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In this issue your NI Bulletin offers a wide selection of articles, from brief to in-depth, ranging on topics from ancients to modern. First time contributor Xavier Alban provides an analysis on a particular 2 reales of Ecuador. Paul Oostervink writes on another Dutch medal with beautiful photos of pertinent specimens. Robert Ronus explores aspects of the silver three-gros of Sigismund III, certainly a familiar coin type, but his article addresses related copies. The articles from Numismatica Ars Classica show outstanding gold aurei of the Roman Empire, a visual treat just to see the pictures, let alone the stories behind them. Rounding out this issue are many good short articles.

It’s been awhile since we had a quiz so here is one. Publius Quinctilius Varus was both a Roman general and governor. While governor of Syria he suppressed a revolt in Judea and had some 2000 rebels crucified (Josephus: *The Antiquities of the Jews* 17:10:10). Later, Varus led the Roman armies against German tribes east of the Rhine where he was ambushed by German warriors led by Arminius (now Germanized to Hermann) at the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. Which of the articles in this issue is related to the Battle of Teutoburg Forest?

Herman Blanton

An Improbable Overdate, Ecuador 2 Reales 1834/5

Xavier Albán R.

Translated by Michael J. Anderson

While Ecuadorian numismatic history is short, due to its having begun its own coinage only in 1833, it does have an extraordinary variety of specimens that makes it very rich and interesting for collectors.

It is common to find within a single year some very apparent differences which make individual coins distinct, varieties such as subtle changes in the design of the shield, errors in the legend such as inverted or altered letters, crude minting, overstrikes, minting errors, etc.

Among the varieties of overstruck coins there exists a huge range of pieces with overstruck dates which enriches our coinage. We may note that with very few exceptions most of the coins with overstruck dates are found on 1/2, 1 and 2 *décimo* pieces from 1891 to 1912 (the *décimo* is a tenth). It is very puzzling that most of these coins appear only in these denominations, and even more puzzling that almost all of them relate solely to the mint of Lima. The overstruck dates do not occur in the mints of Birmingham or Philadelphia. In the case of the mint of Santiago de Chile, Krause World Coins records an overdate only on the one-*décimo* coin 1889/1789, which, since it relates to an 8 over 7 in the hundreds of the date, is clearly dealing with the correction of a date error. The overdated piece of Santiago de Chile is very scarce, and the NGC Census reports the existence of only one piece.



Figure 1

The only Santiago de Chile *décimo* reported in the NGC Census

It is worth mentioning that there exists no record of why these overdates occurred in the Lima Mint, but it had been standard practice on Peruvian coins since the earliest days of the Republic. It is believed that the motive was to optimize the cost of production of the dies in that the operating cost was less if larger quantities of dies were produced—so that the excess could be used in subsequent years—for which it was necessary only to correct the digits of the date with the year in which Ecuador requested a new supply of coinage. This theory is a consensus of various experienced collectors, because as already mentioned there exists no known record which clarifies this mystery, which was very common in the Lima mint, and there is no other logical explanation which allows a second hypothesis.

In this way, by checking the catalogs, we find the following Ecuadorian coins where the dates were overstruck for use in subsequent years:

- 2 décimos 1889 TF Lima was overstruck for the years: 1892/89, 1893/89, 1894/89 and 1895/89
- 1 décimo 1894 TF Lima was overstruck for the year 1899/4
- 1/2 décimo 1893 TF Lima was overstruck for the year 1894/3
- 1/2 décimo 1897 TF Lima was overstruck for the year 1899/7
- 1/2 décimo 1902 JF Lima was overstruck for the year 1905/2 (There is no record of this in the NGC census or PCGS)

There also exist some 1/2 décimo coins minted in Lima with overstruck dates which show the practice of preparing dies with the last one or two figures of the date left blank, but which still needed to be overstruck because of the change of decade or century, such as:

