## 1580-2005



# THE FORGOTTEN MINT OF COLONIAL PANAMA 

## A LOOK INTO THE PRODUCTION OF COINS IN AMERICA DURING THE $16^{\text {th }}$ CENTURY AND PANAMA'S SPANISH ROYAL HOUSE FOR MINTING COINS



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* About the book: The author, Jorge A. Proctor, prepared the cover page design and all the drawings illustrated in this work, unless otherwise stated.

The cover page illustration (previous page) portrays several contemporary coins and other items laying over a map titled "Map of the Countries of the South Seas from Panama to Guayquil." This map was engraved by the British Royal Hydrographer Thomas Kitchin for Rev. Dr. William Robinson's History of America (as published according to Act of Parliament of $29^{\text {th }}$ Sept. 1795 by W. Strahan and T. Cadell in the Strand - London).

Note: I have only anglicized Spanish names and place-names where English versions are more common to the reader.

The printing of this edition is limited to 150 books numbered from 1 to 150 .

I dedicate this work to LAURA DE LA GUARDIA, my mother, and to DANIEL SEDWICK, the numismatist, who in 1994 not only motivated me to undertake this very interesting investigation, but also volunteered countless hours of his valuable time and energy by providing leads, input, and conscientiously editing many of my numerous drafts which have helped to conclude with this final result.


Beautiful $16^{\text {th }}$ century engraving of King Philip II of Spain. On July 8, 1578, Philip II approved for the establishment of a mint in the city of Panama. The minting of coins began in early 1580, making Panama the site of the sixth mint to be established by Spain in the New World and first in Central America.

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## PROLOGUE

## Central American Numismatic Association

The history of numismatics in what is now Central America has been slow to emerge from obscurity. Several initial books on the subject were produced by foreign and Central American numismatists in the nineteen sixties and seventies. They covered only parts of the Spanish Colonial and Republican periods, and mostly referred to individual countries. Other researchers brought to light valuable historical information to fill existing major gaps during the final decade of the twentieth century and in the most recent years. However, more research is still required to completely fill the prevailing gaps. Historical data awaits the devoted researcher in dust-filled places located in both Spain and in America.

Conducting such original research is not easy. Financial resources are lacking to fund the time, travel and local expenses of the numismatic researcher. And it takes a very special kind of person to have the drive and devotion to search and search for original numismatic historical data, often hidden under other official documentation. However, the joy of finding the correct answers to long-standing questions concerning our numismatic past cannot be overstated!

Jorge Proctor has proven to be precisely that kind of devoted, persistent person. He has visited and spent long periods of time in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville and in many other depositories of historical information located in Spanish America as well. And his efforts have proven extremely fruitful. In his book The Forgotten Mint of Colonial Panama he has made a special and very important contribution that will enable us to rewrite Spanish America's Colonial numismatic history. And he has done so with a wealth of information that numismatists consider as the dream come true in any research, providing more evidence than is required to change previously believed concepts and facts.

Indeed, before Jorge's book we had been used to the notion - drawn mostly from Humberto Burzio's Diccionario de la Moneda Hispanoamericana - that the only mints authorized by the Spanish Monarchs for the American Colonies during the sixteenth century had been those of Mexico (founded in 1536), Santo Domingo (1542), Lima (1568), La Plata (1573) and Potosí (1574). And that the next century had witnessed the opening of Royal mints at Santa Fe de Bogotá and Cuzco only, to
be followed in the eighteenth century by Popayán (1729), Guatemala (1732), and Santiago de Chile (1749) - [the coins from Santiago dated 1744 were struck in 1749.*]

In Proctor's work we now learn that the Ceca de Tierra Firme in Panama was founded in the very early 1580's. Despite the fact that the lack of sufficient local precious metals caused the mint to close after only a short period of operation, its existence preceded that of the Guatemala mint in the territory of present-day Central America!

The Central American Numismatic Association (ANUCA) was founded in 1999 with the purpose of fostering research on the numismatic history of the subregion. Jorge Proctor - who happens to be the Association's Director for Panama has clearly contributed his share to ANUCA's goals, by discovering and analyzing the valuable historical information described in this book. Similar research presently underway on the subject of numismatic history for the Central American sub-region will greatly benefit from the new historical framework that Jorge has provided. Other parties, interested in the history of numismatics in the rest of Spanish America will profit as well. We are very grateful for such contribution.

J. Roberto Jovel<br>Chairman<br>Central American Numismatic Association

* New evidence to be presented in Carlos Jara and Alan Luedeking's new work "The Early Coinage of Santiago de Chile." The mint of Santiago was authorized by the Spanish King Philip V on October 3, 1743 but was not established in Santiago (mintmark S) until 1749.


## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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round the world, advances in technology have led to many great findings both under water and on land. It has boosted the area of Western Hemisphere numismatics classified as Spanish Colonial, and created an emerging market for its coins. Today, to facilitate the dissemination of new information and to appease the thirst for knowledge, which is growing and spreading rapidly, thanks to the news of all these extraordinary treasure finds, old books are being revised and new ones are increasingly being published. Despite all of this, the story of the mint of Panama has continued to remain shrouded in mystery. Panama is arguably the least known of all of the Spanish mints established in America over the span of more than 300 years of recorded colonial history.

The presentation of this work is done with the hope that it will serve to inspire and assist others. Although Spanish Colonial Numismatics has come a long way through the years, its early $16^{\text {th }}$ century history continues to remain partially unknown. Only recently have we begun to understand many of its secrets. A corpus of information, some never before seen or published, is contained within these pages, properly documented in the footnotes, appendix, and bibliography, so that anyone who is willing to undertake this fascinating journey into the past might use it to step off where this work ends.

I acknowledge that while the research presented here is by no means complete, with questions yet to be answered, this publication does represent the first serious attempt solely dedicated to the rediscovery of this long forgotten chapter, finally enabling us to take a long overdue look into the mysterious mint of Panama, the sixth mint that Spain established in the New World, and, most importantly, the first Central American mint.

I am indebted to a number of organizations and individuals whose kind cooperation and assistance were essential for the making of this work. Before I give their names, I would like to give special recognition to Daniel Sedwick, Alan Luedeking and Barry W. Stallard, without whose cooperation this work would have never been possible.

I now commend the other individuals and groups whose unselfish dedication and willingness to contribute, in whichever way they could, will not go unrecognized:

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Jorge A. Proctor<br>Author

## INTRODUCTION

$\mathbb{T}$he year 1492 was a very important year in history, as it was in 1492 that King Ferdinand (Fernando) and Queen Isabella (Isabela), known as the Catholic Rulers (los Reyes Católicos)', finally were able to defeat the last Arab outpost in the Province of Granada. With the conquest of this province, over 780 years of Moorish occupation came to an end and the Spanish Peninsular territories were finally unified. The Spanish Monarchs now found themselves with extra time for the exploration of the coveted route of the spices to Asia.

The sailor Christopher Columbus (Cristóbal Colón) ${ }^{2}$, who was in Spain at this time, decided to try to gain support for this enterprise from the Spanish Crown, as a last resort. He had previously tried to gain financial support from Portugal, but such help had been denied. At the time King John II (João II) of Portugal was pleased with the results that his own sailors were producing, using the route around Africa, and was not about to try anything new.

Unafraid to accept a challenge, Columbus used his knowledge of navigation and maps from the period to suggest to the Crown of Spain that a faster route to the land of spices could be found by traveling west through the waters of the Atlantic. ${ }^{3}$ Although we know today that his calculations were far off, as the entire land mass that would later be rediscovered ${ }^{4}$ and called America was not taken into account by him, his petition was sponsored by Queen Isabella and on October 12, 1492, he arrived at what he thought were some islands of the Indian Sea, off the eastern coast of Asia, which explains why all the explored lands were later referred to as the West Indies and its inhabitants called Indians.

News and riches immediately began to arrive back to Spain, and the myths and legends of the new lands became the inspiration for fortune seekers. After the rediscovery of the New World, grants for exploration began pouring from the court of Spain, more ships began getting rigged for the long voyage across the Atlantic, and new towns were founded almost overnight.

