

THE O'CONNOR COLLECTION

A Presentation of Coins and Medals Featuring Real and Mythological Women

- with a focus on Queen Isabel II of Spain and Philippines



Introduction

Like many collectors living in the USA I began collecting coins of the USA by date and mint mark to complete a series. Then switched to type collecting which provided an opportunity to learn about and obtain one of each design and denomination. When I ventured into world coins there was so much to discover and no realistic way to collect it all. A different approach was needed. Topical collecting fit my needs nicely. Rather than focus on coins of just one country or denomination the collecting theme became real and mythological women.

Even when I first began collecting, the coins with women from mythology or personifications of ideals such as Liberty on the USA walking liberty half dollar were far more attractive to me than coins with presidents. This tendency continued when I made the leap into world coins. Sifting through thousands of coins predominantly depicting kings and other male figures, when I encountered those depicting a female it triggered the collector in me. Who is she? What is her story? Who is the artist who engraved the coin? What is the history behind the origins of this coin?

I began assembling a guide to the coins of particular interest to me, starting with Queen Isabel II of Spain, which later became the book on the subject, *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*, and later a separate volume encompassing coins and medals from a wide array of countries. The joy of collecting is amplified greatly by learning about the historical context of each coin and the stories of the women depicted on them.

Among the things learned during my quest are the scarcity of many of these coins and medals in eye appealing condition. In general, there are fewer coinage issues depicting women, especially queens or other female historical figures. Many of the individual coin and medal issues are scarce in their own right or were melted or mishandled to such an extent that finding an eye appealing example in any condition is a challenge. Of course, this only increased the satisfaction of acquiring an exceptional example.

This catalog presents each coin from the collection along with some historical and numismatic context. There is much more to the story of each item and I encourage you to seek it out and, above all, enjoy your numismatic journey!

-Patrick O'Connor

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Coins & Medals of Queen Isabel II

Spain was in a state of transformation throughout the 19th century. The Spanish empire once encompassed much of the known world including most of North and South America, the Philippines, and portions of Africa. By the 1820's much of that empire had been sold or lost to revolutions. France invaded and controlled Spain for a time before the Spanish pushed them out. Wars and poor fiscal policy placed Spain in a dire economic position. The people of Spain struggled with their own political factions and other European powers to establish Spain's new destiny. It was into this turbulent period of history that Queen Isabel II was born. The study of coins of her reign is a wondrous adventure through history, heraldry, economics, politics, intrigues, and stories seemingly beyond belief.



Queen Isabel II of Spain
- portrait by Dionisio Fierros, 1853

This introduction and the following sections are devoted to exploration of the numismatic history of the reign of Queen Isabel II (1833-1868) through coins and medals of the O'Connor collection. I hope you find it enjoyable and that it may serve to inspire your own numismatic adventures.

For many decades Spanish silver coins had been leaving the country due to their weight and purity being higher than those of other governments. The coins of Spain and her colonies were a known entity and not only accepted, but preferred by merchants in Asia, the Americas, and elsewhere. While Spain enjoyed the continuous import of silver from her colonies in the Americas this was not so great a concern. However, as Spain began losing her colonies to revolution in the period 1810 to 1825, the accompanying loss of silver imports from those colonies put Spain's economy in jeopardy. The need to address the continuous export of Spanish silver would soon become painfully clear.

French invasions, Carlist Wars, riots, and political infighting made Isabel II's Spain an uncertain and chaotic place. The country was deeply in debt and saw little hope of escape until Ramón de Santillán and Alejandro Mon y Menéndez implemented the tax reform of 1845. Not everyone favored the reform, but it filled the royal coffers so it was embraced by the government. The government encouraged both domestic and foreign investment in the infrastructure and production capacity of Spain. With the launch of a major water project and several railroad projects it appeared Spain's fortunes were improving. However, even as the economy heated up, Spanish commerce found itself in trouble. There was a shortage of coinage, especially silver coinage. Banks seldom had a large supply of paper currency relative to the supply of silver and gold coins on hand so most business was conducted in coin. Spain

had relatively little silver and gold with which to produce coins. To make matters worse, enterprising people would often export large amounts of Spanish silver coins to take advantage of favorable bullion exchange rates. Those coins that escaped the melting pots were heavily used in every day commerce. It is very difficult to find fully original uncirculated examples of the larger silver coins of Isabel II. Even eye appealing examples in circulated grades are quite scarce.

The Spanish government attempted to address some of these problems through several monetary reforms. Thus, the numismatic history of Spain during the reign of Isabel II is divided into periods associated with each of these reforms. These are referred to as the Kingdom period, 1st Decimal period, 2nd Decimal period, and 3rd Decimal period. In addition to the primary Spanish coinage there were also issues unique to Cataluña and the Spanish Philippines. This collection also presents the one commemorative issue associated with Isabel's reign and a few of the many medals adorned with her image.

