

Santa Fe (de Nuevo Reino) Mint

Herman Blanton April 28, 2024



Philip IV
Santa Fe, Eight Reales, c. 1627-50
Restrepo 2012 number M44
Louis Hudson Specimen

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Image: Daniel Sedwick, LLC, Treasure Auction 35 lot 385

While this 8 reales is substantially corroded and difficult to study I decided to contribute to its attribution as far as I am able to do so. Thus far it has been attributed to Cartagena but my interpretation differs as I see the markings of Santa Fe (de Nuevo Reino) which is today Bogotá Colombia. In general the coin looks to me to date to the late 1640s which would make it assayer “R” (and if from the late 1640s the coin did not come from the *Concepción* which sank in 1641).

Before studying the coin we can review its provenance. I have recorded three observations of this specimen; Louis Hudson 2010, Daniel Sedwick 2011 and again in 2024.

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Louis Hudson listed and illustrated the coin on eBay and I made a record of the listing on April 21, 2010. The coin was offered with a “Buy it Now” price of \$575.



The Hudson images show the coin has extensive seawater damage.

The listing read:

“Authentic Sunken Shipwreck Treasure from the *Maravillas* which sank in 1656 off Grand Bahama Island. Cartagena, Colombia 8 Reales ND Assayer NV. ca. 1630. Km-3.4. Weighs 24.5 grams. With an original *Maravillas* COA. An exceedingly rare coin. Tough to come by a cob from this mint; especially in this price range.”

I infer that ND is “no date,” NV is “not visible” and COA is “certificate of authenticity.”

While Hudson did not illustrate the *Maravillas* certificate the eBay listing leaves no doubt that he represented it as recovered from the *Maravillas*.

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Interpretation:

The coin has substantial corrosion which makes it challenging to interpret. The published interpretations are for the Cartagena (de las Indias) mint but I interpret the coin as Santa Fe. The illustration in the Sedwick TA35 catalog shows the maximum diameter at 38mm.

The castle in the Castile/Leon section of the obverse shield uses one of the standard lion punches for Santa Fe. We observe this castle design on the reverse (cross) of 2 reales of assayer A (1632-42), see Restrepo 2012, M28-13 and Eldorado 11070. We also find it with assayer R (1642-1650, shield design) see Restrepo 2012, M28-21 dated 1647 (Eldorado 11071).



**Stack's Bowers Eldorado 11071
2 reales assayer R, 1647**

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The reverse (cross) side of the Louis Hudson specimen has castles and lions which I attribute to a Santa Fe 8 reales punch set. I call these punches “5 Stone Arch Castle” and “Bushy Tail Lion.” Compare the castles and lions below with those on the Louis Hudson specimen 8 reales.



5 Stone Arch (Gate) Castle



Bushy Tail Lion

**Castles and Lions used on 8 reales 1665
Aureo & Calicó 242 lot 127 (March 8, 2012).**

The closest die comparison of the Hudson specimen to an 8 reales is Stack’s-Bowers ANA sale August 18, 2021 lot 40156. Lot description “COLOMBIA. Cob 8 Reales, ND (ca. 1642-51)-NR R. Bogota Mint. Philip IV. NGC VF-35. KM-3.3; Restrepo-M44-21/13; Cal-Type 114. Weight: 25.54 gms. This nicely preserved survivor, struck on a broad flan, exhibits a nearly complete shield and cross with transposed castles and lions. The mint mark is bold and clear on the opposite side of the shield to where it is normally located adding to its collector appeal. Another interesting aspect of this example is that the obverse die appears to be that of Restrepo-M44-21 while the reverse is Restrepo-M44-13. This wholesome looking and attractive example displays lovely light gray tone with areas of richer coloration amongst the devices adding to its eye appeal and desirability.” The Stack’s-Bowers coin is encapsulated NGC6102729-008 VF35.

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The key diagnostic for this similarity is the Naples and Sicily section of the shield. The vertical lines at top left and bottom right are missing.

Stack's Bowers
20180818-40156



Sedwick
TA35-385



Vertical lines missing top left and bottom right



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The reverse side of the coin has the cross with castles and lions which on this specimen are the same punches used on Santa Fe 8 reales, see Aureo & *Calicó* above.

Summary:

The coin has thus far been attributed to Cartagena assayer E coming from the shipwreck of the *Concepción* (1641). I attribute the coin as Philip IV, Santa Fe, 1627-1650. Tentatively I date the coin as late 1640s, assayer R. Concerning the shipwreck provenance I have not seen a certificate of authenticity but the eBay listing is clear that such a certificate did at one time exist (*Maravillas*).

Provenance (appearances and listings):

- ✚ Louis Hudson on eBay, April 21, 2010 with photos. “Authentic Sunken Shipwreck Treasure from the *Maravillas* which sank in 1656 off Grand Bahama Island. Cartagena, Colombia 8 Reales ND Assayer NV. ca. 1630. Km-3.4. Weighs 24.5 grams. With an original *Maravillas* COA. An exceedingly rare coin. Tough to come by a cob from this mint; especially in this price range.”
- ✚ Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC. Treasure Auction 9, April 27, 2011, lot 660. “Cartagena, Colombia, cob 8 reales, assayer not visible (ca. 1630), rare. KM-3.4. 24.5 grams. Thick and solid coin with clear and distinctive shield and cross but much surface corrosion and encrustation.” This coin listed in the *Concepción* section of the catalog and the listing on iCollector.com has the added information “From: *Concepción*, sunk in 1641 off Hispaniola.” Realized selling price \$345.00.
- ✚ Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC. Treasure Auction 35 May 7-9, 2024, lot 385. “COLOMBIA, Cartagena, cob 8 reales, Philip IV, assayer not visible (E), rare. Restrepo-M45; S-C3; KM-3.4; Cal-Type 298. 24.49 grams. Oblong flan with moderate surface corrosion and spotty dark toning, full cross and nearly full shield of distinctively tidy design, patch of whitish coral on edge. Pedigreed to Sedwick Auction 9, with original lot-tag 660.” The listing on iCollector.com has the added information “Recovered from: *Concepción*, sunk in 1641 off Hispaniola”. Estimate \$400-600 hammer before 20% buyer fee.

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References:

- Restrepo, Jorge Emilio. *Coins of Colombia (Spanish Colonial and Republican) 1619-2012*, 4th edition – 1st English edition. Medellín: 2012.
- Sedwick, Daniel Frank, LLC. *Treasure and World Coin Auction 9*. Winter Park, FL.: Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC, April 26-28, 2011.
- Sedwick, Daniel Frank, LLC. *Treasure and World Coin Auction 35*. Winter Park, FL.: Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC, May 7-9, 2024.
- Stacks's Bowers Galleries. *The Eldorado Collection of Colombian and Ecuadorian Coins* – January 12 & 13, 2018 New York City – Grand Hyatt Hotel. Santa Ana CA: Stack's Bowers Numismatics, LLC, 2017.



Due to the effort spent researching for his book *Las monedas coloniales hispano-americanas* José Toribio Medina referred to it as his collection regardless if the coins were in his personal collection or not. (Medina: VII) *Por tal razón, en esa parte bien podría llamarle Catálogo de mi colección de monedas hispano-americanas* I feel the same way towards my own virtual collection and in his honor I am emulating some features of his book including the use of selected graphics—*author*.