With the great fever of emigration spreading fast in Spain, the settlements in America started growing at such a rapid rate that, by 1525 , the toll it had taken on the Americas and its monetary system, or lack thereof, became more apparent than ever. The historian William H. Prescott best described this fever of emigration when he documented in his history of Peru that in the book Viaggio Falto in Spagna, Andrea Navagiero, the Venetian ambassador who in the year 1525 traveled through Spain, wrote that the great port of embarkation of Seville, in particular, was so stripped of its inhabitants "that the City was left almost to the women." Soon after, Spain responded to the need to have a stronger approach to implement their monetary system in the New World; and so it was that midway through the 1530 's mints started to be established there under orders from the Spanish Crown.


> On May 11, 1535, Spain authorized Mexico to begin production of $1 / 1,1 / 2,1,2$ and 3 Reales, as well Maravedis. Mintage began in 1536 and two years later, in 1538, the new denominations of 4 and 8 Reales were also added, after having been approved in 1537. At this time the 3 Reales, which was easily confused with the 2 Reales, was discontinued. But, whereas the minting of the 4 Reales proved to be very successful, the 8 Reales were too difficult to produce and only a few were ever minted. The Mexico 8 Reales illustrated above is the only specimen of this denomination believed to have survived from this early coin series.

(Image courtesy of Ira and Larry Goldberg Coins and Collectibles, Beverly Hills, California).
In 1578, Panama, which was a capital city under the dominion of the Viceroyalty of Peru, was granted by the King of Spain the establishment of a mint there, as was done in other cities of America. But what happened to its coins?

The existence of coins from a mint at Panama has been a source of discussion for years among scholars and numismatists. ${ }^{6}$ Rumors of the existence of any such mint, or its coins, had been accepted by many as fantasies, since there were no coins known to exist, and information on the matter was as elusive as the coins themselves. Though some scholars had come to accept that a mint might have been established, almost every one of them agreed that it probably came to an end before anything was ever minted.'

In 1977 an article titled Foundation and History of the Mint of Panama (Fundacion E Historia de la Casa de Moneda de Panamá) was published by Mr. Guillermo Díez Morales. This article, released as part of the Informative Bulletin of the National Archives of Panama, used transcripts of documents related to this mint, located in Panama, which were taken from originals found at the Archive of the Indies in Seville, Spain. But, even though this article correctly describes the mintmark for Panama as a letter $\mathbf{P}$ with $\mathbf{A}$ above ( $\left(\begin{array}{l}\mathrm{P}\end{array}\right)$, and the author made mention of the notion that coins were minted (although none were known at the time), the information was not widely disseminated and the matter was forgotten once again. ${ }^{8}$ In the early 1980 's, a book was published reviving the subject, but the documentary evidence presented was not transcribed to its true translation and the result was the creation of a myth, as will be seen later, that still haunts researchers today.?

In 1989, finally the day came for this forgotten mint to step out of the shadows and join the list of all other Spanish Colonial mints. In June of that year, Dr. Sewall H. Menzel published an article in the Gaceta Numismática in Spain ${ }^{10}$ that finally removed the cloud of mystery from an enigmatic issue of coins that had, for many years, eluded any attempts aimed at uncovering their place of origin." Dr. Menzel, for the first time, now linked these relatively unknown coins to the mark that had been authorized by Philip II, King of Spain, for the coins that were to be minted in Panama; and with the confirmation of existing coins from this mint, Panama could at last be given its long overdue recognition as having established and operated the first mint of Central America.

The title of "los Reyes Catolicos" (the Catholic Rulers), was granted to Ferdinand and Isabella in 1494 by the Spanish Pope Alexander VI (known as Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia prior to his election as Pope in 1492), for their involvement in the campaign against the Moors and their Muslim teachings.

Cristóbal Colon is the Spanish translation of the name of Christopher Columbus. Historians currently accept the traditional account that Christopher Columbus was born between August 25 and October 31, 1451, in Genoa, with the name Cristoforo Colombo, son of Domenico Colombo and Susanna Fontanarossa. But Christopher Columbus' own desire to leave in obscurity all that pertained to his place of birth and childhood has caused some to question his reasons for wanting to keep such information a secret. Theories have been proposed which suggest that Christopher Columbus, the explorer, could in fact have been a Spaniard who had one of several reasons for hiding his past. But at present time these theories remain vastly speculative, with no concrete documentary evidence to support them.
G. Menzies, 1421 (New York, NY, 2004), pp. 397 and 425-426. Capt. Gavin Menzies has done an in-depth study of the Chinese voyages of the Ming Fleet in the first part of the $15^{\text {th }}$ century. History records this fleet's visits to parts of Asia, the Middle East and Africa, but Capt. Gavin Menzies also postulates a theory that a portion of this fleet may have also traveled to the New World (the Americas) prior to Columbus, and that he knew of the lands they had discovered. Although I will not comment on this theory as it is currently highly speculative with little to no supporting archaeological or documentary evidence to link the knowledge of islands across the Atlantic, prior to 1492, to Chinese discoveries; it is important to say that I do not dispute that Columbus did know of these islands before his voyage. Capt. Menzies outlines three excerpts from Columbus' own 1492 diary which clearly indicate that: "Columbus had seen spheres and mappae mundi showing islands in the Atlantic, and that these lay, in Columbus' opinion, to the north and south of his position..." To elaborate on Capt. Menzies' statement I must add that it is also well documented that prior to his 1492 voyage Columbus did receive a letter from the distinguished Florentine mathematician, scientist and author Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli in which he wrote: "I noticed your splendid and lofty desire to sail to the regions of the East [China] by those of the west as is shown by the chart which I send you, which would be better shown in the shape of a round sphere...not only is said voyage possible, but is sure and certain and of honour and countless gain..." And that, beside the chart included in Toscanelli's letter, Christopher Columbus' brother, Bartolomeo Colón, worked in the map workshop of King John II of Portugal, and it was in this workshop where maps including mysterious islands across the Atlantic were kept. All facts that are pointed out by Capt. Menzies in his book, as well.