The Kingdom Period (1833 - 1848)

Isabel II inherited the throne in 1833 upon the death of her father, Ferdinand VII. The first numismatic period of Isabel's reign (1833-1848) is referred to as the Kingdom period. During this time the coinage denominations and appearance continued much as they had in Ferdinand's time except for the introduction of Isabel's name and image.

The earliest coins bearing Isabel's image were likely inspired by the queen's appearance at court wearing a pearl necklace and earrings with her hair pulled up into a bun topped by a small crown of pearls. The royal engraver, Mariano González Sepúlveda, created dies depicting Isabel II in a similar manner on copper, silver, and gold coins of the Kingdom period. She was also portrayed thus in a contemporary portrait painted by Carlos Ruiz de Ribera.

In 1833 several proclamation medals were issued in silver and gold in sizes similar to existing coins, but without a stated denomination. Many of these likely saw use in commerce based on their weight. A few regular issue 4 reales and 80 reales coins were struck as early as 1834, but most denominations were issued beginning in 1836.



Isabel II niña
- painting by Carlos Ruiz de Ribera, 1836

At this point in history, Spain was comprised of several political factions. Chiefly, the liberals (also known as Constitutional party) and the royalists who favored the Carlist faction. The liberals were comprised of moderates (sometimes referred to as conservatives), progressives, and radicals. In simplest terms, the royalists were fighting to preserve the old ways under which each town and region was independently governed by various local men of power. The liberals sought a new way in which greater freedom and opportunity was given to Spaniards and wanted to centralize government authority for the purpose of assuring consistent policies in the administration of Spain.

Ferdinand VII had led an absolutist government that favored the old ways. In Isabel II the liberals saw an opportunity for change. They sought a return to the progressive Constitution of 1812. Isabel's mother and regent, Maria Cristina, made overtures to the liberals to assure her leadership. However, she did not seem genuinely supportive of liberal ideals which sought to limit royal power. During the summer of 1836 the guards at the summer palace revolted and forced the Queen Regent to implement a constitutional monarchy. This explains why the decree of 1836 has very little in the way of coinage specifications. Its primary purpose is to assure that "CONSTITUTION" appears on the coins.

ROYAL DECREE of 1836 December 1:

The coinage is to be minted with the same types, sizes, and contours as currently being made, but placing on coins obverse "Isabel II por la gracia de Dios Y la Constitucion" and the reverse "Reina de las Españas" and on the edge of the 20 reales "ley, patria, Rey" while retaining thin reeding on other denomination coins.

The coins of the Kingdom period (1833-1848) include:

Copper: 1, 2, 4, 8 maravedís

Silver: 1, 2, 4, 10, 20 reales

Gold: 80 reales

During this time the province of Cataluña also struck their own coinage:

Copper: 3 and 6 cuartos

Silver: 1 peseta

The Philippines relied on countermarked Spanish colonial coinage at this time with a limited number of copper coins

Copper: 1, 2, and 4 cuartos



Vista del parte del Real Palacio de la Cuesta de la Vega
- painting by Fernando Brambila, early 19th century

The O'Connor Collection - Queen Isabel II



Spain 1842 1 maravedís Segovia mint PCGS MS65RB - ex Barinaga
AE (copper) 14.3mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right
O'Connor p.77 1M-1842a

Spain issued only one type of 1 maravedís (1842-1843) of Queen Isabel II.

The 1 maravedís coin pictured above has lustrous red brown surfaces and almost no marks. An excellent example of the type.



Spain 1841 2 maravedís Segovia mint PCGS MS64RB - ex Barinaga
AE (copper) 19.4mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right
O'Connor p.78 2M-1841a

Spain issued only one type of 2 maravedís of Queen Isabel II. The coin above has lustrous red brown surfaces and few marks. Both sides, especially the reverse, have mirrored iridescent surfaces when viewed in hand. A stunning example of the type.



Spain 1858 2 maravedís Barcelona mint PCGS AU55
AE (copper) 19mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right
O'Connor p.79 2M-1858B

Most 2 maravedís were minted at Segovia or Jubia from 1836 to 1850. However, Barcelona also issued this type in 1858. This is unusual since maravedís had been officially abandoned in 1848 with the change to decimal coinage.

This particular example is one such Barcelona issue. It has pleasing chocolate brown surfaces with light areas on the obverse and deep, almost iridescent toning on the reverse.



