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A NEW THEORY ON *T*C* SUD COINAGE

TLALCHAPA, 1813

by Max A. Keech

Copper SUDs were first struck by José Morelos in 1811. In 1813, *T*C* SUDs of a more refined style and better production quality were issued. These *T*C* style SUDs have long been described as Tehuacán issues in which *T*C* abbreviates the “Tierra Caliente” region where they were supposedly struck. Based on new research which is detailed below, I believe the *T*C* style SUDs were issued much further west in Tlalchapa, by Supreme Junta forces under the command of Junta member Father Sixto Berdusco (Verduzco)¹. In the pages that follow you will see a September 1813 Morelos decree on which this determination rests. Before detailing this Tlalchapa assignment, we first begin with a quick historical overview followed by past *T*C* SUD attributions. Then we review the Tlalchapa origin theory and conclude with a detailed look at individual *T*C* SUD issues.



1813 *T*C* SUD 8R, 2x

Campaigns of Morelos: In 1811, during his first military campaign, José Morelos found himself in desperate need of funds and issued a proclamation authorizing the coinage of copper SUDs redeemable in gold or silver at a later date. Copper SUDs of a complex floral design, which are commonly designated “ornate”, were initially struck in Tecpán and then sometime later in Chilpancingo. During Morelos’ 1812-13 military campaigns the production of copper SUDs was expanded to include simpler, non-ornate styles in locations other than Tecpán and Chilpancingo. Sometime in 1813, a new style of SUD was created with the abbreviation *T*C* prominently displayed on the reverse. These *T*C* style SUDs show finer die work and better production quality than the ornate and non-ornate style SUDs that preceded them.

Past *T*C* Attributions: For many decades, *T*C* was thought to be an acronym for Tierra Caliente or “Hot Land”, designating the near costal, southern region where the *T*C* SUDs were presumed to have been made. This theory originated with Layman Low’s 1886 publication “A Sketch of the Coinage of the Mexican Revolutionary General Morelos”. In 1938 Dr. Alberto Pradeau expanded on Low’s theory with the hypothesis that *T*C* SUDs were struck in Tehuacán as a way to differentiate the Tehuacán SUDs from others produced by Morelos. Pradeau’s theory, detailed in his “Numismatic History of Mexico”, has served as the primary reference on the coinage of the War for Independence since its publication in 1938 and hence Tierra Caliente and Tehuacán have become synonymous with *T*C* SUDs.

1. Berdusco is most often spelled Verduzco in both English and Spanish sources including Bancroft. We have chosen to utilize the paternal spelling preferred by Spanish historians of the War for Independence. This spelling is also consistent with the Berdusco’ signature.



Five Major Types of Non-Ornate SUDs: Plain, Dotted, Feathered Arrow, Circular & 8...R

Other Theories: Numismatists have recognized the problems associated with the Tierra Caliente and Tehuacán assignments and have proposed other theories for *T*C* coinage. In 2015, García Castro suggested “Treasure of the Capital” or “Treasury of Chilpancingo” as possible *T*C* associations. This theory is based on Morelos’ 13 July 1811 proclamation which authorized SUD coinage. This proclamation states that SUDs will be struck at the Treasury of said Capital (“tesorería de la expresada capital”), referring to the capital of the Province of Tecpán.² Perhaps, according to this theory, *T*C* SUDs were struck in Chilpancingo following Morelos’ September 1813 recall of SUDs for counterstamping.

Like Tierra Caliente, this theory has challenges. Ornate style SUDs were first struck in Chilpancingo and Tecpán in 1811 during Morelos’ first campaign. We can be certain of this because ornate SUDs were the only SUD style struck in 1811. Given the importance of Chilpancingo, it is likely that ornate style SUDs continued to be struck in 1812-14. In fact, ornate SUDs dated 1813-14 are the most plentiful of all copper SUDs. Why would Chilpancingo switch from ornate to *T*C* SUDs in late 1813 and then revert back to ornate SUDs in 1814? Critically, the die work and production quality of *T*C* SUDs is superior to either the 1813 or 1814 ornate SUDs which would have been made in Chilpancingo. If *T*C* style SUDs were struck in Chilpancingo they would be physically similar to the ornate SUDs struck in Chilpancingo in 1813 and 1814. Because of these physical differences, I believe Chilpancingo, like Tehuacán, can be eliminated as the source of *T*C* SUDs.

Gómez Wulschner and several other specialists have proposed Tlacotepec as the origin of *T*C* SUDs.³ Tlacotepec is a small town separated from Chilpancingo by 120 km of rugged terrain.⁴ While a *T*C* abbreviation of Tlacotepec is theoretically possible, to my knowledge there is no documentation indicating coinage was struck in Tlacotepec in 1813 prior to the Insurgent Congress’ arrival in 1814. And if Tlacotepec did produce SUDs in 1813, we would expect die work and production quality similar to Chilpancingo rather than the finer quality of the *T*C* SUDs. We would also expect SUD production to continue in Tlacotepec in 1814 during its occupation by the Insurgent Congress. If so, SUD production in Tlacotepec during 1814 would have to be of the inferior ornate style, the only style SUD struck in 1814. Based on die work and production quality, I believe that Tlacotepec, like Tehuacán and Chilpancingo, can be excluded from consideration as the location of *T*C* SUD manufacture.

2. Olvera García, Jorge; García Castro, René; García Peña, Analida. *El Caudillo del SUR: forjador de la Nación Mexicana* (Toluca: 2015), page 127

3. Olvera García, et al, page 90.

4. On 24 January 1814 the Royalist Lt.-Col. Armijo surprised the Insurgent Congress near Chilpancingo, capturing 10,000 pesos in copper along with their archives and baggage. Following this, the Rebel Congress relocated to Tlacotepec, arriving before the end of January 1814. They were there for the month of February 1814 before fleeing northwest to Michoacán province, arriving in Tlalchapa by the first week of March 1814.



*Comparison of 1813 ornate, 1813 *T*C* and 1814 ornate copper SUDs*

Tlalchapa. A New Theory on *T*C* SUD Coinage: Based on the research and analysis outlined below, I believe *T*C* SUDs were produced in Tlalchapa by forces under the command of Supreme Junta Member Sixto Berdusco. Tlalchapa has documentary support, had reason to differentiate their SUDs from those produced by Morelos' forces and explains the physical differences between *T*C* SUDs and the standard SUDs produced in the south. Tlalchapa, to my knowledge, has never been considered as the source of *T*C* SUDs even though it is specifically mentioned in the Morelos' decree which follows.

As previously mentioned, copper SUDs were initially produced in a complex style which is commonly designated as ornate. In 1812-13, as the campaigns of Morelos brought more cities under his control, SUD production was expanded by producing simplified, non-ornate styles in these new locations. Counterfeiting of these non-ornate copper SUDs began almost immediately. As evidence, numerous Morelos letters of this period complain about the incessant problems of counterfeiting. On 30 September 1813, Morelos issued a proclamation in Chilpancingo which recalled copper SUDs for a three-month period of inspection and counterstamping:

Jose Maria Morelos; Chilpancingo, 30 September 1813

Don José María Morelos, Servant of the Nation, and Generalissimo of the Armies of this North America, by universal vote of the people, etc.

Having received representatives from various towns, about the harm caused to many unfortunate individuals who are suffering with their families by accepting the counterfeit copper coins manufactured by the wicked, and the coins minted in different territories without the corresponding license of this authority, which the people received with sincerity and in good faith, in return for their personal work including all aspects of their industry and services, to provide for the support and subsistence of their women and children.

*Desiring to provide all possible means to avoid these evils or at least to diminish them, so that they do not become so detrimental to the poor, I have decided to grant, for a specific term of three months, that anyone who has this type of currency, **which is not from the mints of Tlalchapa, Chilpancingo and Oaxaca**, which are authorized according to the respective decree, shall send them to the treasury of this new city, where it shall be revalidated*

with the stamp of my letters and two little stars. Under these circumstances it shall be received everywhere, with the understanding that after said term, whoever possess the aforementioned currency will lose it and the penalties for counterfeiting will be enforced.

