COINS OF CHARLES I - HISPANIARUM REX

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Letter of Columbus in Italian in verse by Giuliano Dati

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In the case of Ferdinand and Isabella, it does not speak of the dynastic union between Castile and Aragon, but rather that Ferdinand has Isabella under his command and that she has brought him a number of kingdoms to the wedding, the complete opposite of the motto "Tanto monta monta tanto Isabel como Fernando"

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In the case of Ferdinand and Isabella, he does not speak of a dynastic union between Castile and Aragon, but rather that Ferdinand has Isabella under his command and that she has given him a number of kingdoms as a dowry in the wedding, completely opposite to the meaning of the motto "Tanto monta monta tanto Isabel como Fernando"

THE COINS IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES I

At the beginning of the reign of Charles I (1516-1556), a golden coin of lower grade than the Spanish duchy was used in several European countries, which caused it to be assiduously channeled by foreign visitors to their states. Many popular groups attributed the flight of the Spanish gold coin abroad to the rapacity of the Flemish lords of the entourage of the young King Charles. The popular indignation was reflected in an ingenious quatrain: "Save God / dukedom of two / that monsieur de Chiévres / did not run into you". To solve this problem, the Cortes of Valladolid in 1523 requested the production of a new gold coin of lower grade, similar in purity to the French pieces.

Charles' imperial coronation in Bologna in 1530 involved the payment of large sums to his main political and religious supporters. The military and other resources used in the construction of the Empire mobilized great economic resources, which led to an increase in the circulating currency. In 1534, on the occasion of the preparation of the gigantic expedition to Tunisia, the gold shield appeared, initially minted in Barcelona along with a large amount of silver and fleece (an alloy of copper and silver), largely destined to pay for the soldiers. All of these coins included the Latin legend "Carolus Quintus Imperator – Hispaniarum et Utriusque Secilie Rex".

The first gold shields featured on the obverse the shield of the monarch surmounted by a double-headed and crowned

imperial eagle, while on the reverse there was a cross with the ends also crowned. The eagle since Roman times was a motif used to express imperial aspirations; his bicephaly alluded to a plurality of domains whose peculiar characteristics were theoretically respected. As for the cross, whose appearance could vary greatly from one coinage to another, it expressed the Christian ideal of European monarchies. Silver escudos were also minted, equivalent to twelve reales, and which exceeded twelve times the weight of gold escudos. The silver pieces of one real and half a real already used on the obverse the motif of the two columns on waves, derived from one of the myths of Hercules, and indicative of the Hispanic expansion beyond the Strait of Gibraltar. The fleece pieces minted on the occasion of the expedition to Tunisia were adjusted to the Barcelona coins in progress, including on the reverse a cross with the stick of the same size as the crossbar and perpendicular strokes added to the four ends of the simple cross. Meanwhile in Seville reales were minted in twos and fours according to old rates.

After the Cortes of Valladolid in 1537, gold shields began to be carved in Castile, also called crowns, with the legend "Iuana et Carolus Hispaniarum Reges". Therefore the emperor's mother, who retained the royal dignity until her death in 1555, continued to contribute her name to the new coins, always in the company of Charles'. These gold escudos were valued at 350 maravedís or, equivalently, at ten silver reales, thus differentiating themselves from the exchange system that had been used in the coinage of Barcelona. They bore the cross described above on the reverse in a tetralobed shape, as if it were a flower. Coins made in La Coruña have already added the "Indiarum", contracted as "Ind", to the "Hispaniarum". In Navarre, half-horns were minted with a large N on the obverse and crowned columns on the reverse, accompanied by the legend "Plus Ultra".

The costly international undertakings undertaken by Charles I weighed heavily on the Spanish economy, which suffered from the exercise of political primacy. The increased financial pressure on the cities led to their growing discontent. The Crown's regular recourse to European bankers absorbed a large part of the remittances of precious metals from America, which vitalized the currency as a means of payment, but at the same time caused an excessive rise in prices. The corsairs found in the assault on Spanish ships one of their most lucrative activities.

During the reign of Charles I, the rough royal of eight (eight silver reales) appeared in Burgos, Segovia, Toledo and Seville, which contained the motifs of the simple real minted in 1497 by the Catholic Monarchs, including their respective names. It could have been a way of exalting the deceased monarchs and propagating the idea of the supposed unity of interests of the Spaniards, or on the contrary it could have been a simple typological survival. The motifs alluded to consisted of the crowned shield on the obverse and the yoke and arrows on the reverse. The real of eight tried to match the prestigious silver "thaler" of the German principalities. It changed its name to "peso duro", a term that in America designated the unit of reference of silver, and from which our words peseta and duro derive. In fleece, white and other pieces were issued in accordance with the system of purity and weights of the period of the Catholic Monarchs, which was reformulated after the Cortes of Madrid in 1552, reducing its law. The presumed scarcity of fleece pieces meant that from 1532 pieces of simple copper circulated in small transactions, with a castle on the obverse and a lion on the reverse, both in the name of the Catholic Monarchs and in the name of Juana and Carlos. The presence of these pieces, whose intrinsic value was a third of the nominal value, favoured the flight of good money.