Archivo General de Indias (AGI): Patronato, 295, N. 2. The notion that Christopher Columbus already knew of islands across the Atlantic, prior to 1492, is not a new one. There are those who have stipulated that he knew of the existence of some of the islands of the Caribbean, to include Cuba which Columbus is said to have mistaken for Cipango (Japan), and that he used this information to persuade Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic Rulers, in sponsoring his voyage of 1492. In fact the Capitulaciones de Santa Fe (Capitulations of Santa Fe), which was the contract between Columbus and the Catholic Rulers, signed April 17, 1492, does seem to indicate that they were under the assumption that Columbus had already made discoveries across the Atlantic. A portion of the text from the Capitulaciones de Santa Fe states that: "I las cosas suplicadas y que vras altesas dan y otorgan a don xpoval de colon en algunà satisfacion delo $q^{\prime}$ ha descubierto en las mares oçeanas y del viage que agora con el ayuda de dios ha de faser por ellas en serviçio de vras altezas son las que se syguèn."
G. F. Bass, Ships and Shipwrecks of the Americas (New York, NY, 1988), pp. 30-32. Since it is an accepted fact that at least the Vikings made Pre-Columbian visits to the Atlantic coast of North America in the New Word between the $10^{\text {th }}$ and $15^{\text {th }}$ century, I have opted to describe Columbus' voyage of 1492 as one of rediscovery rather than discovery. The discovery and excavation of the only known Viking settlement in North America has been recorded by academics such as Dr. George F. Bass, who is often called the father of underwater archaeology. This site, which dates from around AD 1000, discovered in L'Anse aux Medows, Newfoundland, consisted of eight houses, a kiln, several large cooking pits and a boat shed. The archaeological evidence from this site is supported by two Icelandic Sagas (The Greenlanders' and Eirik the Red's Saga). The Sagas appear to be two versions of the same story, but those, together with the discoveries at L'Anse aux Medows, have convinced scholars that the sagas' accounts of Leif Eiriksson's voyages to North America are generally accurate. To date, only the Vikings have passed scholarly scrutiny.
W. H. Prescott, Peru (New York, NY, 1900), Vol. 1, p. 151, footnote No. 2.
J. B. Sosa \& E. J. Arce, Compendio de Historia de Panamá (Panama, 1911), p. 106; E. J. Castillero R., "El Sistema Monetario Panameño", Crónicas de Historia Nacional, Elite - Revista Mensual llustrada del Club Unión, (Panama, Republic of Panama, June 1, 1935), Year 2, No. 5, p. 12. The text of the book Compendio de Historia de Panamá, written in 1911 by Juan B. Sosa and Enrique J. Arce, includes that during the administration of Pedro Ramirez de Quiñones, Governor and President of the Audiencia de Panamá
between 1580 and 1585, a mint had been established in the city of Panama. This book is important in that it provides the earliest known published reference to a mint having been established in the city of Panama during the 1580's. Ernesto J . Castillero, also published a reference to the existence of a mint in Panama, stating in an article published in 1935 that King Philip II of Spain had authorized for the city of Panama to establish a mint in 1580. Mr. Castillero again acknowledged this information in 1948 when publishing the first edition of his book Historia de Panamá (History of Panama).
T. Dasi, Estudio de los Reales de a Ocho (Valencia, Spain, 1950), Vol. II, p. 80. I must acknowledge that among those scholars who did not dismiss the possible existence of coins from a mint in Panama was Tomás Dasi. The Panama Mint is discussed as part of Mr. Dasi's monumental work from 1950. Although he states that at that time there were no coin issues known from a mint in Panama, he also states that there was still a desire for one of these to come to light so that it could help us become more familiar with the production of this mint.
G. Diez, "Fundación e Historia de la Casa de Moneda en Panamá," Boletin Informativo de los Archivos Nacionales de Panamá, Ministerio de Gobierno y Justicia (Panama, June 1977), Vol. 7, pp. 200-206. Copies of this article were provided by Mr. Benjamin Mizrachi, Former President of the Numismatic Association of Panama (Asociación Numismatica de Panamá). This article is important in that it has the distinction of being the first known published with the correct description of the mintmark for Panama - a letter $\mathbf{P}$ with $\mathbf{A}$ above
J. C. Porras, Colección Numismática Panameña (Panama, 1982), pp. 10 \& 32. This book provided good guidelines for the dates of some Royal decrees in relation to the mint of Panama, but these documents, transcribed by Dr. Fermina Santana (pages 31 through 37), with few exceptions, are not true to the originals. Among many errors: several different documents are taken and presented together as one, even some that do not pertain to the mint at all; wrong names appear for some mint officials, as verified by the originals; there is information with dates that do not match the dates of the original documents, etc. It is of greatest importance to mention that the mintmark, $P$ with $A$ above, is erroneously transcribed as "un aspa con hoja encima" (an X shape with leaf above). The author of the book, J. Conte Porras, on pp. $10 \& 11$, on the subject of Spanish Colonial coins minted in Panama, outlines a list of historians and numismatists who stated in their work that there was no evidence of the existence of coins having been minted at this city.
S. H. Menzel, "La Misteriosa Casa de Moneda Colonial en Panamá," Gaceta Numismática de la Asociación Numismática Española (Barcelona, Spain, June 1989), pp. 55-64; "La Misteriosa Casa de Moneda Colonial de Panamá," Cuadernos de Numismática of the "Centro Numismático - Buenos Aires," Vol. XVI, No. 68 (Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 1989), pp. 1-10; "The Mystery Mint of Spanish Colonial Panama," in The Numismatist (Colorado Spring, CO, June 1990), pp. 914-918 \& 986-989. Although the acknowledgment of the $P$ with A above mintmark for Panama had already been established prior to the publication of Dr. Menzel's articles (see above, n. 8), Dr. Menzel does carry the distinction of being the first to report the existence of coins from this mint with proper evidence to support their correct attribution.
E. A. Sellschopp, "Monedas de origen dudoso," Gaceta Numismática de la Asociación Numismática Española (Barcelona, Spain, March 1974), pp. 30-33; American Numismatic Society, Proceeding No. 5 , Coinage of the Americas Conference, Editor W. L. Bischoff, The Coinage of El Penú (New York, NY, 1988), pp. 105-120. Section titled, "The Enigmatic Sixteenth-Century AP Coins: Issue of a Peruvian Mint in Alto Peru?" by Barry W. Stallard. Both, Dr. Sellschopp (in 1974) and Mr. Stallard (in 1988), wrote about the coins with the A above P mark. But no link to Panama was established at these times.

## Chapter 1

## THE INTRODUCTION OF COINAGE TO THE AMERICAS

a
s early as 1497, foreseeing the importance of having coins for circulation in the New World, on April 23rd the King and Queen of Spain, when giving instructions to Christopher Columbus, told the great navigator that it was their belief that the gold found there should be coined. In order for these gold coins to be made, he was granted full rights to ensure that the coins minted in the West Indies would conform to the decrees that the Monarchs had passed and, thus, allotted the proper personnel, coin dies and instruments. The document also provided guidelines for the officials who were to be in charge of the minting labor so that they too could follow the orders in these decrees, to avoid the penalties that could be applied. ${ }^{1}$

On January 29, 1500, Christopher Columbus, acting in the name of the Spanish Rulers, Ferdinand and Isabella, appointed a person by the name of Johan (or Juan) Pestaña to the office of the treasury of the mint which was instructed to be established on the Island of Hispaniola ${ }^{2}$, but after such brief mention of this early attempt to establish a mint in the New World, nothing appears to have been done, since only pleading for the much needed coins followed.

Back in Spain, in 1503, a new decree was passed authorizing only the mint of Seville to use the gold coming from the New World for the minting of coins, a decision that was later extended in 1504 to the mints of Granada and Toledo.

In 1505, desirous of Spain to implant the Spanish monetary system in the new Colonies and not having been slowed down by the minor setback from Hispaniola, on April 15 King Ferdinand ordered the mint of Seville to add the letter F, crowned, to some dies being used in the minting of silver coins called Reales, as well as to make new dies for the "Monedas de Vellón" (coins of billon, or copper alloyed with a little silver), denominated Maravedis. ${ }^{3}$

The alteration of design was done to ensure the differentiation between the new coins and the coins minted in, and designated for, circulation in the Spanish mainland. Only coins minted with this slightly different design were allowed to circulate in the New World. ${ }^{4}$ On December 20, 1505, two million Maravedis' worth of the newly minted coins were ordered shipped to the Island of Hispaniola.


1 Real coin minted in Seville, Spain, with the special design for use in the New World. Note the stylized crowned letter "F" in the center of the reverse. (Image courtesy of Superior Galleries Auctions)

The Island of Hispaniola, which is composed today of the Dominican Republic in the South and Haiti in the North, was, at the beginning of the $16^{\text {th }}$ century, the center of all
expeditions into the mainland and surrounding islands of the Americas. In 1506, the new coins struck in Seville arrived, fulfilling the earlier requests for coinage made by the inhabitants of this island. Although this was a noble attempt to ease the situation, soon, without a stable monetary system to support the rapid growth in the population of the New World, the lack of coins for circulation became even worse.

Before long, unofficial "coins" (tokens) began to appear, known as plata corrientes, that were simply cut or broken pieces of silver used for circulation as substitute coins while official coins were in short supply. It was originally thought that these pieces were unmarked, as they did not reflect any payment of the King's "fifth," a $20 \%$ tax on all mined or minted silver, but documents clearly indicate that at least some plata corriente had been taxed and marked ${ }^{6}$, confirmed by discoveries of such pieces on land and at sea. The number of unofficial "coins" made is not known, and will probably never be known, as they were soon declared illegal and recalled for melting and reuse of their silver content in the striking of official coins, once the mints in America began production.

Even less is known about similar "coins" in gold, which were apparently cut from long "finger" bars. Such gold pieces have turned up almost exclusively in shipwreck finds, such as the Atocha (1622) and Maravillas (1656), as well as several unidentified $16^{\text {th }}$ century wrecks.