And so that this provision has punctual and due compliance, and no one alleges ignorance, I command this decree be published in the capitals of the conquered provinces, where the necessary copies will be sent to their respective jurisdictions, the term running from the day in which each one is published.

Given at Chilpancingo Headquarters on the 30th day of September of 1813.

Jose Maria Morelos. By orders to S.A Juan Nepomuceno Rosáinz.^{5,6}

This important Morelos decree, when coupled with the copper SUDs themselves, serves as a Rosetta Stone to unlock some of the mysteries surrounding these SUD issues. The decree informs us that:

- SUDs from Tlalchapa, Chilpancingo and Oaxaca were not counterstamped as part of the recall effort.
- SUDs issued at locations other than Tlalchapa, Chilpancingo and Oaxaca were recalled and counterstamped.



*Non-ornate SUDs (bottom & right) are often counterstamped while *T*C* and ornate style SUDs (left & top) are not often counterstamped.*

Based on an examination of 830 copper SUD eight reales we can integrate the following facts with Morelos' decree:⁷

- Non-ornate style SUDs were the coins recalled and counterstamped. More than 50% of all non-ornate style SUDs display Morelos counterstamps. Based on this observation, we can assign the five non-ornate SUDs styles to cities other than Tlalchapa, Chilpancingo and Oaxaca (although not specific non-ornate styles to specific cities). Interestingly, Morelos' decree appears to approve the counterfeit SUDs already in circulation for counterstamping, thereby accepting responsibility for future repayment in silver, to avoid injury to his unsuspecting subjects! This interpretation would explain the large number of contemporary counterfeits encountered today with Morelos' counterstamp.

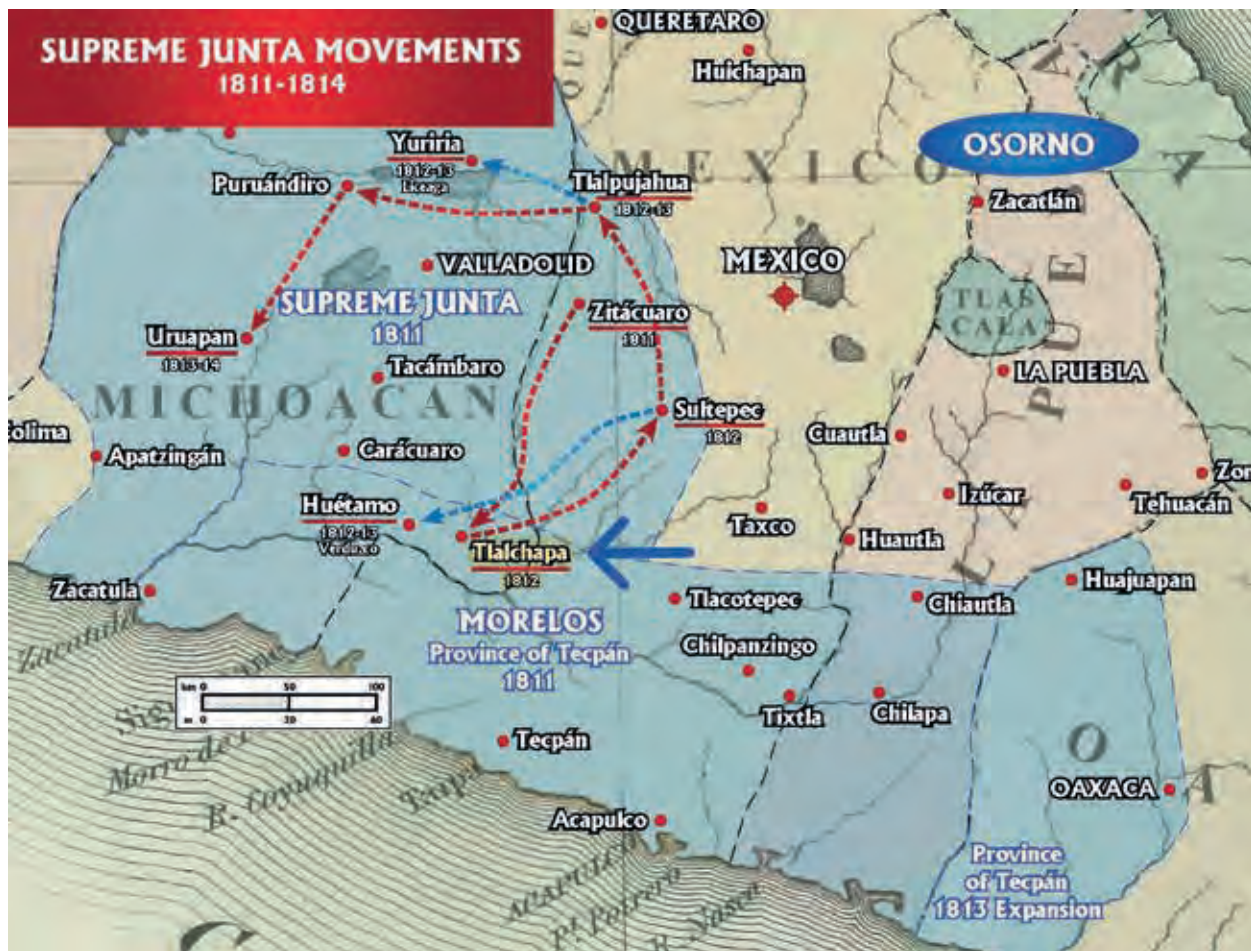
5. My appreciation to Ramiro Cerecer for his translation of this important document.

6. General Archives of Mexico "Archivo General de la Nación" abbreviated AGN; infidencias, t. 144, f. 6; Lemoine, Morelos, 1965, doc. 118, pp. 382-383.

7. Copper eight reales are used for this analysis because copper eight reales are primarily what were counterstamped. Very few copper minors with Morelos' counterstamps are known. The 830 examples come from a number of large collections and are thought to be representative of the overall SUD population.

- Ornate and *T*C* style SUDs were not recalled for counterstamping by Morelos' decree. Less than 5% of *T*C* and ornate style SUDs display Morelos' counterstamps. This is in sharp contrast to the non-ornate style SUDs! Based on this observation, we can assign the *T*C* and ornate style SUDs to Tlalchapa, Chilpancingo and Oaxaca.⁸ But which style SUD to which city?
- *T*C* SUDs are of a different manufacture than ornate (and non-ornate) style SUDs. In addition to their finer die work, *T*C* SUDs have a better production quality. They are on larger planchets (averaging 39mm vs. 35-36mm) and of a more uniform thickness. *T*C* SUDs are stable when stacked while ornate SUDs are unstable due to their uneven thicknesses. These die work and production differences indicate a different minting location with different equipment and craftsmen. These important physical characteristics have often not been considered in attempts to identify the source of *T*C* SUD production.

Morelos' proclamation makes it clear that SUDs were minted in Tlalchapa and that these SUDs were not recalled for counterstamping. This reference to Tlalchapa SUDs appears to have escaped past examination, perhaps because of its distance from Morelos' operations. The Tlalchapa SUDs were either of a *T*C* or ornate style as those were the SUDs not generally counterstamped. I believe *T*C* style SUDs are the logical choice for Tlalchapa.



Tlalchapa: Tlalchapa is a small city in the current state of Guerrero on the eastern edge of the Province of Michoacán. During the War for Independence, Tlalchapa was a stronghold of the Supreme Junta. When the Supreme Junta was forced out of Zitácuaro in January 1811, they first fled to Tlalchapa before relocating the Insurgent government to Sultepec. In June 1812, when the three members of the Supreme Junta decided to separate to avoid providing the Royalists with a concentrated target, Junta member Father Sixto Berdusco headquartered in Huétamo, 70 km west of Tlalchapa. Berdusco was given command of western Michoacán Province including nearby Tlalchapa. Simultaneously, Morelos was admitted as the fourth member of the Supreme Junta with command of the south.

