiate genuine and fakes. Chemical and even Carbon 14 analysis would show the paper of the fakes to have been made on the first third of the XIX century. Beside the old book supply, anyone traveling through Mexico may go to small or large town communities, offer a few pesos to an underpaid clerk and get blank sheets from 1825 files. In conclusion, a very VERY close study of the paper used in the genuine notes is necessary in order to detect forgeries on the sole basis of the paper".* In a letter of 17 July 1969 Clyde Hubbard suggested that any investigation regarding the authenticity of these bills should be directed to a study of the inks used rather than the paper used. *"The reason for this is quite obvious: old paper can be obtained in the files of Government offices, particularly in small towns or cities. This paper could be used for the counterfeiting."* Clyde Hubbard's own notes came from old files in the City of Durango and there was no doubt in his mind about their being genuine.

Shlieker made an *"infinitesimal"* study of \$1 10813 and \$2 46607, offered at \$360.00, the pair, *"scrutinizing every detail, point by point in comparison with all records in catalogs. The only variation I can find is the 1° in the date. These two notes bear the same 1° in the date, whereas Gaytan's catalog shows a more bold 1 on the Un Peso, not the same as on the Dos Pesos. ... The diamonds (in the vertical designs) do not match those as shown in the catalog. Of course this may vary due to change in printing plates, but it seems to be a distinct pattern in this respect that is repetitive in these two notes, making it so obvious that they are copies. They are identical in this respect. ... Another significant facet is that the 7 ends in a dot on the Un Peso, none shown in catalog. ... The entire imprinting of all lettering on the Un Peso was done under heavy pressure as the reverse shows a deep deboss to the point of perforating. This is not true of the Dos Pesos which shows a normal imprint. ... The watermarks appear to me to be a key or prime factor in determining a genuine note."*

Later, on 16 August 1970, Shlieker wrote to Newman *"At this time, I am not convinced as to what represents a true or false Iturbide. To me the physical appearance and observation of any note is not conclusive. The paper and printing can and could be identical, it is easily duplicated. To me the most important clue is the hand inscriptions on the notes, namely the serial*

number and endorsements (from Oaxaca). However all notes do not bear an endorsement. One point in question, and one of the most important to me, is the different styles of digits used in the serial numbers. Some are the old style of numbers and others are the modern day method of numbers, also I have seen some with a mixture of both? They all appear in sepia ink. Regarding endorsements, of which all mostly appear on the reverse; the latest word I have received from an avid colleague is that he observed and tested the ink on a four note sheet. He used a simple test of smudging or rubbing transferring to another sheet, the ink came off very easily. I would say not very conductive of inks this old, unless a clever counterfeit. All the other characteristics appeared as genuine. ... The few notes I have on hand, I am still attempting to date the ink, They would be the serial number ink only as I do not have notes in my personal possession with endorsements.

The inherent characteristic of counterfeiting these notes is so vast that it may not be possible to establish a validity. ... I would be more inclined to accept a single note without the endorsement properly watermarked and old style of numbering the serial number, as a genuine. However, style of numbers is yet to be determined as to which is old or modern, I have had many opinions on this, none conclusive."

In January 1971 Rosovsky wrote his article "The Paper Money of Iturbide" for the *Boletín Numismático*, No. 70 (also available at the USMEXNA online library) in which he was able to detail how the notes were printed at the rate of eight at a time, four on one side with blank reverse and four on the other half, but on the opposite face of the paper, so they also have a blank reverse. Each sheet of paper had its corresponding watermark distributed between two halves: in one, the name of the manufacturer 'JHP ROMUGOSA' under the trademark of its mill: a medieval tower with a big entrance door, called Tower of the Guarros, and laurel leaves, and in the other simply 'No 1o', undoubtedly referring to the paper quality. This paper, of Spanish origin, was bought at the important wholesale-retail store "El Comercio de Mexico", owned by José Severo de Arana, and located at the Portal de las Flores, in the main square. Rosovsky's article was supplemented by an article "Paper Money of Iturbide" by Alberto F. Pradeau (*Boletín Numismático*, No. 74, January-March 1972, also available at the USMEXNA online library) which laid out a couple of the relevant decrees.

So what have we learnt about counterfeits? The consensus appears to have been that there were modern counterfeits produced in San Luis Potosí, as described by Tamborrel in his *Boletín* article, but that almost all of these had all been destroyed. The two examples pictured in in the article were



These counterfeits were done by an offset process whereas the authentic notes were printed by press and the impression on the reverse could be seen as the letters are slightly raised. The counterfeits were numbered by hand in sepia ink, in an attempt to copy the original but in the present day style rather in that of the nineteenth century.

