

Cartagena RN & N(E)R mintmarks combined on Colombian cobs

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New Discovery of Colombian coin type: Cartagena 8 reales ca. 1627-1633

Numismatist Daniel Sedwick alerted me to a Cartagena cob that has the mint mark RN to the right of the shield. Comparison with a similar coin in my collection identifies both pieces having been made from very similar if not identical punches. Neither coin has full details, but by mentally "re-constructing" a composite from the two coins, it can clearly be seen that the coins have two complete sets of mint marks, a previously unreported type for the Cartagena mint.

The Cartagena mint operated sporadically between 1622 and 1655, and used four (4) different mintmarks; S, RN, NR and C. The RN mint mark was used in the first year of mint operation, 1622, by assayer "A", possibly Iñigo de Alvis. Assayer "E", possibly Echeverría, looks to have used the RN mintmark from 1627 to 1630 and in 1633, however additional dates could yet be discovered. In the Christensen auction of May 14, 1982, lot 216, there was a 1626 2 reales RN (E), with the E inferred, therefore the coins could have been struck as early as 1626. See table 1 for a list of dated coins.

For information on the Cartagena mint see Lasser in the reference section at the end of this article.

Coin numbers below refer to numbers that the author assigned in the web site [Colombian Silver Cobs.](#)

Coin #1810 is from Ponterio auction sale 106, April 7 & 8, 2000, lot 1619. The coin is identified in the Ponterio catalog as a product of the Santa Fe (Bogotá) mint, but an announcement made during the sale clarified the attribution as Cartagena. When I first examined this coin I saw something to the right side of the shield beneath the denomination VIII. There is not enough of the characters visible to read them, I thought that the bottom character might be an X. Looking to the left of the shield, notice the mint mark NR and the large assayer mark "E" between the NR of the mintmark, for a vertical grouping of NER.

Coin #1818 is reported to come from a "Black Sea" hoard of mostly Spanish cobs but with some México and Potosí cobs as well. The RN mintmark beneath the denomination VIII to the right of the shield is clear, even though the area above the mintmark, including the VIII is double struck. The NER to the left of the shield is not clear, with only the N being visible.

#1810 weight 26.782 grams

#1818 weight 27.174 grams



Close up of the RN mintmark beneath the VIII

Characteristics common to both coins:

OBVERSE

Shield Style
 Shield width - 22 mm
 Number, style and location of lily flowers in New Burgundy
 Location of RN mint mark
 Style of tail on the Brabant lion
 Denomination VIII reads down and in same location
 Legend stops are a cross of five dots

REVERSE

Thick cross arms, #1818 is even thicker though
 Castles have tall towers
 Right towers have 3 sharp points

A **major difference** in the reverse design, coin #1810 has brace design at cross ends instead of arcs; coin # 1818 has arcs, which is the standard configuration for Spanish cobs. Christensen also has an NER Cartagena cob with braces at cross ends, lot # 213.

My search for other coins of this type produced one other, for a total of three (3) pieces. It is Cayón # 5838 and the photo shows a letter N and part of another letter (R?) immediately below the VIII of the denomination, exactly the same location, but not the same order, as on the two coins illustrated here. The Cayón coin has a partial date of (1)62(X).



Cayón 5838 - images of 5838 copyright Cayón, used with permission

Table 1

1628	RNE	4 reales	Calicó (Felipe IV) #617B, Lasser (1992) plate 13 (not in Lasser 2000)
1628	RNE	2 escudos	Restrepo M52-6, Lasser (2000) M52C-6
1629	RNE	2 escudos	Calicó (Felipe IV) # 133
1630	RNE	4 reales	Restrepo M36-3, Lasser (2000) M36C-3
1633	RNE	8 reales	Lasser (2000) M45C-12

Illustrations of assayer "E" dated coins with the RN mintmark. There are other dates for Assayer "E" using different mint marks.

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Thanks to Daniel Sedwick, & Dr. Jorge Restrepo for information and for reviewing the article. Thanks to Cayón - Jano S.L. for use of their image.

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