8. Oaxaca SUD are also generally not counterstamped which should be expected for this 1814 issue produced after the late 1813 counterstamping effort.

Father Sixto Berdusco (Verduzco): Before the revolution Berdusco served as the priest of Tuzantla, a parish near Carácuaro, making him intimately familiar with western Michoacán. Berdusco was a Morelos loyalist and his representative on the Supreme Junta. In March 1813, escalating conflict among the three of the four Supreme Junta members resulted in Berdusco and Liceaga breaking with López Rayón, each declaring the other unfit. Berdusco actively undermined López Rayón in his communications with Morelos. Morelos, who remained neutral, accurately saw this dispute as detrimental to the Insurgent cause and began considering leadership changes which would culminate in the Congress of Chilpancingo. It is probably around this time in 1813 that Tlalchapa, under Berdusco's command, produced their *T*C* SUD coinage. The *T*C* designation would have served to identify the Tlalchapa location of production as well as differentiate this coinage from Morelos' SUDs. The Supreme Junta had skilled die engravers and superior minting technology as evidenced by the Supreme Junta' 1812-13 continuous legend style coinage. This would explain the superior die work and production quality of the Tlalchapa *T*C* SUDs when compared to Morelos' SUDs manufactured in the south.



1812 Supreme Junta Continuous Legend 8 Reales

It should again be emphasized that, based on Morelos' September 1813 decree, either *T*C* or ornate style SUDs were struck in Tlalchapa since these are the SUDs that were not recalled and counterstamped. The physical evidence supports *T*C* style SUDs and this theory has the documentary support that is lacking for Tehuacán, Chilpancingo and Tlalcotepec.





1813 *T*C* & 1814 Oaxaca SUD 8 Reales

Is *T*C* a reasonable abbreviation or mintmark for Tlalchapa? Consider the example of Oaxaca where another member of the Supreme Junta, Ignacio López Rayón, used the mintmark O.X.A. for Oaxaca. In early 1814 Oaxaca struck SUDs with OAXACA and O.X.A. legends to identify their origin. This occurred after Morelos' crushing defeat on 5 January 1814, at Valladolid when former Supreme Junta members Liceaga, López Rayón and Berdusco, acting with other Congress members, assumed executive power. López Rayón was appointed Commandant General and given command of Oaxaca and Tecpán. Shortly thereafter, 1814 Oaxaca SUDs were struck in a style somewhat similar to the *T*C* style SUDs. The Oaxaca die work and production quality is similar to the *T*C* SUDs. While similarities exist, the lettering and bow & arrow styles are different on the *T*C* and Oaxaca style SUDs indicative of different die engravers.

The mission of General López Rayón in Oaxaca was to correct numerous problems that had developed after Morelos' departure in February 1813. These problems included inept administration and the ills of copper money. Without silver to properly remedy the latter situation, a better executed copper issue probably had to suffice. It appears López Rayón or his lieutenant, General San Martín, sought to differentiate the Oaxaca SUDs in the same manner theorized for Tlalchapa. Numismatic writers have previously commented on the similarities between the *T*C* and Oaxaca SUDs. The possible involvement of Supreme Junta members, administrators or craftsmen in both issues offers a reasonable explanation for these similarities.⁹

Epilogue: The Royalist army, commanded by Colonel Melchor Alvarez, retook Oaxaca on 29 March 1814, so we can pinpoint the Oaxaca SUD coinage to the first three months of 1814. Tlalchapa and Huétamo would continue to be Insurgent strongholds. The Congress, with Liceaga as President and Berdusco as a Vice President, occupied Tlalchapa and Huétamo from March to June 1814, a chronology evidenced by numerous decrees issued during this period. Father Berdusco was captured in 1817 and imprisoned for 32 months. He was released upon Iturbide's ascension and would go on to serve two terms as a senator for the State of San Luis Potosí. Sixto Berdusco died in Mexico City in 1832 at age 59.

Coinage: *T*C* SUDs were struck in copper in 1813. Denominations consist of half, one, two and eight reales. The die work is superior to that seen on other SUDs. Production quality is also quite good. Relatively few varieties exist due to the consistency of the die sinking. Contemporary counterfeits are very scarce but are encountered occasionally, particularly in the two reales denomination. The copper eight reales were struck in significant quantities and are today quite common. Minor denominations become increasingly scarce as they get smaller. The half reales are very rare. Copper eight reales with Morelos counterstamps are somewhat rare and command a significant premium. A number of modern fantasy *T*C* issues exist that occasionally trade as genuine. Some of these have made their way into catalogs and prominent auctions. Collectors are advised to use extreme caution when considering any silver *T*C* issue.

9. I have also considered whether *T*C* SUDs could have been struck in Oaxaca in 1813 before López Rayón's arrival with *T*C* representing Treasury of the Capital. This alternative theory could explain the similar die work and production quality of the *T*C* and Oaxaca SUDs. Problematically, this theory relies on Morelos' July 1811 Tixtla decree previously mentioned. Unexplained is why two years elapsed before the adoption of a "Treasury of the Capital" legend in Oaxaca in 1813. Improbably, this scenario also requires that López Rayón changes the design from *T*C* to Oaxaca style SUDs in January 1814. A change that seems unnecessary given the high production standards of *T*C* style SUDs. The lettering and bow & arrow style changes are also unexplained if both issues were produced in Oaxaca. While considered, this alternative is unlikely.

A detailed listing of the four denominations of this interesting and distinctive *T*C* SUD issue follows.

Obverse Design	Monogram "sMo" of Morelos appears above the denomination and date, Stars flank the denomination *8*R* and date *1813*. The borders consist of alternating stars and tildes on both the obverse and reverse. Inexplicitly, on the half and two reales, there are no stars flanking the date.
Reverse Design	A Oaxaca style bow and arrow sits above *T*C* with SUD below. Stars flank *T*C* and *SUD*. On most, but not all, two reales there are no stars flanking SUD.
Edge/Planchet	Planchets were cast before striking and evidence of casting is sometimes present, especially on the eight reales. Edges display filing consistent with other Insurgent issues. Diameters range from 38 to 40mm for eight reales with most measuring 39 mm. Two reales have diameters between 23 and 25 mm, while one and half reales are 21 mm and 16mm respectively. Diameter and thickness are relatively consistent and much improved from other Morelos SUDs.
Weight	As expected for copper coinage, weights vary widely with eight reales generally ranging from 20 to 32 grams. One and two reales range from 2.5-4 grams and 4-7 grams respectively. Half reales average 1.5 grams.

½ REAL, Struck Copper
***T*C* SUD**



[Num] 1813 The 1813 half real denomination is expressed as Mo for medio real. The half real is the key to the four-coin *T*C* series. It was missing from the Gerber collection and is not present in the Banco de México collection. Krause lists this coin as KM#243 but pictures a counterfeit with a serrated, rather than star-tilde border. The Pradeau sale featured two examples, the second of which was spurious (lot# 1758).

Rarity Very Rare. Counterfeits exist.

REAL, Struck Copper
***T*C* SUD**



[Num] 1813 The 1813 *T*C* real is somewhat scarce and quite difficult to obtain with a full strike that is corrosion free.

Rarity Scarce

2 REALES, Struck Copper
*T*C* SUD



[[Num] 1813 The 1813 *T*C* two reales is common. It was produced from at least four pairs of dies. While the dies are of good workmanship, incomplete strikes on undersized planchets are often encountered. Krause lists *T*C* two reales dated 1813 and 1814 (#245 & #246). The 1814 is a counterfeit with a fantasy America Morelos obverse.

- Rarity Common.
- Varieties
- a. SUD without stars (pictured).
 - b. *SUD* with stars before and after from a single die.
 - c. Star below *SUD*, amateurish, suspected contemporary counterfeit (scc).
 - d. Retro 1s, possible contemporary counterfeit (pcc).