Spain 1847 4 maravedís Segovia mint PCGS MS64BN
AE (copper) 24mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right - Denomination on Obverse
O'Connor p.81 4M-1847a

Spain issued two types of 4 maravedís during the reign of Isabel II which are distinguished by the placement of the denomination on reverse or obverse. All of them pictured Isabel II on obverse and a stylized cross with castles & lions on the reverse. The coin pictured above is of the second type with legend ending CONST.

Although a relatively common date, even in uncirculated condition, the 4M-1847a is seldom found with good eye appeal owing to highly varying quality of planchets, minimal quality standards for copper coins of the day, and the considerable service life and associated wear on dies for most copper coins of this era. This particular example is an exception. It has a lustrous brown color that shifts to red and purple toning as it is turned and rotated in hand. An exceptionally attractive example of the type.



Spain 1836 8 maravedís Segovia mint PCGS AU details
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AE (copper) 29.0mm x 2.1mm 12h Edge: laurel leaves pattern
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right - Denomination on Reverse - DIOS
O'Connor p.83 8M-1836a

Spain issued three types of 8 maravedís during the reign of Isabel II. All of them pictured Isabel II on obverse and a stylized cross with castles & lions on the reverse. The first type had a legend that ended DIOS with denomination on the reverse, the second type was a crudely cast coin from Pamplona (the only official cast coin of Isabel's reign), and the third was like the first except that the denomination is on the obverse and the legend ends CONST since the legend was modified to "... GRACIA DE DIOS Y LA CONST."

The coin pictured above is of the first type with legend ending DIOS. The edge has a laurel leaves pattern similar to those seen on earlier Spanish colonial 8 reales silver coins of 1732-1772. This particular example has rich brown toning with a hint of luster on the obverse and a highly contrasted dark and tan reverse.



Spain 1842 8 maravedís Segovia mint PCGS MS62BN
AE (copper) 28mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right - Denomination on Obverse - CONST
O'Connor p.85 8M-1842a

Spain issued three types of 8 maravedís during the reign of Isabel II. All of them pictured Isabel II on obverse and a stylized cross with castles & lions on the reverse. The first type had a legend that ended DIOS with denomination on the reverse, the second type was a crudely cast coin from Pamplona (the only official cast coin of Isabel's reign), and the third was like the first except that the denomination is on the obverse and the legend ends CONST since the legend was modified to "... GRACIA DE DIOS Y LA CONST."

The coin pictured above is of the third type with legend ending CONST. This particular example is a pleasing shade of brown. An attractive example of the type.



Spain 1850 8 maravedís Jubia mint NGC MS64RB
AE (copper) 9.93g 28.1mm x 1.9mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right - Denomination on Obverse - CONST
O'Connor p.86 8M-1850J

Spain issued three types of 8 maravedís during the reign of Isabel II. All of them pictured Isabel II on obverse and a stylized cross with castles & lions on the reverse. The first type had a legend that ended DIOS with denomination on the reverse, the second type was a crudely cast coin from Pamplona (the only official cast coin of Isabel's reign), and the third was like the first except that the denomination is on the obverse and the legend ends CONST since the legend was modified to "... GRACIA DE DIOS Y LA CONST."

The coin pictured above is of the third type with legend ending CONST. This particular example is a rich, lustrous red-brown. The slightly weak strike evident in some elements of the reverse may be the only thing keeping this from a full gem grade. Regardless, an exceptionally attractive example of the type.



Spain 1850 2 reales Seville mint NGC MS63
Assayers: RD = Benito de **R**oxas - Vicente **D**elgado
AR (0.8125 silver) 18.2mm 12h, Edge: reeded
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right - Legend Ends CONST
O'Connor p.89 2R-1850S-RD-f

Spain issued two types of Kingdom 2 reales of Isabel II. They are distinguished by the legend, with one ending DIOS and the other ending CONST. All of them pictured Isabel II on the obverse and crowned arms encircled by the Chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece on the reverse.

The coin pictured above is of the second type with legend ending CONST. This particular example is beautifully lustrous on both sides. The obverse bears a few marks commensurate with the grade. The reverse is virtually flawless.



Spain 1838 20 reales Madrid mint NGC MS63 - ex Barinaga
Assayers: CL = José Luis de **C**astroviejo - Eugenio **L**arra
AR (0.9027 silver) 37mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY * * *
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right - Legend Ends CONSTITUCION
O'Connor p.99 20R-1838M-CL

Spain issued two types of Kingdom 20 reales of Isabel II. They are distinguished by the legend, with one ending DIOS and the other ending CONSTITUCION. All of them pictured Isabel II on the obverse and crowned arms encircled by the Chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece on the reverse.

The constant export of Spanish 20 reales during the mid 1800s makes finding an eye appealing example very challenging and Kingdom period 20 reales are the most challenging among these.