In May 1970 Rosovsky was pleased to send Newman such a counterfeit that he had managed to obtain, "a very scarce item, now, since all of them were promptly destroyed". His specimen was made on a thicker paper, very little alike to the original Iturbide notes, with a watermark, partly seen as GABEL. "The paper came NOT from old books but from large leaves of old judiciary paper archives, more or less easy to obtain in the provincial towns. All these fake notes had the signatures on the same place since they were all copied from one and the same single, genuine Iturbide note and not stamped separately. Even the TWO pesos notes, then absolutely impossible to get, had been copied from the same ONE peso note, but with the ONE altered to TWO and an S added to the word "peso".



Another \$1 note from the correspondence, illustrated below, is clearly a forgery. It is also described as having as a watermarked CABEL below a coat of arms but this cannot be one of the San Luis Potosí forgeries as the right-hand signature is in a different place.

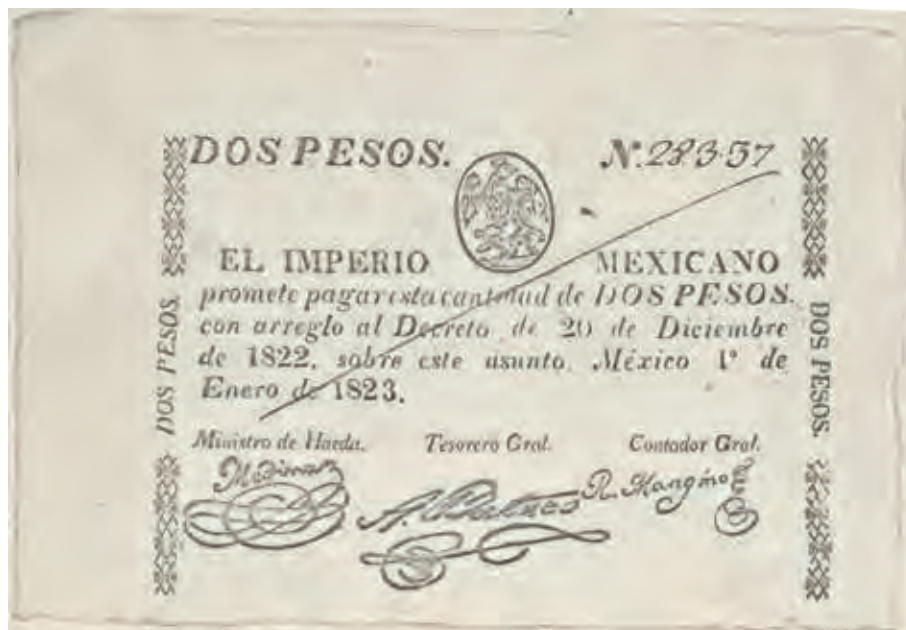


As for contemporary counterfeits, Rosovsky wrote "If they exist, they are very difficult to recognize because all are printed on original paper pertaining to the historical period of the First Empire of Mexico." but he did managed to send Newman a "GENUINE COUNTERFEIT. ... Iturbide TWO pesos note, counterfeit and cancelled in 1823; obverse half-crossed and on the reverse, the words hand— written: "NO VALE". In response Newman wrote to Rosovsky "The counterfeit is of particular interest because it is apparently made in 1823. It seems to be made by engraving a plate by hand and then casting that plate in lead for printing purposes. The type on the normal notes is uniform while on the counterfeit each letter is different each time it is repeated. The alignment is very poor and indicates hand engraving of the base plate. The impression of the letters through the paper also confirms the fact that this was positive printing rather than engraving printing (intaglio)."

The notes illustrated in the correspondence include this \$2, numbered 10109, as a genuine note



in contrast to this \$2, numbered 28337, as a counterfeit.



and an undated memo lists two types of counterfeit \$1 notes:

- (1) Lettering crudely engraved and not typeset; base of 'r' in 'Enero' high; period after 1823 missing; capital 'N's in top row different in shape; 'n' in 'cantidad' tilts to the left; base of 'to' in 'asunto' high; and
- (2) Offset printing; normal space omitted between 'de' and '1823'; the Tesorero Gral's name is misspelt ('Portxos' (actually 'Bartres') instead of 'Portxes').

and one type of counterfeit \$2 notes:

- (1) Offset printing; normal space omitted between 'de' and '1823'; base of 'al' in 'Contador Gral.' much too high; on left border 'OS' in 'DOS' are upright and not slanting to the right as other letters; the Tesorero Gral's name is misspelt ('Portxos' instead of 'Portxes')

Having reviewed the notes sold in recent Stack's Bowers and Heritage auctions I noticed the following, sold by Heritage for \$528 on 13 January 2020. This seems to have questionable type and a misprint 'Deereto' for Decreto'.



I realise that anyone reading this article will have expected to learn how to recognise whether their Iturbide note was a counterfeit. I apologise if they feel short-changed, but hope that by recalling correspondence from 60 years ago and noting some recorded differences I have added something to the debate in this bicentennial year. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who believes they have a forgery.





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