- 1/2 décimo JF Lima 1899/87
- 1/2 décimo JF Lima 1902/802 and 1902/892 (as yet there is no record of 1902/892 in the NGC census and PCGS)
- 1/2 décimo JF Lima 1905/805

This practice of overstriking the decade and century on dies where the final digit or digits were left blank was common practice in the Lima mint as evidenced by the existence in the Peruvian series of 1/2 *dinero* 1900/890, 1901/801, 1901/891, 1902/802, 1902/892, 1903/803, 1903/893, 1904/894, 1905/805, 1 *dinero* 1900/890, 1902/892, 1903/893, sol 1890/80, 1891/81, 1892/82 and many more (the *dinero* is a tenth).

Michael Anderson wrote on the Lima varieties: “Varieties in the Lima Mint Coins of Ecuador 1889-1915” in *Seaby’s Coin & Medal Bulletin* October 1971.



Figure 2

**Scarce Ecuador 1/2 décimo 1899/87 JF with overdate in decade.
Only one piece is recorded in the NGC census**

We should mention that there is no record in the NGC and PCGS censuses of certain coins such as the 1/2 décimos 1902/892 and 1905/2, so there is no confirmation of the existence of these pieces, even though both coins are reported in the Krause World Coins catalog.

In addition to the overdated decimal coins, there exist other pieces known with the same type of error corresponding to the pre-decimal coinage, among which the following are recorded:

SILVER

2 Reales 1848/7 GJ
1/2 Real 1833 overstruck M over 1/2
1/4 Real 1843/2...Very rare

GOLD

8 Escudos 1849/7 GJ...Very rare
8 Escudos 1852/0 GJ
8 Escudos 1855/2 GJ

All six of the above listed pre-decimal overstruck pieces are confirmed to exist. NGC also mentions the existence of an overstruck 2 reales 1839/8 MV, but since it is not included in the NGC census we are unable to confirm its existence; reference NGC World Coins Price List 2 Reales 1839 at the following link.

<https://www.ngccoin.com/price-guide/world/search/1/?keywords=ECUADOR%7c%7c1839%7c%7c2+Reales%7cECUADOR++1839+2+Reales>

The mystery of the 2 reales 1834/5 GJ.

What should be borne in mind is that all the coins with overdates have one thing in common, which is that the overstruck date is normally over a date earlier than that of the overstriking. However this rule has an exception.



Figure 3
2 reales 1834/5 GJ

Dale Seppa’s compendium *ECUADORIAN COINS – An Annotated Checklist* 2016 edition, p. 18 reports the existence of a 2 reales coin with overstruck date 1834/5 GJ, a coin with an unusual overstriking in that the overstriking is on a future date compared to the overstriking rather than an earlier date as is normal.



Figure 4
1834/5 coin in which traces of the number 5 can clearly be seen under the 4

In this compendium Seppa mentions that the coin is certified by NGC as VF DETAILS with Hairlines, the same as was auctioned by Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC in May 2013

at a price in excess of US\$800. The auction catalog description mentioned that this piece is the only one known so far. The auction can be seen at the link:

http://auction.sedwickcoins.com/Quito-Ecuador-2-reales-1834-5GJ-unique-overdate-no-dot-after-CONSTITUCION-encapsulated-NGC-VF_i15947128

Seppa also mentioned in his compendium that he did not have the opportunity to find the records and the verification code assigned by NGC, to be able to study this unusual overdate and confirm it, but it is clear that it concerns a 2 reales of 1835 GJ overstruck with a 4. This we can easily confirm because the only difference which exists between the 2 reales coins of 1834 and those of 1835 is the period at the end of the word CONSTITUCION (all the 1834 coins have a period at the end of the said word, while the 1835 coins do not have the period). The overstruck coin from the Sedwick auction (1834/5) does not have the period, as is indicated in the description from the Sedwick auction, which clearly confirms that it is a coin from a die of 1835 overstruck with a 4.