By decrees of King Charles I on June 19 and July 5, 1519, Castilla del Oro was informed that dies were being sent to stamp the gold smelted there. ${ }^{7}$ The mark provided was described as having the king's personal standard, which was the "Band of Castile" with the Columns of Hercules. Included with these decrees were also two identical illustrations of the prescribed mark (see image right center). Source: © Ministerio de Cultura. Archivo General de Indias. Panamá, 233, L. 1, F. 243.

The gold coin above right is a Dobla de la Banda of King Juan II (John II) of Castile and León (1406-1454). On the obverse of this coin is illustrated the standard of the Castilian Cavalry Order of the Band (Orden de la Banda), as would subsequently be included on the mark of Castilla del Oro. This Order was established in 1330 by King Alfonso XI and its emblem soon after became the personal standard of the Rulers of Castile. Although it was disbanded by the Catholic Rulers, Ferdinand and Isabella, its emblem was later used by King Charles I (Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire), as one of his personal standards. ${ }^{8}$ (Image courtesy of Cayón Auctions)

The marked piece of silver, "plata corriente," image below right, was found in a mid- $16^{\text {th }}$ century Spanish wreck, today known only as the St. John's wreck (Bahamas). Test on the silver has proven its place of origin as being Peru. (Image courtesy of the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society and Museum)

(Enlarged image)



1 Real coin minted in Burgos, Spain, with the special design for use in the New World.

Documents show that by May, 1511, the coins with the special design authorized in 1505 for exclusive use in the Americas were still being produced. And during the reign of King Charles I of Spain (better known as Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire), further attempts to improve the situation in the New World were made by sending more of these coins minted in Seville to the Island of Hispaniola. It has also been well documented that subsequent shipments of these coins were also sent to other areas such as the Island of San Juan (Puerto Rico), Castilla del Oro (Panama), and Mexico.'

In trying to solve the monetary problem, there is one last attempt documented as taking place at the mint of Burgos in 1531, but to no avail. Since by this time shipments of this type of coins had already been sent to several parts of the New World, no restrictions were placed on where the coins from Burgos could be introduced into the West Indies. In fact, the merchant Lope Pérez de Maluenda was told that he could introduce these coins in whichever part of the Indies he preferred or considered to be of most benefit. ${ }^{10}$

It appears that it was also by the early 1530 s that Spain realized the importance of having coins minted in the New World. The sending of coins from Spain had increased steadily as the years progressed. Spain soon realized it could not provide the quantity of coins that was needed to ease the many problems that were being encountered by its overseas possessions. Since it was now clear that sending minted coins from Spain was no longer feasible, the possibility of minting coins in the New World had to be seriously examined.

In fact, documents from the Archive of the Indies confirm that by the time that Burgos minted the coins with the special design that had been instituted for use in the West Indies, a decision had already been reached that something had to be done to ensure the collection of the King's "fifth" on all silver from the New World and to ease the situation that was being created by the lack of coins.

On March 30, 1530, what can be considered the cornerstone for the creation of the first operational mints in America was laid. On this date, Don Garcia Manrique, the Conde de Osorno (Count of Osorno), was given the titles to offices of the treasury of mints that Spain agreed would be established in Mexico and Santo Domingo;" nonetheless, even with this positive turn of events, the American settlements would have to wait a few more years before any direct action was taken.


1 Real coin minted in Mexico. As can be seen above, this coin shows on the obverse the $\mathbf{M}$, mintmark for Mexico, and on the reverse the $\mathbf{R}$ for assayer Francisco del Rincón. The gothic legend of this entire coin identifies it as from the first output of this mint - circa 1536. (Image courtesy of Ponterio \& Associates, Inc.)

On May 11, 1535, by Royal decree, Spain finally authorized the first mint in the Americas to start production at Mexico, or Tenochtitlán-México, as this city was also referred to by its original Aztec name. Coins with the pillars, no waves, design started being coined at this city of the Viceroyalty of New Spain the following year, 1536, showing an $\mathbf{R}$ for its first assayer, Francisco del Rincón, and the letter $M$ to identify its origin (Mexico). ${ }^{12}$ This mintmark was modified by a Viceregal order of June 28,1542 , adding a lower-case " 0 " above the $\mathbf{M}(\stackrel{\circ}{M})^{13}$, although the $M$-alone mintmark continued concurrently with the new one, as demonstrated by coins minted after 1542.


Two 4 Reales coins from Mexico's assayer G, Juan Gutiérrez, minted between 1542 and 1548. The coin to the left includes the addition of the lower-case " 0 " above the $M(\mathcal{M})$, as mandated by the Viceregal order of June 28, 1542. As for the coin to the right, the M-alone mintmark remained unaltered.

The use of both mintmarks continued concurrently with each other until the coins with the new design mandated by the decree of March 8, 1570, were minted. (Images courtesy of Ponterio \& Associates, Inc.)

The rich mines from this region provided what was needed for the mint of Mexico to continue forward. With the success of this, all eyes in Spain turned to the city of Santo Domingo on the Island of Hispaniola. In 1541, between January and April, a series of letters were written with regard to Santo Domingo, to ensure that the minting of coins would begin there. There had been a previous order for the establishment of a mint in Santo Domingo, given by Royal decree of November 3, $1536^{14}$, but because of problems getting the installations and equipment ready for the striking of coins, the work did not begin until after January 1, 1542. ${ }^{15}$


4 Reales coin minted in Santo Domingo. The reverse of this coin shows the mintmark $S$ to the left and the supplementary mintmark $D$ to the right.
Although the mintmark $S$ appears inverted on this coin, it is still a wonderful specimen with all important marks clearly visible. (Image courtesy of Emilio Paoletti who published it in his book: Monedas Macuquinas de 8 Reales de Potos)

The first silver coins minted in Santo Domingo carried the same design of pillars, no waves, that the first Mexican silver coins had carried, but this time the letter $F$ is seen for its assayer, Francisco Rodríguez, and $\mathbf{S}$ for the mintmark, always accompanied by a $\mathbf{P}$ or $\mathbf{D}$, its supplementary mintmarks. ${ }^{16}$ When the letter combination appears as S-D, a rarely seen feature on these coins, it is obvious that it stands for Santo Domingo, but the S-P is another matter. The S-P letter combination has been the subject of debate for years ${ }^{17}$, but everything tends to indicate that these were used to represent $\underline{\text { Santo Domingo del Puerto. }}$


4 Reales coin minted in Santo Domingo. This coin shows on the obverse the $F$ assayer mark for Francisco Rodriguez. On the reverse the mintmark $S$ can be seen to the right and the supplementary mintmark $P$ to the left. (Image courtesy of UBS Auctions)
"Santo Domingo del Puerto" was the name given to the city when it was founded in 1498 by Bartolomeo Colón, brother of Christopher Columbus. At first, the settlement carried two names. Christopher Columbus, not knowing that his brother had already given a name to this city that was established on the east bank of the Ozama River, also called it Nueva Isabela (New Isabella). In July 1502, the settlement was completely destroyed by a hurricane, and after its relocation to the west bank of the Ozama River, its present location, its official name became just Santo Domingo although its original name of Santo Domingo del Puerto was not soon forgotten by its inhabitants.


Section from a letter written in Santo Domingo, dated February 15, 1516. The original name of "Santo Domingo del Puerto," is included in this document.
Document source: © Ministerio de Cultura. Archivo General de Indias, Patronato, 174, R. 3
As in other Spanish settlements, a portion of the full name of this city was later dropped; most people are unfamiliar with the complete name of Santo Domingo del Puerto. I first became aware of this complete name from Humberto Burzio's writings and, although the document dictated on its foundation is not known to have survived, documents from the Archive of the Indies confirm, as can be seen on the illustration above, that the inhabitants of this city were still using the complete name in the early $16^{\text {th }}$ century. ${ }^{18}$ Now, bearing in mind that the use of the
letter $P$ on the coins seems to have been a decision taken at this city, since no document from Spain includes the last part of the original name, and also considering that only the letter $\mathbf{S}$ is specified by Spain as mintmark for Santo Domingo, it is my belief that $\mathbf{P}$ most likely stands for Puerto. [It appears that the decision to add the supplementary mintmark ( $\mathbf{P}$ or $\mathbf{D}$ ), to the coinage of Santo Domingo, was made as a further effort to distinguish these coins as being minted in Santo Domingo rather than Seville, Spain].