RARITY SCALE	
Rarity	Estimated Population
ER	1-4
VR	4-10
R	10-20
VS	20-40
S	40-100
C	100+

8 REALES, Struck Copper
*T*C* SUD



[Num] 1813 The 1813 *T*C* eight reales were struck in large numbers from at least nine sets of dies. The die work is very consistent, and the only major variety observed contains vertical tildes in the star-tilde borders. At least one example is known with a colonial edge applied after striking (the edge does not match the Oaxaca SUD eight reales edges). A contemporary counterfeit is also known with crude letters and numbers which appear to be hand engraved. Krause list a cast silver *T*C* eight reales as KM#249 but does not picture it. The author has yet to see a silver example which elicits confidence.

Rarity Very Common (CCC, 400+) but difficult to obtain problem free and with a full strike. Many of the examples seen today are burial recoveries which exhibit some amount of corrosion or environmental damage. Damage free specimens with complete strikes are scarce. The variety with vertical tildes in the border emanates from a single die pair and is presumed Very Scarce.

- Varieties
- a. Borders of alternating stars and horizontal dashes (pictured).
 - b. Borders of alternating stars and vertical dashes.
 - c. Crude, hand cut letters, scc.

[Author's note. This article is a chapter in a long-term War for Independence book project. I would like to thank Mike Dunigan and Cory Frampton for reviewing and providing invaluable comments and editing. I would also like to thank Ramiro Cerecer for his input and translation of the 30 September 1813 Morelos decree. Readers' comments are always appreciated and can be emailed to max@worldnumismatics.com]

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THE DIFFICULT SURVIVAL OF THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL COPPER COIN OF THE VICEREGAL MEXICO

by Pablo Luna Herrera

The issue of small (or low-denomination) coins by the official authority in the Viceroyalty period was always complicated, due to a currency shortage for centuries and few successful cases of low value copper issued in almost three hundred years.

The object of this study has its roots in multiple previous attempts by the Spanish Crown to mint copper coins of low value: some examples are:

1. Copper patterns of 1768 and 1769¹,
2. Silver quarters (named Lion and Castle type) produced from 1796 to 1816 (KM #62).

Regarding the latter, the increasing cost of manufacturing them, their inconvenient size, insufficient quantities struck (Nibert, 2004) as well as the various Insurgent movements marked their end. Alfredo Lagunilla Iñarrítu (1981) points out that the silver “cuartillas” described above were insufficient to satisfy the needs for small change; even Viceroy Félix María Calleja in 1814 -when authorizing the coins that concern us- addressed the same reasons. Furthermore, Ricardo Fernández Castillo (2019) explains the main objectives of issuing minor copper coins in the period were:

1. A response to the increasingly Insurgent money flows, mainly made of copper,
2. An attempt to extinguish the use of unofficial currency, such as tlacos, pilones, and other local coins,
3. Consolidation of the role of the Mexico City mint, struggling to achieve a path that would give it back the power lost since 1810,
4. To earn a position of useful and legitimate fiat currency, above its rebel counterparts.

In other words, the purpose was to facilitate retail trade and reduce the use of unofficial means of exchange, as well as to respond to the revolutionary issuers of fiduciary currency.

To understand why these coins were authorized at the end of the viceroyalty, we need to talk about the so-called “moneda del pueblo” (people’s currency), the existence of unofficial currency. José Enrique Covarrubias (1998) explains why it was difficult to introduce small copper coins:

“Although the problems caused by the use of tlacos existed from early days of the colonial period, it was not until the middle of the 18th century that they began to be a reason for continuous discussions, to the point of inciting the highest authorities of the Spanish empire to a deep consideration of them themselves. Around 1760, laws and regulations are published on the conditions for circulation of the aforementioned tlacos. [...] The final intention [...] is none other than to request an official minting of copper coins that puts an end to the scams made by local merchants when they give and accept change [...]. The proposal, however, ran into opposition from the powerful Consulate of Merchants from Mexico City, reluctant to any initiative for copper coins endorsed by the king. For major businesses, a massive mintage of copper coins obviously represented the risk of having to admit official copper currency instead of their own money.”

Now we can understand that although the viceregal authority recognized the need to issue low-value copper coins (vellón) there was resistance and opposition given that New Spain was a silver economy, with privileges for major merchants. Moreover, the same author also mentions the technical difficulties in producing copper coins.

“One of the fundamental elements (in coining copper) was the lack of adequate techniques for casting and especially refining that metal [...] the workers of the copper mines in the Michoacán area were not characterized by an innovative spirit regarding such works [...] copper is a metal that comes in many different qualities and that often requires being properly refined to have it in its purest possible presentation, New Spain copper was from a low-quality purity.”

The technical troubles described before are another issue that helps to explain the lack of a national copper coin.

Whereas Enriqueta Quiroz (2006) explains that more than a problem of the lack of minor coinage, the issue was fractional values in the colonial economic system, the half or quarter real was not enough and these new coins were a proposal to solve the problem.

1. These patterns are addressed in “Las monedas de cuartilla en el México virreinal y la escasez de la moneda menuda.” published at <https://eldatonumismatico.wordpress.com/las-monedas-de-cuartilla-en-el-mexico-colonial/>

That same argument is subscribed by Luis Gómez Wulschner (2009), who mentions the following:

"In 1814, by order of Viceroy Félix María Calleja, copper was minted to correct the anarchy that prevailed in those times in relation to private minor coinage. Also, in order to achieve a monetary organization, since private issues, from villages and farms, counterfeits, etc. abounded.

On this occasion, the denomination was not expressed in maravedíes, instead it used the values that people knew, "but without giving them other names than those that remain settled." This is how coins were minted in three values: two quarters, one quarter and one eighth, equivalent to one quarter, one eighth and one sixteenth of a real respectively. The intention was to extinguish the existence of tlacos and pilones."

Now that we know the backgrounds it is time to move to the coin themselves: the introduction of the new copper coinage can be traced in different steps: on 28 March 1814 the Consejo Superior authorized the coining of small change (*moneda de vellón*) in New Spain; on 4 July Virrey Calleja authorized their minting; on 23 August he published the decree stating the denominations, for immediate circulation, and then, on 20 December, a proclamation ordered that prices be given in the new currencies and forbade their refusal (Yonaka, 2020).

Special emphasis needs to be made regarding the authorization given by Viceroy Calleja to mint three new coins, -struck by his own initiative (Yonaka, 2020) - he argued that: "...in order to prevent the existence of the hateful private currency as tlacos y pilones. We look to fight against the circulation of these types of coins and establish a safe national money for all the people in the State and for their interests..."



1/8 Real 1814. Stack's Bowers, January 2023 NYINC auction, lot #42616



1/4 Real 1814. Stack's Bowers, June 2022 World Collectors Choice Online auction, lot #72032



2/4 Real 1815. Aureo & Calico, auction 389, lot #148

The design of the coins is interesting (for more information, see Yonaka (2020)), the aforementioned decree said: "... carrying on the obverse the name of our grand and beloved sovereign Ferdinand VII, the initial of the Royal Mint, and the sign that represent the value, in the other side the shield of Castilla and Leon..."

We can notice on the reverse two "F" letters intertwined and inside a "VII" at the center, all crowned, to the left the Mexico City mark and to the right the value, the inscriptions surrounding the coin "FERDIN-VII-D-G-HISP-REX" (Ferdinand VII by the grace of God King of Spain), and the date of the year in the exergue. On the obverse, surrounding a laurel wreath, is at the center the Bourbon shield with castles, lions and a fleur-de-lis.

However, it is relevant to notice that all the described designs were hybrid of two previous pieces already minted, on the one hand an 1808 Madrid proclamation medal of the same king and for the other side a Segovia 8 maravedis, as the following pictures illustrate:



Ferdinand VII, proclamation medal, Madrid, 1808. Classical Numismatic Group, auction 363, lot #491.



