

1701 Gold Escudo Hybrid of Santa Fe from 1715 Fleet

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The “1715 Fleet-Queens Jewels, LLC” treasure salvage operations recovered a cache of gold escudos on 13-July-2013 on a site called “Corrigans” at Sebastian Inlet near Wabasso Beach, FL. Other artifacts including a silver spoon, olive jar pottery shards, musket balls and spikes were found in the vicinity. About a week later three additional coins were found. Of the fifty-one specimens all are one escudos save a lone two-escudo doubloon. Operations manager Brent Brisben submitted a two page report of this find, including a coin data table, which appeared Ernie Richards’ PLVS VLTRA Newsletter 2nd Quarter 2014.

The fact that all save one of the specimens recovered from the hole are one-escudos is significant. According to historical documentation the one-escudo gold along with silver two-reales, one-real and half-real were to be produced for local use while the larger two-escudo gold and silver eight-reales and four-reales were produced for export.

...para que se labren en ella escudos sencillos, reales de a dos, sencillos y medios, para que con esta moneda menuda se pueda tratar y comerciar entre los vecinos, quedándose en la tierra, sin que se pueda sacar de ella... Vuestra Majestad mandará lo que fuere servido. En Madrid, a 27 de noviembre, 1618.
(Friede: document 2, p. 48)

It seems that this cache of one escudos may have been a privately owned treasure. Of course we may never know how it came that this group of one escudos was gathered in a sea floor crack.

The report highlighted a 1701 dated escudo from Santa Fe with a distinctive design. This immediately brought to mind another specimen whose attribution I’ve long held as problematic. This prior specimen was the only one known to me before Brisben’s report; it is Lasser and Restrepo M49S-1 (pp. 67, 131) where it is identified as Philip IV (reigned 1621-1665). This coin is not in the prior Spanish language version Restrepo and Lasser (1998) so it seems that Lasser come upon his specimen between 1998-2000. My doubt about the attribution is due to the design of the obverse shield which is quite unlike any other Santa Fe gold coin. With the publication of a clear photo of the 1715-Fleet Queens Jewels specimen and some thinking about it an attribution developed. In my review of the literature I found a concurring attribution published a decade ago (Menzel).

The designs of Spanish gold and silver intentionally differ from another by royal decrees. As a consequence of the Potosi scandal, in which the integrity of the silver coinage became an issue in global trade and an embarrassment to Spain, the king ordered a redesign of the silver produced in the viceroyalty of Peru. The royal decree of 22-December-1650 ordered a new design for the silver coins, that being the placement of the arms of Castile and León on one side and two columns on the other with the motto *Plvs Ultra* in-between the columns (Proctor and Blanton). The Santa Fe mint complied with the decree beginning in 1651 even though there was no malfeasance there.

...ordeno la forma del cuño fuerte que no imite del de hasta aora sino que por la una parte se pongan las armas de Castilla y León y por la otra dos columnas con el Plus Ultra en medio procurando que no sean relevadas y también sea de pone el año, la

casa y el nombre del ensayador con gran distinción y claridad de manera que se pueda leer advirtiendo se estampe muy bien los sellos de la moneda de suerte que se reconozca por ambas partes pues esto es tan conveniente para que tenga diferencia de las de antes...

Below are two 1701 dated Santa Fe escudos from the recovered cache. One is a typical Santa Fe design (76469) and the other the subject coin (76510). The typical Santa Fe escudo of the 1715 fleet era has an obverse shield with Castile and León (castle and lion, two each) at the top left. At top right is the arms of Aragon/Two Sicilies where three vertical members of Aragon are constricted at the midpoint by two dots representing eagles. Along the bottom of the shield are three compartments; the center is a small shield of Flanders & Tyrol (which appears empty on this specimen) and either side are three lily flowers in the form of crosses (x). The subject coin 76510 has a shield as described by the decree of 1650 showing simply the arms of Castile and León; **this die is for a silver one-real coin.**



(76469) 3.5g

Typical Obverse / Typical Reverse

(76510) 3.5g

Error Obverse / Typical Reverse

Images courtesy Brent Brisben, 1715 Fleet – Queens Jewels, LLC

The reverses of these two are very similar, disputably the same die. Notice the four lily flowers appearing as crosses (x) positioned between the cross arms of the central design. The two-escudo reverse design at the time (c. 1700) used a more elaborate shape of lily flower resembling scissors. The simple cross design shows that one escudo dies were used for striking these specimens as opposed to two-escudo dies used on one-escudo planchets (coin blanks). Following is an image of the Lasser one-escudo, indubitably the same design as coin 76510.



Restrepo (2012) M49-2, image courtesy Jorge Emilio Restrepo



1715 Fleet-Queens Jewels #76510 obverse with legend overlay, value 1 horizontal at 3 o'clock and "CAROLVS•II•D•G•" around. This die is correct for one-real, not for one-escudo, hence this one-escudo is an error coin.

Below are two Santa Fe one-reals of Charles II (reigned 1665-1700) designed according to the decree of 1650 with shield of Castile and León on the obverse. These are very rare so there are not many available for comparison. One of the coins is assayer Pedro Ramos whose term ended in 1676 and the other is assayer Pedro Garcia (1678-86, 1687-91).



Charles II, Santa Fe, assayer Pedro Ramos (PORS). 20mm. The obverse shield consists of 4 compartments with castles and lions inside. The mark of value "1" is positioned vertical and left of the shield.

B & C Subastas lot 237



Charles II, Santa Fe, assayer Pedro Garcia (PG). 18mm. The obverse shield consists of 5 compartments four of which have castles and lions inside and the fifth (triangular) compartment at the bottom with a dot representing a pomegranate. The mark of value "1" is horizontal and right of the shield. Notice that the ring of dots nearly, but not completely, encloses the value.

B & C Subastas lot 238

Summary

As I write this in June 2014 the 1715 Fleet-Queens Jewels and Lasser specimens are the only examples of this error known to me. Based on the four compartment design, which omits the pomegranate, the Lasser specimen may have led some to attribute this coin to Cartagena. However, since the 1715 Fleet-Queens Jewel specimen is dated 1701 we can be sure it is Santa Fe as Cartagena closed in 1635 except for some weeks in 1655 when only silver was produced. Further study could be done to compare the castle and lion punches on the obverse with those used on the known one-real coins and to compare the reverses of coins 76469 and 76510. According to Brisben the State of Florida received coin 76510 in the division of treasure.

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Soli Deo gloria