The Spanish discoverers and colonists who arrived in America found that the indigenous people used various products as currency in their exchanges, such as cocoa beans, cotton fabrics, colorful bird feathers or metals. These elements continued to be used by the indigenous people even when Spanish currency had already become widespread in their lands. The initial monarchical hesitations around the regulation of the currency that should circulate in America led Hernán Cortés to probably mark ingots with the royal punch to guarantee their concrete value and thus be able to resolve pressing situations. Pieces of gold and silver were also used in the first transactions, which in the case of conforming to a certain purity were marked with the royal stamp. The first American mint in regular operation seems to have been located in Santo Domingo, which carved pieces of fleece and silver, as well as the mint of Mexico, founded in 1535. In American coins, the two columns were generalized as an iconographic motif, as well as the legends that mentioned Juana and Carlos as kings of Spain and the Indies. In Mexico, the currency of account plus gThe gold peso of Tepuzque was enenralized, which became equivalent to eight Castilian silver reals. The copper pieces that began to be worked in the Mexican mint were very poorly received by the natives, so that it was necessary to return to the accounting of the cocoa almond trees, of which 140 were equivalent to one silver real in 1555.

In Barcelona, double gold ducats were minted that had on the obverse the opposite busts of Juana and Carlos, with a scepter in the middle. Barcelona's fleece moneys could feature the crowned bust of the emperor on the obverse and a cross progressively widened towards its ends on the reverse. Gerona and Vich also minted fleece money at this time, while the famous Perpignan mint carved thirty gold and copper salaries.

In the kingdom of Aragon, the Jaqueses de vellón monies continued to be issued. The Cortes of Zaragoza in 1518-1519 implemented the Castilian metrology of silver in Aragon. And from 1528 it was allowed to beat in Zaragoza ducats and

half ducats of gold with the law and weight of Castile. This approach to monetary unification has been interpreted as supporting the strengthening of the Crown. A gigantic piece from Zaragoza of one hundred gold ducats, weighing 360 grams, not intended for normal circulation, is known, in which Juana and Carlos are called "Triunphatores et Catolicis".

In Valencia in 1545, 23,000 gold ducats were withdrawn from circulation in the name of Ferdinand the Catholic, melting them down to mint coats of arms in the name of Juana and Carlos. The anti-nobility revolt of the Germanías (1519-1523) caused two special mints of silver pieces by the royalist side in the kingdom of Valencia, one carried out in Denia and the other in Segorbe. Among the artisans who worked in the mint of Valencia was Alfonso Sánchez Dalmau, whose carving mark was a lion. At the end of the reign of Charles I, popular attempts to introduce Castilian silver coins, of greater weight and better quality, into the kingdom of Valencia led to many arrests in the border areas.

In 1537 it was ordered to equalize Mallorcan silver in grade and weight with Castilian silver, which was difficult due to the increase in the price of silver on the island and other socioeconomic issues that prevented the Mallorcan royal from rising. The order was repeated in 1556, a sign of the difficulties encountered in its fulfillment, and now it is also extended to gold. Thus began a competition between the Mallorcan gold duchy, introduced in 1508, and the Castilian gold shield. Ibiza obtained permission to make copper coins to facilitate small transactions. These pieces, which had the crowned head of the monarch on the obverse and a castle on waves on the reverse (a typical motif of many islands), sometimes passed to the Peninsula to replace the few fleece coins.

The coins minted in Naples and Sicily during the reign of Charles I had among their most characteristic motifs the large imperial coat of arms, sometimes sheltered by the double-headed eagle, which could also appear exempt. A piece of silver carved in Rome is known with an iconographic allusion to the siege to which Pope Clement VII was subjected by the troops of Charles I in 1527. The Milanese silver ducatons bore the bus on the obverseThe emperor was awarded a laureate and heroic bearing, while its reverse was reserved for St. Augustine. In Sardinia, gold shields were minted that featured a barred shield and a flowered cross. The silver pieces of Franche-Comté included as a message of loyalty to Charles I the legend: "Deo et Cesari Fidelis Perpetuo".

The numerous workshops in the Netherlands made coinage that was quite different from each other. Each workshop used its own brand, such as the rat in Arras or the link in Namur. Just before coming to Spain, Charles I had silver pieces minted in Antwerp to cover the expenses of his trip. In 1521 new monetary values were introduced in the whole of the Netherlands, highlighting the so-called "Florin Karolus", which could be made of both gold and silver, and which was equivalent to 20 "stuivers". This currency denoted a certain desire to centralize, and was born with the purpose of functioning as a unit of account. The motifs of the coins of these territories could consist of heavily quartered shields, fleurs-de-lis, batons of command and fleece, which alluded to the mastership of the order of chivalry of the same name. The Dutch pieces omitted the Spanish titles of Charles I. In the Duchy of Brabant and other provinces of Flanders, the legend "Da mihi virtute(m) contra hostes tuos" was used on the reverses, in its entirety or abbreviated, taken from the Marian antiphon "Ave Regina Caelorum", a message with which they wanted to combat the advance of Lutheran ideas.

Some German principalities, whose traditional currency was the thick silver "thaler", honoured the emperor in their coinage, who usually appeared in armour, holding the sceptre in one hand and the hilt of a sheathed sword in the other. On other coins with less conciliatory iconography, Charles I holds a drawn sword and a sphere crowned by a cross, a sign of the universalist and Christian vocation of the power he held. These German pieces dedicated to Charles I also include the coats of arms of the local princes, exempt or on the crop of the double-headed eagle.

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