In a letter dated April 11, 1552, the Audiencia de Santo Domingo informed that by this date the production of silver coins had ceased at the mint. ${ }^{19}$ It would not be until the design for the coinage of the Americas was changed in the 1570s that the mint of Hispaniola would start producing silver coins again, but only for a few months. ${ }^{20}$ These new coins, minted there in 1578, debuted more than just a new design; they also carried a new monogrammed mintmark (£) , given to this mint for use in 1573 to represent $\underline{\text { Santo }}$ Domingo $\underline{o}^{21}$, and an assayer mark which has been confirmed on silver $1 / 2,1$ and 4 Reales and billon coins (often also called copper coins) of 4 Maravedis that have survived from this series, as being an X for Cristóbal (Xpoval) de Medina, its new assayer. ${ }^{22}$


Obverse and reverse of a 4 Maravedis (upper coin) and a $1 / 2$ Real (lower coin) minted in Santo Domingo under the decree of 1573 .

The new monogrammed mintmark for Santo Domingo, $\hat{\mathcal{B}}$, can be seen on the obverse of these coins; to the left of the castle on the 4 Maravedis and to the left of the Monogram for the King's name on the $1 / 2$ Real. The X assayer mark for Cristóbal (Xpoval) de Medina is also visible on the obverse, right hand side, of both these coins.

Note: 1 had not intended to discuss in detail or illustrate the billon coins (Maravedis) minted during this period. But, due to the lack of photographic references to other surviving silver coins from this series, I had to make an exception here. In any case the billon coin illustrated here is a prime example clearly showing the new mintmark for this series of Dominican coins.

Images courtesy of: Mr. Louis Hudson (4 Maravedis) and Mr. Mike Dunigan (1/2Real).

Unlike the mint of Mexico, which continued its success, the one on the Island of Hispaniola suffered a severe blow on January 10, 1586, when all its equipment was destroyed during Sir Francis Drake's attack on the Island. Orders were given on July 16, 1595, to resume the striking of coins there, ${ }^{23}$ but the mint's infrastructure had been so severely damaged that no meaningful production of coins would be undertaken in Santo Domingo for another 200 years. ${ }^{24}$

After the establishment of mints in Mexico and Santo Domingo, Peru followed with the establishment of mints in the following years: 1568 at City of Kings (Lima), 1573 at La Plata, and 1574 at Potosí. Panama soon followed, under orders from King Philip II, to become the last Spanish-American mint to be successfully established in the $16^{\text {th }}$ century. Although there was an attempt around 1590 to establish a new mint in the New Kingdom of Granada (Nuevo Reino de Granada), this early attempt failed. King Phillip II died in 1598, and it would not be until 30 years later, under orders given in 1620 by his son King Philip III, that this endeavor could finally achieve success in the New Kingdom of Granada, with the establishment of a new mint in Santa Fe de Bogotá and a branch office in Cartagena. ${ }^{25}$
(1) H. F. Burzio, Diccionario de la Moneda Hispanoamericana (Santiago de Chile, 1958), Vol. II, p. 361; M. Estrella Gómez, Monedas Dominicanas 1492-1979 (Santo Domingo, Dominican Rep., 1979), p. 263; Fr. C. de Utrera, La moneda provincial de la Isla Española (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2000), p. 6.

[Audiencia] declared January 1, 1569, as the terminal date for the circulation of plata corriente...as of New Year's Day, plata corriente could not circulate, not even that on which the 20\% royal tax (King's fifth) had been paid" (Archivo General de Indias-AGI: Contaduria, 1683, Sec. 5). This shows that some of the plata corriente was stamped to recognize that it had paid the tax; Burzio (above, n. 1), Vol. II, p. 24, also acknowledges that some of the plata corriente had been marked. "A la plata corriente circulante, también se le punzonaba la marca según se desprende de un auto de la Real Audiencia de Quito, sobre transacciones de reales y plata, que lleva fecha de 1.0 de julio de 1602."
A. Ramos Baquero, Angeles, Plateria Virreinal en Panamá - Siglos XVI al XVIII (Seville, Spain, 1996), unpublished thesis, University of Seville, pp. 440-442 and 654-656. Dr. Angeles Ramos Baquero can be credited with the discovery of the two documents that contain the mark authorized by King Charles $V$ for use at Castilla del Oro.

Archivo General de Indias (AGI): Panamá: 233, L. 1, F. 242-243. Document dated in Barcelona, June 19, 1519. The margin of this document reads: "al comendador conchillos q enbie çiértos cuños /a tierra firme." Text from the original: "El Rey" "Comendador lope Conchillos del my Consejo e nuestro fundidor e marcador en Castilla del oro yo he mandado q de aqi adelante al oro q se fundiece en la dicha Castilla del oro se le heche las marcas e cuños de my devisa q es la vanda de castilla con las columnas de ercules segund abaxo va figurado porq se conozca e aya diferencia del oro dsa tierra al de las otra partes e porq esto esto es a vuestro Cargo de proveer como fundidor e marcador yo os mando $q$ luego $q$ esta veays hagays probeays e enbieys a la dicha Castilla del oro con gonzalo fernandez de oviedo nuestro veedor d las fundiciones d la dicha Castilla del oro $q$ agora enbiamos a $q$ use su ofiçio o con otra persona de Recaudo qual voz quisieredes alguna Cantidad d los dichos Cuños d la manera e devisa $q$ de suso va declarado e sera bien $q$ enbieys algunos numero d llos porq por ser el Camino largo e ser cosas q se gastan en muy poco tiempo seria inconveniente sy alla no oviese tantos Cuños e marcas como fuesen menester e sera serbido $q$ asy en esto Como en lo demas $q$ tocase en el ofiçio hagays poner mui buen Recaudo. Fecha en barçelona a XIX dias del mes de junio año de mill e quinientos e diez e nueve años Yo El Rey. Refrendada del Secretario Cobos e señalada del obispo de burgos e del de badajoz e de don garcia e xapata I."

Archivo General de Indias (AGI): Panamá, 233, L. 1, F. 249-250. Document dated in Barcelona, June 19, 1519. The margin of this document reads: "al gobernador q se echen los cuños de la devisa." Text from the original: "El Rey" "nuestro lugarteniente e gobernador e oficiales q Resides en Castilla del oro I. yo enbio a mandar al Comendador lope Conchillos my Secretario e del mi consejo nuestro fundidor e marcador en la dicha Castilla del orol q porq mi merced e voluntad es q' daqi q' d aqi adelante al oro $q$ se fundiere en la dicha Castilla del oro se le hechen las marcas e cuños de mi devisa $q$ es la vanda de Castilla con las columnas de hercules' segund abaxo va figurado porq se conosca e aya diferencia del oro desa tierra al de las yslas e otras partes porq' esto es des se Cargo de probeer por Razon del dicho oficio que luego probea e enbie a la dicha Castilla del oro con gonzalo fernandes de oviedo veedor d las fundiciones o con otra persona de Recaudo alguna cantidad de los cuños e marcas $q$ para esto es menestr' $q$ ' aya en la forma suso dicha. por ende yo vos mando $q^{\prime}$ despues que los dichos Cuños alla sean llegádos no consintaiys que d ende en adelante' se hechen otros Cuños ni marcas algunas de los $q$ ' hasta entonces se solian hechar al oro $q$ ' en estas partes se funde salbo el qontenido en los Cuños e marcas $q$ el dicho nuestro fundidor e marcador enbiara q sea como' de suso va declarado e asy $m$ lo aveys de mandar e pobeer de nuestra parte vos el dicho nuestro gobernador. E segund $q$ va declarado en la ynstruccion del dicho veedor e so las penas $q$ ' vos dede nuestra parte pusieredes pa lo qual e pa la Execuçion dllas voz doy poder' cunplido con todas sus inçidencias e dependençias . tomandose la Razon desta mi cedula por los nnuestros ofiçiales q' Resyden en la çiudad de sevylla . en la Casa de la contratacion d las indias Fecha en barçelona a çinco dias del mes' de jullio de año de myll e (quinientos e diez e nueve años yo el Rey . . por mandamiento del Rey francisco d los Cobos. e señalada del obispo de burgos e del obispo de badajoz e de don garcia de padilla y del liçenciado çapata"
A. Hopkins, Knights (New York, NY, 1991), pp. 121-122; M. Costa y Turell, Tratado Completo de la Ciencia del Blasón ó sea Código Héraldico-Histórico (Barcelona, Spain, 1856), p. 153. The Castilian Order of Cavalry of the Band (Orden de la Banda de Castilla) was established in 1330, in Vittotia, by King Alfonso XI of Castile and León (1311-1350). This was one of the earliest secular orders of knighthood. The descriptive emblem of this Order was composed of a bend engouled of dragon-wolves (dragantes lobos). Where castles and lions became the symbols to represent the Kingdoms of Castile and León (and later, emblematic of Queen Joanna in the coinage of the Americas), the successors of King Alfonso XI continued to use the emblem of the Castilian Order of the Band as their private standard, to exclusively represent the Monarch. Although this Order was disband by the Catholic Rulers, its emblem, with the Columns of Hercules added after the rediscovery of America, continued to be used by King Charles I of Spain as one of his personal
standards. The Columns of Hercules in particular later became emblematic for King Charles I (Charles $V$ of the Holy Roman Empire) in the coinage of the Americas.