Figure 5 (upper) Figure 6 (lower)

2 Reales coins of 1834 and 1835 where can be seen the principal feature which distinguishes both coinages, the PERIOD at the end of the word CONSTITUCION, which appears only on the 1834 coinage.

The coin from the Sedwick auction passed through the hands of several Ecuadorian collectors until I acquired it in March 2017, together with the white holder for the slab and the NGC certification label with which it had been auctioned in 2013, since the coin had been removed from its container. The verification code on this certification was 2782907-001.

In April 2017 I sent this coin to NGC again, so that it could be reviewed by the certification experts for the second time. The result obtained was exactly the same as the previous certification: 2 reales 1834/5 GJ with the grade VF DETAILS, with the same defect of Hairlines. This new certification has the verification code 2812314-001.



Figure 7

NGC 2812314-001

NGC 2782907-001

Holder / Holder with coin encapsulated



Figure 8

2 Reales 1834/5 GJ
NGC 2812314-001 (2017)

2 Reales 1834/5 GJ
NGC 2782907-001 (2013)

Photographs of the NGC certifications (2017, 2013) of the same specimen

That is to say that four years after the first certification NGC again validated the same overdate of 4 over 5, with the same grade of condition and recording the defect of Hairlines, without being informed that it involved the same piece that had been certified in 2013. This we can easily confirm by comparing both NGC photographic records of 2013 and 2017, where can be seen even the same Hairlines below the letter R on the obverse (2 marks below the R).

This causes us to ask the following questions:

- How did this improbable overdate happen?
- Why was a die of 1835 corrected with a 4?

First, Dale Seppa was contacted so that he could review the overstrike, since he had already announced its existence but did not have photographs in 2013 for a more detailed examination. He succeeded in confirming that the overdate existed, and that in his opinion it was genuine and an authentic original mintage of the coin. Michael Anderson also checked this aspect, arriving at the same conclusion about the improbable overdate.

So, how do we explain what happened? We can only offer some hypotheses based on the research and conclusions reached by historians about the events of the period 1834 to 1836.

1. We must take into account that one of the engravers who prepared dies in the period of 1834 and 1835 was Mr. Eduardo Coronel, who, according to Melvin Hoyos in his book *La Moneda Ecuatoriana a través de los tiempos*, was dismissed as mint engraver for irresponsibility in his duties. His irresponsibility is not further detailed but we must wonder if this overdated coin was involved.
2. Melvin Hoyos also mentioned in his work that Mr. Eduardo Coronel was found with a die stolen from the mint. This, according to the unpublished “Numismatic History of Ecuador” of Carlos Iza Terán, occurred in March 1836, and production in this year was ordered to begin only on 14 June, according to what is said in Melvin Hoyos’ book, second edition, p. 110. All this allows us to make the following observations:
 - 2.1. It is impossible that the theft of the die related to one produced in 1836, since the minting of coins was ordered in June 1836 and Mr. Eduardo Coronel was found with the stolen die in March of that year.
 - 2.2. We can infer that the stolen die must have been of the year 1835 or earlier, which were those which existed before Mr. Coronel was found out, but it is very probable that he would have taken one of those most readily available at the time, which would have to be one of 1835, to be used in his criminal activity in 1835 and/or 1836 until being found out.
 - 2.3. According to Iza in his unpublished “Numismatic History of Ecuador” it is said that Mr. Coronel carried out his forgeries in the same mint where he was found with a stolen die in March 1836.
 - 2.4. In the early days of the Republic, forgers used to steal part of the silver from coins of good fineness, making fraudulent coinages of base fineness, and thus making a profit from the metal they obtained.