8 Maravedís 1808, Charles IV. Aureo & Calico, auction 258, lote #263

The ornate design on the obverse was originally created in 1770 by the engraver Tomas Francisco Prieto, together with the bust type monetary family (circulating since 1772 in Mexico).

Production started in July 1814. The quantity minted are the following:

Year	Total production amount, all copper denominations, cumulative amount in pesos	
1814	103,555	All values produced.
1815	101,356	All values produced.
1816	125,281	Only $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ produced.
1821	12,500 (12,700) other authors	Only $\frac{3}{4}$ produced.
Total	342,962	

The mintage was irregular in the first three years of production. Pilar Gonzalez Gutiérrez (1995) in her work records data from the Indies Archives in Spain, that shows the monthly production, and that any records were found regarding copper striking in 1821.

Month	1814	1815	1816
January	0	10,000	0
February	0	11,300	0
March	0	10,700	0
April	0	13,600	30,000
May	0	10,400	0
June	0	0	0
July	34,900	15,000	30,000
August	16,000	0	0
September	19,870	0	0
October	14,900	0	30,000
November	0	17,000	30,000
December	17,885	13,356	5,281
Total:	103,555	101,356	125,281

As a hypothesis, the reason why minting was suspended after three continuous years of fairly uniform production, is probably due to the appeasement of the war conflicts, which partially ceased by the middle of the decade, added to the sufficient quantity produced in stock. On the other hand, the reduced amount of production for the last year is likely due to the early conclusion of the viceregal administration, with multiple changes in 1821.

In addition, although the initial circulation was foreseen mainly for Mexico City, a significant amount of copper coin was sent to various areas of the Viceroyalty (Fernández Castillo, 2019):

Remittances of copper currency sent to other territories. (1815)	
Guanajuato	8,500 pesos
Valladolid	4,500 pesos
Querétaro	3,000 pesos
Puebla	10,000 pesos

Further, Ben Nibert (2004) argues -with reason- that confusion exists in the collectors' guild regarding the correct reading of the issued denominations, since their value was determined by three different factors: (i) the value engraved on the coin, (ii) the value granted by the government and (iii) the value named colloquially by the people: the same theory is shared by Brad Yonaka (2020). Therefore, the following information is provided for a better understanding:

Value engraved:	Value Spanish system:	Popular name:	KM#
1/8	1/16 Real	Pilón (a half)	59
1/4	1/8 Real	Tlaco	63
2/4	¼ Real	Señal	34

The reasons that caused the end of the copper coins are headed by the Independence movement, culminating in victory in the last year of production. However, it is well known that the production of silver coins with the royal bust continued beyond 1821; with the copper metal this was not the case due to:

- Rumors spread by the Insurgents that the issue of copper coins would withdraw all the silver and gold coins from circulation.
- It is a fact that the coins helped with previous trade issues related to minor coinage, but they also worsened the diversity of monetary types. That same explanation is shared by Brad Yonaka (2020) when he asserts "...The total coin produced were completely inadequate to the task of flushing out tlacos."
- Rejection and resistance: business and shops preferred their own minor coinage (that gave them private benefits) to a national coin not regulated by them.
- Counterfeits.

Finally, the also named "Calleja coins" continued to circulate decades beyond, their total amortization (withdrawn for new coins) would not come until the Antonio López de Santa Anna administration in the 1840s.

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FIVE PESOS GOLD COINS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO – THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

by Kirk Menczer

Excluding the 1 peso, decimal gold coins are one of the least collected series minted in Mexico. The 5 pesos gold coins may be the least collected of these. This article will try to explain why that is the case and what difficulties and opportunities this presents the collector.

The design of the 5 pesos coin is consistent for the entire series. It has a facing eagle with snake in beak and date on the obverse. The reverse has an attractive radiant cap above balance scales identical in design to the silver pesos of 1869-1873. In addition, the reverse has the mint mark and assayer's initial. The 5 pesos gold coins were struck between 1870 and 1905.

Except for 1888 which will be discussed later, 1875 was the last year in which more than two of the nine mints that struck 5 pesos gold coins struck them in a single year. This may be because there was little need for mid-denomination gold for commerce as it was too big for the everyday citizen and too small for large commercial transactions. Or there was ample US gold circulating in Mexico to satisfy the need for this denomination as the US 5 dollars and Mexican 5 pesos were accepted as equals on both sides of the border.

The 5 pesos gold coins generally come in high grade. These coins like the 1 peso and 2½ pesos gold coins did not circulate to the same degree as escudo gold or the larger decimal gold coinage. The average condition is almost uncirculated or better except for a few of the branch mints.



Zacatecas – 1877 Zs S/A

In order to shed some light on the availability of 5 pesos gold coins I will be summarizing information from combined PCGS and NGC Population Reports. DO NOT assume this information represents anywhere as comprehensive a picture of the population of this series of coins by date, mint, assayer (DMA) combinations or condition as does the US Morgan dollar census or that of other highly collected series. Slabbing foreign coins became popular long after that of US coins. There are still and will continue to be many private treaty sales of unslabbed 5 pesos gold coins. There are several collections and individual coins that are not currently slabbed. They probably will not be slabbed until they are sold which may be many years from now. Even then, they may be sold raw by private treaty. However, at the present time, almost all 5 pesos gold coins being sold at auction are being slabbed if they are higher grade or rare dates. So as time progresses, we will get a more accurate picture of the population and condition of the various DMAs. NOTE: I use the term DMA not DAM (date, assayer, mint) as some people do. This is just a personal preference as I feel it more accurately reflects the order in which I describe a specific coin.

The North American Price Guide (catalog) lists 67 DMA combinations. For the purposes of this analysis a coin with a normal date and an over date are considered one DMA. Also, coins in "details" holders are not included. There are a few very rare dates in detailed holders. In addition, there are at least four DMAs that exist that are not listed in the catalog.

So, we are considering 71 different DMAs. The summary is presented in the chart below.

Slabbed 5 Pesos Gold Coins

	Different DMAs	Percentage of DMAs	Coins Slabbed	Percentage of Coins Slabbed
DMAs with No Coins Slabbed	15	21%	0	0%
DMAs with 1-2 Coins Slabbed	27	38%	38	10%
DMAs with 3-5 Coins Slabbed	12	17%	46	12%
DMAs with 6-10 Coins Slabbed	9	13%	71	18%
DMAs with over 10 Coins Slabbed	8	11%	229	60%
	71	100%	384	100%

So, you can see 42 DMAs or 59% of 5 pesos gold coins have between zero and two slabbed coins. This illustrates the biggest deterrent to collecting this series. And that is, it has one the highest percentages of extremely rare DMAs to total DMAs of any series of Mexican coins. The 10 and 20 pesos gold coins also have many rarities but they have more common coins as well. There are numerous 5 pesos gold coins that have never been sold at public auction. This illustrates how infrequently they change hands. Various mints reported mintages for 39 of the 71 DMAs. The mintages ranged from 16 to 1,600. Of these 39, 14 had mintages of 200 or less. To the collector, this means there is no way you will ever complete the full set of DMAs. After five years you could acquire many of the common and some of the scarce and maybe two or three rare DMAs. After that you would have to be content with acquiring a new coin infrequently and maybe a few when collections come on the market. This is not a series for action junkies. Only you can decide if this series is "too rare to collect" as one person told me. Again, I remind you the percentage of rare dates slabbed is much lower than that of many series of coins, but I think it is safe to say that if only zero to two coins have been slabbed the total population of that DMA is less than 15 with many below 10 and some below five.

Is there any good news? The cost relative to rarity of this series is very low compared to the more popular Mexican coin series. That is not to say the rare dates are inexpensive but when you consider what coins of highly popular series such as the 8 reales, Maximilians, Itubides, Caballitos, etc. sell for compared to their rarity and availability they are much less expensive. Of course, this is true only because the demand side of the supply/demand equation is so low. However, only a few additional collectors of this series could change that drastically. Imagine if you had decided to collect nice Caballitos only five years ago. The competition and prices would have been materially lower.