Medina (op. cit. 3), p. 34, footnote 3, pp. 115-116. Dasi (op. cit. 2), Vol. I, pp. CXXXVIII, No. 119. Medina documents from Antonio Vives' Reforma Monetaria de los Reyes Catolicos (Madrid, 1897) that the first subsequent shipment of these coins took place in 1506, being that of 12,301 and a half Reales worth of silver coins and 3,915 and a half marks worth of billon coins. Dasi also includes this information providing the source as: "A. de la H. -Colección Muñoz. - Tomo. 75, pàg. 224."
de Utrera (op. cit. 1), p. 9; Las Casas de Moneda de los Reinos de Indias, Vol. 2, Cecas de Fundación Temprana, directed by G. Anes y Alvarez de Castillón \& G. Céspedes del Castillo (Madrid, 1997), p. 217. Section written by Frank Moya Pons, "La Casa de Moneda de Santo Domingo". A subsequent shipment of one million Maravedis' worth of these coins is documented in both these sources as being sent in 1519 to the Island of Hispaniola. Fr. Cipriano de Utrera also includes the date of the decree as February 28, 1519.

Burzio (op. cit. n. 1), pp 361-362. Burzio tells us that the coins minted under orders from 1505 (the coins with the special design) are documented as still being produced in May 1511 for the Island of Hispaniola. There is also a short reference to coins of this type being sent by orders from Charles V to Mexico in 1523. But Burzio did not emphasize the importance of this shipment of coins to Mexico, as he was unaware that the coins being sent to the Americas carried a special design, and thought that they had the same appearance as the Spanish peninsular (mainland) issues. To this effect Burzio writes: "De la primera remesa hecha en el reinado de Fernando el Católico, llegada a Santo Domingo en 1506 y años siguientes, la impronta de las piezas debe haber sido igual a la de España de entonces, pues no se tiene noticias de piezas de plata o vellón con la sigla de la ceca de la isla Española y nombre de ese monarca."

Archivo General de Indias (AGI): Panamá, 233, L. 1, F. 306-307 and 308-309. These two documents, previously unknown, dated September 15, 1521, state that by request of the neighbors and settlers from Panama, silver and billon coins were being sent to Castilla del Oro. These documents are important in two ways. They represent the first documentation of shipments of these coins to areas other than the Island of Hispaniola and also prove that shipments had been sent in the past to the Islands of Hispaniola and San Juan (Puerto Rico), for their delivery to Castilla del Oro. That shipments had been made to the Island of San Juan (Puerto Rico) was unknown before these documents were located. Text from the original: "...es por parte de los vezinos y pobladores' dla nueva çibdad de panamá q' esta fundada en la costa dla màr del súr de castilla del oro me es hecha rrelaçion que a causa de no aver avido hasta aqui moneda de plata y de vellòn én la dicha tierra aunque los dichos vezinos y mòradores pudièsem tratár y conpràr las cosas de que tienèn nèsçessidad...pòr bien por ende yo vos màndo que luego hagais que se labre de la dicha moneda de plata hasta en quantia de çièn myll maravedis' y dla dicha moneda de vellon hasta en quantia de otros çien myll maravedis y lo enbieys cón signado al nuestro govèrnadòr y ofiçiales dla dicha castilla del/oro con la Cuènta dla dicha quantia parà què lo tòrnè a ènbiar en/oro lo qual enbiad enbiad segùnd y dla formà y ley $q$ ' se ha enbiado otràs vezes a las islas Spañola y Sant Juàn parà q' ellos la rrèpartàn èntre los vecinos dla dicha castilla del oro..."

Medina (op. cit. 3), p. 34, footnote 3, p. 116 and pp. 249-250. I must acknowledge here that the Spanish "Grand Historiographer" Antonio de Herrera did in fact document in his Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano (General History of the Deeds of the Castilians on the Islands and Mainland of the Ocean Sea), first published in 1601, that there were shipment of coins to Castilla del Oro in 1521 and to Mexico in 1523. Although Medina does include the information regarding the 1521 shipment of coins described by Herrera (erroneously documented in his work: Las Monedas Coloniales Hispano-Americanas under information regarding the background to the mint of Santa Fe), he also adds to this information the statement that this shipment must have occurred if we are to believe Herrera's account. With Medina's statement in mind, I must now say that the rediscovery of the two documents from 1521, as described above, now finally provides the conclusive evidence that corroborates Herrera's account. As for the information regarding the shipment of coins to Mexico in 1523, the actual document has not yet been located. But there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of Herrera's account and unlike Burzio, Medina did acknowledge that these coins must have had a different design, from those minted for use in peninsular Spain.

Archivo General de Indias (AGI): Panamá, 233, L. 2, F. 98. This document, also previously unknown, is a Royal decree dated November 4, 1525. The House of Trade is ordered to make provisions for sending coins of the same type as the ones previously sent to the Island of Hispaniola, to the area of the mainland (Tierra Firme) known as Castilla del Oro. Text from the original: "...por parte d los pobladores e vecinos de tierra firme llamada castilla dl /oro mè fue hecha Relaçion $q^{\prime}$ A causa de no aver moneda la $q^{\prime}$ es menestèr en aquellàs partes para contratar unòs con/ otros pierden mucho los vecinos della e
nuestras Rentas se dismynuyen en contratar con el/ oro y me fue suplicado y pedido por merced les diese liçençia para q' pudiesen llevar móneda de loro y plata y vellón para còprar e vender las mercaderias $q$ en la dicha tierra ay e de aquy en adlante loviere porq' del otra manera se perderia las cotataçiones e se siguien lotros ynconvenients lo comò la mi merced fuese por ende yo vos mando que luego enbieys $A$ la dicha tierra lotra tanta Cantidad de moneda comò se embio la postrera vez que la màndamos enviar a la ysla española e de aqlla mysma ley e manera e preçio e hazerme [? y es saber la Cantidad $q$ enbiare desde cada [?] eq' manera lleva..."

Appendix 5. See article on page 179 of this book.

Estrella Gómez (op. cit. 1), pp. 306-307
AGI: Patronato, 276, L. 4, F. 141; AGI: México, 1088, L. 1, F. 230-231. Both of these previously unknown documents are dated at Bologna on March 20, 1530, and guarantee the appointment of both offices of the treasury for the mints that as agreed would be established in the cities of Mexico and Santo Domingo to Don Garcia Manrique, the Conde de Osomo (Count of Osorno).