Considering these observations, we can develop certain hypotheses, such as the possibility that the stolen die was probably of the year 1835, and the date could have been altered by Mr. Coronel to that of the previous year (1834/5) with the objective of being able to incorporate his base pieces, produced in the same mint, very probably from 1835 to early 1836, trying to hide them among coins of a year of which there already existed a complete supply in circulation; for which it is necessary to remember that the 1835 mintage began in March and lasted until December, so that at the beginning not enough of the 1835 coinage could have existed to conceal the false coins. Another hypothesis could be that he did it to avoid the quality controls of coins minted in 1835, being dated as 1834 they would be exempt from control if the coinage was not part of the production current at the time. Or he could have changed the die simply so as not to have in his possession a die of a year currently in production. But any of these hypotheses would require that the piece under consideration would be an adulterated coin of the time, coined in the mint itself, and that the piece would have to contain little or almost no silver. This ought to have been detected by NGC or by any of the persons who reviewed this coin; furthermore collectors with any experience could see that the coin is of good silver. Alternatively the mint could have struck this piece in good silver after the die was recovered from Mr. Coronel, either for the record or simply by mistake.

3. The third hypothesis is based on a simple question: What relevant fact occurred in 1835 which could affect the design of that years coins?

3.1. On 13 August 1835 the second Ecuadorian Constitution was promulgated, abolishing the idea of the confederation with Colombia and changing the name “State of Ecuador in the Republic of Colombia” (abbreviated on the coins as “El Ecuador en Colombia”) to “República del Ecuador”. Therefore it is necessary to ascertain in which months the 1835 that the 2 reales were produced, since if all or part of them were made after 13 August there is reason to think that the date could have been corrected intentionally so that the design did not contradict what had been established by the new Constitution. In such a case it would be easier to correct the date than the name of the country. If this hypothesis were correct, this extremely rare specimen would indicate the intention to avoid the 1835 coinage being inconsistent with what had been approved by the Constitution on 13 August of that year.

3.2. Perhaps having had the intention of correcting the date, they tested the viability of a few specimens and in the end decided not to make the correction, leaving us this example which would become a witness to the political and constitutional changes in the country.

3.3. This event, the change of name to República del Ecuador, coincides with the exact year of the manufacture of this overstruck coin.

Probably we shall never know the real reason why and how it was done, but what is certain is that the piece has this unusual detail, which was verified by NGC on two occasions (in 2013 and 2017). Furthermore it was reviewed by persons with much experience of colonial and pre-decimal coins, such as Daniel Frank Sedwick, when he offered this piece at auction in 2013, describing it as the only one known up to that time, and both Dale Seppa and Michael Anderson, who had the opportunity to study this improbable overstrike.

Definitely it must be a very scarce coin. If any collector has a specimen with this type of overstrike (1834/5), report it (with photographs if possible) to info@srncoin.com to record its existence and for consideration in a future article.

NI

Holey Dollar, New South Wales Morton & Eden Ltd.



Australia, New South Wales, holey dollar, 1813, struck on a Charles IV 8 reales, 1806 TH, Mexico City mint; with clear, full and well-struck countermarks (type 1/A) on both sides, 21.08 g (Mira A/12 – 1/7). Host coin very fine with characteristic dishing caused by the striking process, countermarks good very fine, an attractive and evenly toned example which has been recently re-discovered in the U.K. Realized £82,000 before 20% buyer fee.

Provenance: Believed to have been acquired by Sir Gerald Strickland, 6th Count della Catena, 1st Baron Strickland of Sizergh, G.C.M.G. (1861-1940), probably during his tenure of office as Governor of New South Wales between 1913 and 1917. Born in Malta, Strickland inherited the title Count della Catena from his mother's uncle and, following an eventful and sometimes controversial career in the Colonial Service, he became an influential politician in both the U.K. and in Malta, where he was reportedly loved and disliked in roughly equal measure. Lord Strickland was also a coin collector who sold his ancient coins at Glendining's on 25-26 April 1939. The lot is offered with copied biographical details; see also lot 30 and front cover illustration. It is thought that this example of the holey dollar, which is offered by direct descent, has not previously been recorded.

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