For the Registry Set aficionado this series is a no brainer. As of the date of this writing NGC has exactly one Mexico Republic 5 pesos Registry set. It has one coin in it. Anyone could have the top set with ease. I cannot guarantee you would always remain number one but as I have stated this is not a highly collected series. There are a few advanced collections in private hands, but I have no reason to believe any of these collectors intend to create registry sets. PCGS has zero 5 pesos Republic Gold registry sets. Top set is as easy as one coin.

You cannot write about Mexico Second Republic gold coins without discussing the year 1888. It was a very special year for Mexican numismatics. It is the only year all mints, except Guadalajara, produced at least some gold coins. Two branch mints (Chihuahua and San Luis Potosí) produced gold 5 pesos only in 1888. There was similar very limited production of most gold coins produced in Mexico in 1888. The Mexico City mint produced a normal but limited mintage. I do not know for certain why so many mints produced gold in 1888. Interestingly, 50 centavos were produced only by Culiacán, Guanajuato, Hermosillo and Mexico City in 1888. All are exceedingly rare. One centavo to 25 centavos production was normal. As more historical records are digitized and made available to scholars it is not out of the question that a definitive answer may be found for these very limited issues. However, we can speculate. Mexico started using standardized dies in 1888. It is not unreasonable to think dies were made in Mexico City and sent to the branch mints where they were ordered, expected and/or encouraged to produce some coins just to see if the new system worked, if for no other reason. It seems very unlikely all these branch mints just happened to need 5 pesos in very small quantities for commerce in this particular year. This is further supported by the fact that numerous 1888 gold coins have mint marks over a Mo mintmark.

Here are examples from six of the eight mints which struck 5 pesos gold coins in 1888. Chihuahua and San Luis Potosí examples will be detailed further within this article. Durango and Guadalajara are missing as there are no known examples of any 5 pesos gold coins being struck in 1888 at these mints.



Alamos – 1888 As L



Culiacan – 1888 Cn M



Guanajuato – 1888 Go R



Hermosillo – 1888 Ho G



Mexico – 1888 Mo M



Zacatecas – 1888 Zs Z



A review of each mint follows:

Alamos

Alamos produced 5 pesos in three years. 1875 L, 1878 L, and 1888 L. The 1875 and 1888 are exceedingly rare. The 1878 is very rare but has more examples known than the other two. I only have records of two coins better than Very Fine.



Alamos – 1875 As L

Chihuahua

Chihuahua produced 5 pesos coins only in 1888. These coins are exceedingly rare. A couple are in Almost Uncirculated condition, the balance seems to be all ex-jewelry.



Chihuahua – 1888 Ca M

Culiacán

Culiacán produced 5 pesos in 13 years per the Krause catalog. I have also seen reports of an 1884 M. I have no confirmed sales of the 1874 P or 1884 M. Of the 14 possible years only five have three or more slabbed coins. It is an easy mint for a type coin. Of the five assayers P and Q are available. D and M are very rare and G is exceeding rare.



Cuiliacan – 1900 Cn Q

Durango

Durango made 5 pesos in four years but with five DMAs, 1873 P, 1877 P and 1878 B, 1878 E and 1879 B. I have no confirmed sales of the 1873 P. Only the 1877 P has more than two slabbed coins. It has three. Of the three assayers P and B are very rare. E is exceedingly rare.



Durango – 1878 Do E

Guanajuato

Guanajuato struck coins in four years. Only the 1871 S comes available regularly but is still scarce. It has eight slabs and comes to auction every year or so. The 1887 R, 1888 R and 1893 R have only two slabs between them and all three are exceedingly rare.

The 1893 Go R, like the gold coins of 1888, has generated some very interesting speculation. The mintage of this date is 16, the lowest recorded mintage of any Mexican coin. One wonders why they would bother to strike such a small quantity. We do not definitively know the answer but again speculation abounds. The mint was required by law to produce coins on demand if provided with the gold necessary to mint them. Guanajuato was a wealthy mining town and obviously had some wealthy citizens. Some people speculate that the daughter of such a citizen was getting married and “los padrinos y madrineros” or couple’s wedding sponsors wanted to give the “arras”, the traditional wedding gift of 13 gold coins. Wedding sponsors are like godparents. The coins are blessed, given to the groom who presents them to the bride during the wedding ceremony. The easiest way to give the mint the gold needed to produce at least thirteen 5 pesos would be to provide four 20 pesos. The four 20 pesos would produce sixteen 5 pesos coins. This may not be what actually happened, but it is a lovely story.



Guanajuato – 1871 Go

Hermosillo

Hermosillo produced 5 pesos in three years with four DMAs, 1874 R, 1877 R, 1877 A and 1888 G. There is one of each date except the 1877 R slabbed. All are exceedingly rare, but the 1874 R turns up more than the others. The 1877 R and 1888 G have only one known example each.



Hermosillo – 1877 Ho A

Mexico City

Mexico City minted coins in 31 years per the catalog. They also made coins in 1885. However, in the three years 1879, 1882 and 1891 there are no slabbed coins. I do have sales records for the 1891 but not the 1879 or 1882. There are 15 dates with two or fewer slabs, so the Mexico City mint is by no means an easy mint to complete. It has some DMAs as rare as the toughest branch mints. Mexico City had only three assayers. The M assayer is easy. The B assayer is very to exceedingly rare and C assayer is a one year type in 1870 and is rare but under appreciated in the market place as it is only a scarce date in other gold denominations.



Mexico City – 1902 Mo M

San Luis Potosí

There are no mint records of San Luis Potosí ever producing gold coins. However, in that special year of 1888 we know dies were made as a trial strike set of 1 to 20 pesos (missing the 2½ pesos) is known to exist in silver. In addition, a 10 pesos and 5 pesos gold coin have surfaced over the years. Was the rest of the five piece set made? Almost assuredly, but that does not mean the coins exist today. It is theoretically possible additional 1888 Potosí 5 pesos coins exist, but it is likely the known 5 pesos is unique.

The existence of 1888 Potosí gold coins, a mint that never before or after produced gold coins, further strengthens the theory that dies were made for all or most of the mints in 1888 even though the commercial need for such coins did not exist.



San Luis Potosí – 1888 Pi R

Zacatecas

There are eight Zacatecas 5 pesos in the catalog. I have no sales records for the 1875 A. The 1875 A and 1888 Z are exceedingly rare. The remaining six can be acquired with sufficient patience although only the 1874 A, 1877 S and 1878 S would be considered common. Of the three assayers only the A which is a one year only assayer is difficult to obtain, and it may be impossible.



Zacatecas – 1874 Zs

If you would like to accept the challenge to collect some or all this series, what form

could the collection take? A single type coin is certainly no problem. Numerous common dates are readily available in high grade. A coin from each year 5 pesos gold coins were made might be possible but will take a long time and is still not guaranteed. A type set with one of each mint is impossible without one or two current collections coming on the market. A mint and assayer set would be even more difficult. A complete set of all DMAs would be the ULTIMATE CHALLENGE. In my opinion it would be impossible to ever complete the full DMA set even if you are young and are willing and able to pay whatever it takes when the rare DMAs come on the market.

If you attempt any form of collection except the single type coin it is in your best interest to align yourself with a dealer or two specializing in Mexican or Latin American coins as a great number of important collections are still sold through private treaty and most dealers have a pecking order in which they offer the rare coins. It would be extremely helpful to be the first or second "go to" collector of a couple of such dealers.