Medina (op. cit. 3), p. 119, footnote 9. I must acknowledge that the two documents above corroborate Antonio de Herrera's account, as documented in his Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano, that the appointment given to the Conde de Osomo (Count of Osorno) had taken place in the year 1530. Jose Toribio Medina also acknowledged this in his monumental work from 1919, stating that: "Según Herrera, la determinación de fundar las Casas de Moneda de México y Santo Domingo, databa de 1530." But the accuracy of the date given by Herrera could not be established at the time of Medina's work, which forced this account to be included only as a simple footnote, rather than be given a more prominent place. Medina quote's Herrera as saying: "En este mismo tiempo [hablando bajo el año 1530] habiendo el rey resuelto de poner Casa de Moneda en México y Santo Domingo, hizo merced de los oficios de tesorero dellas al Conde de Osorno, presidente del Consejo de Indias."

Medina (op. cit. 3), pp. 54-57; Dasi (op. cit. 2), Vol. I, pp. CLXXXII-CLXXXV, No. 207. A complete transcript of the decree from May 11, 1535, can be found in both these sources. This decree, signed in Madrid by Queen Joanna, provides the following description for the mintmark given to Mexico, as transcribed in Dasi's work: "...donde uviere la devisa de las columnas una M. latina que se conozca que se hizo en Mexico."
A. F. Pradeau, Numismatic History of Mexico from the Pre-Columbian epoch to 1823 (New York, NY, 1978), p. 30. Updated reprint of original published in 1938, with annotations \& revisions by Clyde Hubbard, Cuernavaca, Mexico, 1978; T. Dasi, Estudio de los Reales de a Ocho (Valencia, Spain, 1950), Vol. I, p. CCXXIII, No. 263. A Viceregal order from Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, which is dated in Mexico on June 28, 1542, is said to include among its text the new mintmark for Mexico. A portion of this transcript, included in Dasi, clearly describes this marks as: "...una M devajo con una O encima del nombre de Mexico..."

AGI: Santo Domingo, 868 , L. 1, F. 8. This is the complete 12-paragraph decree, made by order of the Queen (Joanna) on November 3, 1536, in which all laws, instructions and requirements for the minting of coins at the city of Santo Domingo, Island of Hispaniola, are given. It is good also to mention that there might have been another document, sent at an earlier date, since the word duplicate is written in the margin of this document.

AGI: Santo Domingo, 868, L. 2, F. 48. Document dated in Talabera, March 14, 1541. From the original: "...el contador alvaro Cavallero en nombre desa dicha Ysla Nos a hecho Relacion que estando ya hecho los aparejos y aposento nescesario para la labor de la dicha moneda $Y$ queriendola Començar a labrar, por una nuestra provysyon enbiamos a mandar...que veais lo suso dicho y provehereys que por termino de cinco años primeros y siguientes que corran e se quenten desde primero de henero del año que viene de quinyentos y quarenta y dos. en adelante, se labre en esa dicha cibdad de santo domingo moneda de plata..."

Estrella Gómez (op. cit. 1), pp. 47-48 and 57-68; Las Casas de Moneda de los Reinos de Indias, Vol. 2, Cecas de Fundación Temprana, directed by G. Anes y Alvarez de Castillón \& G. Céspedes del Castillo (Madrid, 1997), pp. 223-224. Section written by Frank Moya Pons, "La Casa de Moneda de Santo Domingo." Mr. Moya Pons Acknowledges that by May 1, 1543, the regular coin issues of Santo Domingo were not yet under production, indicating that it was probably in spring of 1544 when this event occurred. He also makes mention that prior to this date Santo Domingo had already produced coins of 4 and 2 Maravedis, as has been recorded from an account by Pedro Rodriguez, Foreman of the Santo Domingo Mint, on June 10, 1544 (document source: AGI, Justicia 58). Miguel Estrella Gómez' work has helped to fill
in the gaps, recording the production of coins of 11 (XI) and 4 Maravedis, with the design ordered in 1541, as well as the 10 Reales coin authorized in 1543.

All evidence indicates that the Santo Domingo Mint did begin in 1542, as had been said would be done in accordance with the decree from March 14, 1541. Coin production began with the mintage of enriched billon coins "monedas de vellón enriquecido" (a mixture of copper with a larger amount of silver than regular billon coins). These first coins were of the unusual denomination of 11 Maravedis, being immediately followed by that of 4 Maravedis; both displaying on their obverse design a letter R, a misrepresentation of the letter $K$ with its upper portion connected ( $k$ ), and on their reverse a castle (design authorized by decree from April 15, 1541: AGI, Santo Domingo, 868, L. 2, F. 76). Since the value of the 1 Real had been set in the Americas at 44 Maravedis, vice the 34 Maravedis that it was worth in Spain, the 11 Maravedis coin denomination was intended to be equal in value to a $1 / 4$ Real. As for the silver coins, there is no evidence to suggest that this began in 1542, and it is most likely that it began in late 1543 in conjunction with the controversial 10 Reales denomination that had been authorized by decree from May 1, 1543 (document source: AGI, Santo Domingo, 868, L. 2, F. 159). The production of this coin denomination was short lived as in May 10, 1544, Spain sent a new decree to Santo Domingo in an attempt to standardize its monetary system throughout all its domains, and the orders from this decree eliminated the provisions that previously allowed for the production of the 10 Reales coin. Although to this date the 10 Reales coin from Santo Domingo has become one of the most controversial issues in Spanish Colonial Numismatics, its production is confirmed by two separate sources from the $16^{\text {th }}$ century and can no longer be dismissed. These sources are: the original decree from 1543, passed after receiving a request from the Treasurer of the mint, which authorized the production of the 10 Reales coin denomination in Santo Domingo (document located in the Archive of the indies); and a woodcut, the earliest known for this coin, published in Antwerp by Christopher Plantin in 1576, as identified by Dr. John M. Kleeberg's research (my gratitude to Mr. Alan Luedeking who shared Dr. Kleeberg's important research with me). For the coin to have been documented in 1576 a genuine had to exist as there would have been no reason to make such an early counterfeit of a coin which was not known to exist anywhere in the Spanish monetary system. A copy of this important book from 1576, published by Christopher Plantin, can be found in the collection of old printed books from the Museum of the National Bank of Belgium under the description: "Ordonnantie provisionael ons heeren des conincx opt strck ende tolerantie van den prijs ende loop van de gouden ende silveren munte cours ande ganck hebbende over al des c. maiesteyts landen van henwertsober, Antwerpen, 1576."

AGI (op. cit., n. 14). Document dated in Valladolid, November 3, 1536. From the original: "...y pongase en la parte donde Coviere la deuisa de las colunas vna.s.latina para que se conozca que se hizo en santo domingol" Because $S$ is the only mintmark, as reflected here, mentioned in the documents as the mintmark for this city, and since there is no other known document, from Santo Domingo or Spain, prescribing any changes to this $S$ mintmark, I have decided to refer to the letter $S$ as the mintmark and the other two letters used on these coins, the P or D , as supplementary mintmarks.

Estrella Gómez (op. cit. 1), p. 52. I have included a new theory in my work. According to Estrella, prior to this there were three theories for the origin of the S-P. First that the $P$ is in reality a stylized $D$, completing the name Santo Domingo. Second that the $P$ might be the mark of an assayer, even though no assayer that would have a matching initial on his name has been located during this period for Santo Domingo. And third, that the $P$ stands for the Latin term Primada, for first, as the city had the privilege of being the first in the Americas. For this last one, it is said that the name of the city appears on many documents from the period as Santo Domingo Primada or Santo Domingo Ciudad Primada, but I believe that the word del Puerto has been misread as Primada since I have not yet found any of the documents that are said to mention Santo Domingo Primada or Ciudad Primada.