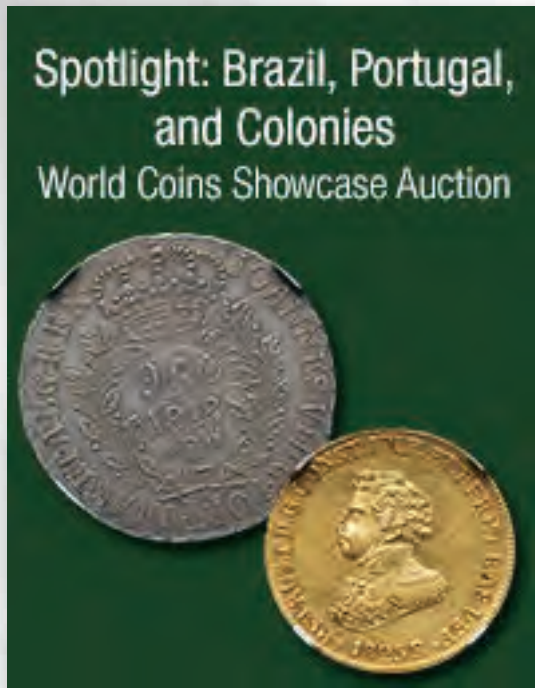
If completing one of these sets is impossible, why do I and a couple of other collectors even try? There is nothing wrong in attempting the seemingly impossible. For some of us the journey, not the destination, provides the greatest pleasure and sense of achievement. One of the happiest and saddest days of my life was when I completed the one peso Mexico gold collection. It was then I realized it was studying, learning, sharing, and chasing I enjoyed more than the actual possession. I think I can state categorically that the quest to complete the ULTIMATE CHALLENGE will never end. But you can look forward to enjoying the journey for the rest of your life, waking up each day hoping it will be the one you locate or discover another of the elusive 5 peso gold coins.

I would like to thank Scott Doll for his photography, editing and most importantly his encouragement and Mike Dunigan for sharing a little of his vast knowledge.

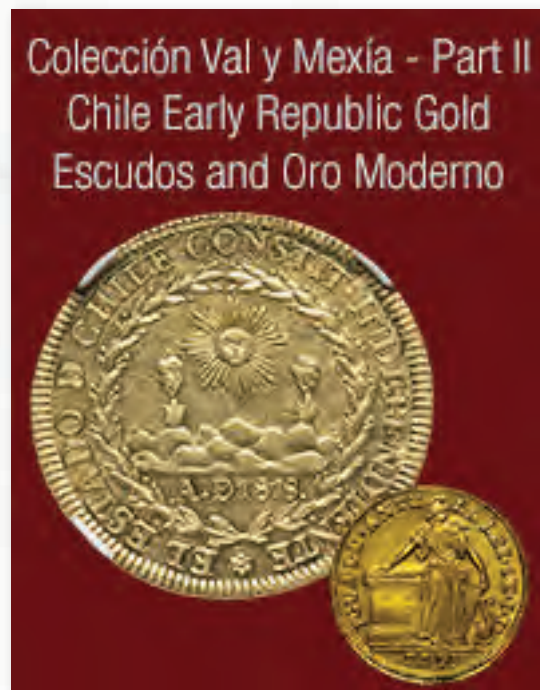
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THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY CORNER

by David Hughes

The Durango 1914 5-centavo Missing Link

A pair of interesting die trial strikes out of the 1914 E. DE DURANGO numeral-5 5-centavo series have been recognized. They mate the obverse dies 6 and 8, from late in the series, in very early die states, with the early square-cut (lettering by chisel) reverse die B of GB-118 (dies 2/B) in a late die state. These die trials are rare, unlisted in the GB catalogue but noted in the Amaya catalogue.



Durango 5-centavo die trial, rare, dies (6/B), GB-UNL, Amaya A-DO-87b. Die 6 was used on four other common circulating E. DE DURANGO Numeral-5 5-centavo: die 6, GB-130 (6/D) and GB-133 (6/I), and the reengraved die 6a, GB-131 (6a/F) and GB-132 (6a/G).

Obverse die 8 is unlisted in the GB catalogue and is likely the final E. DE DURANGO numeral-5 5-centavo die used in the production of the series. The 1's in the date are not parallel, but lean apart ("Drunken 1s"). There is also a dot in the field between the D and first 1 (closer to the D, and not the period in E.). Die 8 coins are rare.



Durango 5-centavo die trial, rare, dies (8/B), GB-UNL, Amaya A-DO-97. Die 8 was used on one other strike, the rare die combination (8/J), GB-UNL, Amaya A-DO-98

Obverse dies 6, 7 and 8 are among the better-engraved obverse dies of the E. DE DURANGO numeral-5 5-centavo series, with nicely-engraved date numerals and a distinctive upturned bottom foot on the E(s). Dies 6 and 7 make great type coins of the series and a prize when in Above Average condition. Die 8 is rare and seldom seen, superseded by the better engraved but lower relief ESTADO DE DURANGO large-numeral 5-centavo dies of GB 115-117. The above die trials suggest the dies 6 and 8 were produced and tested together.



Die 7, part of this group of three similar obverse dies, was also likely tested. This leaves a missing link, the variety (7/B), which may still be out there somewhere.

And now for something completely different. The *1914 Revolutionary Coinage of Durango, Mexico*, by David Hughes with Joe Flores, photographs and describes the known Durango dies, with varieties referenced by die combination, cross-referenced to GB and Amaya numbers. Die numbering from GB continued and expanded. The coinage is discussed in the apparent order of issue, from rude and crude to not as bad. 68 pages, spiral bound, available from the author [shameless plug], email geogen2008@gmail.com, my new email address.

A better strike of rare die 8, on the combination (8/J), showing the Drunken 1s and the dot in the field between the 1 and D.

ISSUES OF EL BANCO NACIONAL DE MEXICO: A CALL FOR HELP

by Simon Prendergast

The major reason for my recent trip to Mexico was to consult the Banco Nacional de México's register of issues. In 1999 the historian José Antonio Bátiz Vázquez referred to the existence in the bank's archives of its Libro Actas de Emisión No 1 which recorded, over 299 pages, 126 lists of dates of issues, covering 51 different dates from 1 January 1885 to 11 December 1913.

Unfortunately, this book is no longer in the archives: indeed, the archivists questioned its very existence, even though it is mentioned in board minutes. Perhaps someone knows of its current whereabouts or has photocopies of its pages. Otherwise, we will have to resort to the other method of reconstructing the bank's table of issues (now at www.papermoneyofmexico.com/history/distrito-federal/banco-nacional-de-mexico), - recording known notes. So can members please send me (simon.prendergast@lineone.net) details that add to the range of date/signature combinations or expand the number ranges. If it is easier, you can just send me a detailed list of your notes and I will do the donkeywork.

A few decades ago someone chose as a postgraduate subject reconstructing the first draft of the second half of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. After he had finished, the draft was found in an attic. So we can live in hope.

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THE ERRORS IN THE MINTING OF 8 REALES OF 1824 IN THE MINT OF DURANGO

by Lic. José Antonio Juárez Muñoz

Director of Durango's Numismatic Museum and President of Durango's Numismatic Association 2023-2025.



In the history of the Durango mint we have found many facets of interesting issues for there is a rich variety in the coins that were minted in its 84 years of existence, both for their designs, legends and variety of metals. We have found varieties that are not recorded in the different catalogs that have been published by great national and international numismatists.

On this occasion we refer to some truly fascinating, extremely collectible and valuable coins, namely the 8 reales of the year 1824 with the Breast Profile or Hookneck Eagle. Thanks to the records that are kept in the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), we have been able to solve many unknowns and are thus able to disseminate this information for all those interested in this issue of the coins produced by the Durango mint.

On 9 April 1823, the Congress agreed how the nation's coat of arms should look:

- 1.- That the national shield is the Mexican eagle standing on its left foot, on a cactus arising from a rock between the waters of the lagoon, and grabbing with its right a snake in the act of tearing it apart with its beak, and that this coat of arms has as a border two branches, one of laurel and another of holm oak, according to the design used by the government of the first defenders of independence.
- 2.- That as for the national flag, it is the one adopted up to now, with the only difference of placing the eagle without a crown, the same thing that should be done on the shield.