Burzio (op. cit. n. 1) Vol. II, p. 360; AGI: Patronato, 174, R. 3. I have stipulated the new theory for the S-P letter combination based on an investigation of Burzio's statement that "Santo Domingo del Puerto was founded in 1496." Research conducted at the Archive of the Indies, in fact, has confirmed that this was the original name of the city and documents from Santo Domingo, from the early $16^{\text {th }}$ century, continue to use this name, something that was not shared during this same period by writings from Spain. The above document from AGI ends: "...la sibdad de Santo domingo del puerto de la ysla española quinze de febrero de IUdXVI [1516] años..."

Medina (op. cit. 3), p. 123. About the letter from the Audiencia de Santo Domingo from April 11, 1552, Medina writes: "afirma expresamente que ya en ese entonces no se labra plata en aquella Casa." Estrella Gómez (op. cit. n. 1), p. $50 \& 102$. Estrella Gómez also confirms this account when he says that, a few years after the suspension of the old design, in 1555, with the death of Queen Joanna, King Charles ordered a change in the coins of Santo Domingo. The new coins, whose legend read "KAROLVS QUINTVS INDIARVM R," were already in production by 1558, according to a letter from the Audiencia dated July 4 of
that year. de Utrera (op. cit. 1), pp. 65-66. Fray Cipriano de Utrera documents a letter from the President of the Audiencia de Santo Domingo, Alonso Arias de Herrera, dated November 1, 1563, which indicates that by this date the coinage at the mint had ceased. The statement is quoted as saying: "No solamente hay falta de moneda porque no se labra en la ciudad sino tambien porque los cuartos estan divididos por la ysla..." Further confirmation of the mint's closure comes from a letter written by the accountant Alvaro Caballero, dated April 6, 1564 which states: "...el Presidente y Oidores no quieren sus salaries en estos cuartos $y$ han mandado que no se labren, $y$ asi ha parado la labor." Since no silver coins are known with the new legend, this further suggests that, after the production of silver coins had stopped in 1552, it did not resume and only billon (or copper) coins were minted until the mint's closure in 1563.

Estrella Gómez (op. cit. n. 1), pp. 325-326 \& 328-329. The complete transcripts of three important letters from Santo Domingo can be found here. The first letter is dated June 20, 1577, and states that the mint had not yet begun the work with the dies and tools sent in 1573, saying: "...ultimamente por el mes de diciembre del año 73, V. M. mandó dar de nuevo Cédula para que en esta ciudad se labre moneda de plata y vellón...El labrarse moneda de plata y de vellón no se ha podido cumplir porque como a V . M . se ha hecho relación, ni acá hay plata ni cobre para labrar..." The second letter is dated February 15, 1578, and informs the king that the mint had begun striking the new coins with the dies sent in 1573: "Aqui vino un teniente del Conde de Osorno...He tratado con él de labrar la moneda de plata y vellón...y asi se ha comenzado a labrar moneda, como V. M. verá por los reales de plata y cuartos que con ésta envio..." The last letter described here is dated May 12, 1578, and informs Spain that only a few silver coins would be minted, because of the lack of silver available: "Se contempla el problema de la escasez de la plata, por lo que serán muy pocas las que se acuñen en ese metal."
(21) AGI: Santo Domingo, 868, L. 3, F. 33. From the original, dated December 13, 1573. "...señal de haverse labrado en Santo Domingol que es vna cifra de vnal d/ con una/ ese. Rebuelta al palo della/ y con vna/o/ encima/..."
T. Dasi, Estudio de los Reales de a Ocho (Valencia, Spain, 1950), Vol. II, p. 54; Estrella Gómez (op. cit. n. 1), p. 108. Both Tomás Dasí and Miguel Estrella Gómez included in their work what at one time was thought to be the only silver coin known to have survived from this series. This coin, a 4 Reales reported since 1932, showed a clear mintmark, but the assayer mark was not immediately recognized as an $X$.

Estrella Gómez (op. cit. n. 1, as described above), p. 49. A list that includes several names from personnel appointed to work at the Santo Domingo mint is found on Estrella Gómez' book, with the dates assigned or year in which they are known to have been first present at the mint. Knowing that it was in 1578 that Santo Domingo began to make coins again, it is apparent that the assayer must have been Cristobal de Medina, who is said to have received the title of assayer by decree of January 5, 1578.
J. Pellicer I Bru, "El Ensayador X, Cristóbal de Medina, Sobre un Real de a Cuatro de Felipe II Acuñado en Santo Domingo," Gaceta Numismática de la Asociación Numismática Española (Barcelona, Spain, September 2002), pp. 45-50; de Utrera (op. cit. 1), pp. 83; AGI: Santo Domingo, 74. Both, Josep Pellicer I Bru and Fray Cipriano de Utrera include a transcript of the important document dated in Santo Domingo on January 5, 1578, which includes the name of Cristóbal de Medina as being an assayer at the mint of Santo Domingo. A transcribed portions of the original reads: "Los Oficiales de la Casa de la Moneda, a saber: Cristóbal de Medina, platero ensayador; Pedro de Arenas, platero fundidor; Alonso Barba, capataz; Alonso de Escobar, platero abridor de los cuños y troqueles, hacen una obligación por cuatro meses con los derechos señalados."
J. Pellicer I Bru, Glosario de Maestros de Ceca y Ensayadores - Siglos XIII-XX (Madrid, 1997), p. 353. The name Cristobal is written in $15^{\text {th }}$ and $16^{\text {th }}$ century documents as Xpoval (a combination of Xpo, Greek for Christ, and val, its Latin termination), which explains the use of the assayer mark $X$ for the name Cristobal. Recently, Mr. Mike Dunigan has confirmed the existence of $1 / 2$ and 1 Reales from this series, showing the corresponding mintmark and $X$ assayer mark as the illustration provided shows (see page 14 for the illustration of the $1 / 2$ Real).

Estrella Gómez (op. cit. n. 1), pp. 336-337. A complete transcript of the decree dated in Madrid on July 16, 1595, can be found here.
de Utrera (op. cit. 1), pp. 127-128. Fray Cipriano de Utrera includes transcripts of important documents regarding Santo Domingo and the mintage of new 4 Maravedis coins, with a special design, in 1633. Samples of these coins were sent to the Council of the Indies in Spain, who subsequently ordered their withdrawal from circulation in 1634 and requested the mintage of new billon coins of the same quality and
value as those minted in Spain. At this time it is unclear whether the mintage of the new billon coins requested was ever carried out. The letter from Santo Domingo dated 10 August 1633 states: "Un platero de este lugar ha fundido hasta en cantidad de una libra de cobre y con un sello ha hecho cuartos, cuya muestra envoi al Secretario don Fernando Ruiz de Contreras, con un castillo a una parte y las dos llaves por la otra, que son las Armas de esta Ciudad." The reply from the Council of the Indies, dated 7 June 1634, states: "Por ahora parece se labren en Santo Domingo hasta cien mil ducados de moneda de vellón de la misma calidad y valor, y lo labrado conforme a la muestra, se recoja; y si al usarse de ella se viesen inconvenientes, avisen." After this brief mention of an attempt to resume coin production at the mint of Santo Domingo, it would not be until 1812 that Spain would mint coins there again.
A. M. Barriga, Historia de la Casa de Moneda (Bogotá, Colombia, 1969), Vol. I, pp. 151-162. The complete transcript of the original decree granting the establishment of the mint of Santa Fe in the New Kingdom of Granada, dated in Madrid on April 1, 1620, can be found here. Part of this decree states that: "...aviéndose muy de atrás conocido los dichos yncovenientes a más de treinta años que el Rey nuestro señor y padre que está en gloria, mandó fundar la dicha Cassa de Moneda y enviado para ello desde estos Reynos los troxeles, herramientas y demás pertrechos necesarios sin averse puesto en execución por falta de cassa y de Ministros y oficiales ynteligentes para las dichas labores y juntándose a esto aver yo recibido continuamente cartas de dicha Audiencia en que representados los ynconvenientes que cada dia más se van causando por esta falta; visto por los de mi Consejo de las Indias conferido y platicado sobre la matheria y consultándoseme ha acordado y resuleto que se asiente y funde la dicha Cassa de Moneda en la ciudad de Santafee del dho Nuevo Reino..."