On 14 April 1823 the sovereign Constituent Mexican Congress decreed:

- 1.- The government will order that new matrices be produced, as soon as possible and by the best engravers, to replace those that until now serve for minting currency.
- 2.- The gold, silver and copper coins will have a common obverse, stamping on them the coat of arms of the Mexican nation with on the circumference the inscription REPUBLICA MEXICANA (MEXICAN REPUBLIC).
- 3.- On the reverse of the silver coins will be placed a cap on which is diagonally written LIBERTAD (FREEDOM), from whose center several bursts of light will emanate. They will also express their respective value, the place and year of their manufacture, the initials of the names of the assayers and their fineness.
- 4.- On the reverse of the gold coins will be a hand with a rod, at the upper end of which the cap of liberty will be placed, resting everything on an open book, with the inscription on the circumference LIBERTAD EN LEY (FREEDOM UNDER THE LAW), with the marks or signs that in the previous article are designated for the silver coins.
- 5.- On the reverse of the copper coins palms will be placed to form a border, and in the center (except for the fineness and the names of the assayers) the marks laid out in the preceding articles.
- 6.- The government will take care, at the time of publishing this decree, to make known to the public, that the fineness of gold and silver coins is the same as those of the Spanish government for the past forty years.

The designer was José Mariano Torreblanca. Therefore, we realize why there were problems with the designs of the coins minted in 1824 in Durango.

What I will transcribe below is from a file of that same year in which six pieces minted in Durango were sent to Mexico City for examination, since there was an office called Gravado (of Engraving), which was responsible for giving approval for pieces to the foreign mints that existed since the time of the War of Independence. A very important one was the provisional mint in Durango that was opened in 1811.

The file, consisting of several pieces of correspondence, reads as follows:

CARTERA 8, CUADERNO 45, NACIONAL CASA DE MONEDA DE MEJICO. AÑO DE 1824, N° 922.
DEPOSITS THAT ARE MADE IN THE TREASURY OF THIS MINT BY THE COURTS AND TRIBUNALS THIS YEAR.

I send to you six coins of eight reales produced in the mint of Durango so that you can weigh, test and assess their fineness, giving me an account of the results to put to the consideration of the supreme executive power. God keep you for many years, Mexico City. 22 March 1824. Frallaga, Superintendent of the Mint.

Mexico City Mint, 22 March 1824 - For the punctual fulfillment of this higher request, immediately send the six eight reales coins that accompany it to the chief engraver, judge of weights (*juez de balanza*) and assayers (*ensayadores*) so that each one proceeds with all the superiority attached to recognize their stamp, weight and fineness reporting what happens after the aforementioned examination. ... Lardizábal – (to) José de la Santa Cruz.

Dear Superintendent –To take charge of what you ordered in your previous order about evaluating the coins that you said regarding the engraving, it is seen that they are chiseled, and not in the manner that the order says it is to be done, having so acted to the detriment of the public. This consideration can be proved if you think it worthy of being brought to the knowledge of his serene highness, the supreme executive power. – God guard your excellency for many years, Mexico City, 27 March 1824. Rafael Lardizábal. (to the) Most excellent Minister of State of Finance.

I attach an original that is sent to the intendant with the coins for forwarding to the supreme government, and is by command of the same superintendent and presented on sheets of official paper, stamped with the current dues, 27 March 1824. José de la Santa Cruz.

The report by Francisco Gordillo, from the engraving office, states:

Without the quality of making several dies it is not possible to get the same results both with the eagle and with the sunburst (*Resplandores*). They are not made with punches. As regards the design the eagle is imperfect, the right leg, if it extends, will be longer than the left, the left foot that sits appears on the ground should be on the cactus, the stalks of the cactus appear out of center, the olive branches seem better as an ornament of laurel, the oak cannot give that symmetry as a bouquet of two leaves and two acorns. The posture of the eagle is loaded to the left, not in the center, on the letter is uneven because its talons are not arranged, and there are still some engraved with a chisel, not engraved with a punch, the posture of these do not acknowledge the circle because they fall in different directions This is what I can tell you about the matter. ---- Office of Engraving. Mexico City, 24 March 1824. - Francisco Gordillo.

The report by Miguel Gaitan Villasenor on the coins' weight was:

Report.-Dear Superintendent. In accordance with what you instructed in the decree, I proceeded to assess the weight of the six coins of Durango and the result is as follows.

	WEAK (i.e. Shortage)	STRONG (i.e. Excess)
No. 1	3 gs (granos)	
No. 2	2 gs	
No. 3		2 %
No. 4		7½ %
No. 5		3 %
No. 6	5 gs	

I have found all the six coins defective, because although number two is (only) two granos short, this is outside the permitted limits. If they were all like this, there would be a mark with sixteen granos, which should not have more than eight and a half. So I have to point out to you that the six coins are completely defective in terms of their weight - Office of the Mexico City Mint, 24 March 1824. Gaitan.

Finally, the report of the three assayers on their fineness states:

Dear Superintendent.-The six silver coins of the Durango mint under test have resulted in the following fineness:

	FINENESS
No. 1	18%
No. 2	18%
No. 3	19%
No. 4	18¾%
No. 5	17½%
No. 6	18%

Assayers of Mexico City mint, 26 March 1824. - García Felada, - Cuevas, - Reyes.

So the summary was:

Your Excellency, to give punctual fulfillment to what you suggested in your letter of 22 March for the six eight reales coins produced in the provisional mint of Durango that were sent to the mint officials, the chief engraver, the judge of weights and the assayers in order that each should consider and examine them as to type, weight and fineness, and having evaluated these operations I attach to the original the file on this matter with the six coins numbered from one to six, in which is the information of the defects that each of these ministers has noticed in them. The first, the engraver Francisco Gordillo, notes what he wrote in his reports of 23 March, according to the regulations of his art. - The second, Miguel Gaitán Villaseñor the judge of weights, notes defects to be considered, such that if all the coins produced in Durango were like them they could not be issued to the public, because the coins numbered one, two and six have shortages in their weight that are greater than that permitted: the first of three granos, the second of two granos, and the third of five. The coins numbered three, four and five are found to be overweight, the first by two granos, the second by seven and a half and the third by three, as account of the note of the same Villaseñor, all being defective as explained in my report of 24 March. The assayers José García, Manuel Felada and José María Cuevas, in their report of 26 March, set out in detail the considerable defects of fineness of these coins, that does not allow the ordinary dispersal to the public in these two matters, particularly in that of fineness. Coin number one is 1½ granos short, number two two, number three one, number four one and a half, number five two and a half and number six two, defects so serious that before they are allowed in public each coin must be given a new increase, retested as to fineness, so that considered and examined by each one they might report what happened to them as to type, weight and fineness.

So far we have transcribed what this file tells us and we realize that not only these pieces of 8 reales had all the errors but also all those one and two reales of that same year that were also of the eagle in profile design. This is why in 1825 new designs in dies were sent from Mexico City to mint the new pieces and the earlier pieces that we have been studying were retired from circulation. This helps us to know why these pieces came out in only a single year, as we see today that they were disapproved of by the experts of the Mint and the design office.

It should be noted that the assayer of these coins was Ramón Luelmo who worked that year, and that in the proclamation number 38 of 11 August 1824 published in Mexico City by the Minister of Finance José Ignacio Esteva, the public were informed of the change in the designs of the national shield in relation to the position of the eagle. The first coinages showed the eagle in profile: from then on they showed it from the front.

The mint of Durango began its Republican issue in 1824, the year after the proclamation of the Republic, along with those of Guanajuato and Mexico City, but with different eagles and sunbursts and we have already seen the consequences of not having the appropriate designs or the weight or fineness so that in the studies that were carried out the determination was made to suggest that they no longer be produced or distributed to the public.



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