The coin pictured above is of the second type with legend ending CONSTITUCION. With only about 219,000 minted, this is actually the highest mintage of the series. Scarce in grades above VF, this coin is truly rare in uncirculated condition. This particular example has lustrous surfaces with mint frost on many of the design features. The finest example of this date seen by this author.



Spain 1848 20 reales Madrid mint PCGS AU58 - ex O'Callaghan
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
Assayers: CL = José Luis de Castroviejo - Eugenio Larra
AR (0.9027 silver) 26.25g 36.8mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY * * *
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right - Legend Ends CONSTITUCION
O'Connor p.99 20R-1848M-CL

Spain issued two types of Kingdom 20 reales of Isabel II. They are distinguished by the legend, with one ending DIOS and the other ending CONSTITUCION. All of them pictured Isabel II on the obverse and crowned arms encircled by the Chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece on the reverse.

The constant export of Spanish 20 reales during the mid 1800s makes finding an eye appealing example very challenging and Kingdom period 20 reales are the most challenging among these.

The coin pictured above is of the second type with legend ending CONSTITUCION. At just over 67,000 minted, this is one of the lowest mintage issues of the series. This particular example has lustrous prooflike surfaces with beautiful golden and powder blue toning on both sides. A hint of rub on Isabel's cheek and a few marks and minor hairlines in the obverse fields are overwhelmed by the overall beauty of this coin. The finest example of this date seen by this author and the most eye appealing example this author has encountered of the entire Kingdom 20 reales series.



Spain 1835 80 reales Madrid mint NGC MS63
Assayers: CR = José Luis de **C**astroviejo - Isidro **R**amos del Manzano
AV (0.875 gold) 21mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Pearl Bun Head Right - Legend Ends DIOS
O'Connor p.100 80R-1835M-CR

Spain issued three types of Kingdom 80 reales of Isabel II. They are distinguished by the legend ending DIOS, CONSTITUCION, or CONST. All of them pictured Isabel II on the obverse and crowned arms encircled by the Chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece on the reverse.

Gold coins of this period saw heavy use as the shortage of silver coins grew dire in the later periods and reliance on gold coins such as these increased.

The coin pictured above is of the first type with legend ending DIOS Though a fair number were struck and they are not too difficult to find in circulated grades, they are rare in eye appealing uncirculated condition. This particular example has lustrous golden surfaces and no distracting marks. An exquisite specimen and certainly among the most eye appealing examples of the type in any grade.

The 1st Decimal Period (1848 - 1853)

During this period, Spain was in the process of adopting the metric system for weights and measures. It was hoped that such a system would facilitate trade and contribute to overall economic prosperity in Spain. The transition to decimal coinage was intended to reduce complexity of everyday commerce and similarly contribute to Spain's prosperity.

Perhaps the most influential factor in transitioning to a decimal coinage was the fact that many of the coins in use in Spain at this time were French francs which were already a decimal coinage. Spain's new system appears to have been not so much an abrupt departure from eons of Spanish tradition as it was a simple adoption of the current method of exchange into a Spanish form. The people of Spain logically desired, and their economy desperately needed, a coinage system to mimic and combat the dominance of French coinage.

The royal decree of 15 April 1848 introduced Spain's first decimal coinage. Under this system reales de vellón were the sole unit of account. Gold coins would be issued in a 100 reales denomination while silver coins continued largely as before except for modifications to their weight and purity in an attempt to combat their export. The maravedís were abandoned and décimas de real (tenths of a real) introduced as the copper coinage. The designs of all coins were revised to reflect the change in the coinage system.



Isabel II of Spain
- painting by Federico de Madrazo

Also, beginning in 1850 the assayers' initials were no longer placed on coins and mint of manufacture would henceforth be indicated on silver and gold coins by stars which appeared at either side of the denomination. Coins minted at Madrid displayed a six pointed star, Seville a seven pointed star, and Barcelona an eight pointed star. Copper coins continued to use the old style mintmarks until the 3rd Decimal period when they also began to employ stars.

The coins of the 1st Decimal period (1848-1853) include:

Copper: 1/2, 1, 2, and 5 décimas de real - Referred to as medio décima, décima, doble décima, and medio real respectively.

Silver: 1, 2, 4, 10, 20 reales

Gold: 100 reales



Spain 1850 décima de real Segovia mint PCGS MS64BN
AE (copper) 3.95g 19.6mm x 1.8mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Crowned Ornate Arms
O'Connor p.107 DR-1850a

The first decimal period is defined primarily by the copper coinage denominations based on décima de real (tenths of a real). This is the 1 décima de real. There was only one type of the décima de real (1850-1853). The aquaduct mint mark above the date identifies these coins as being struck at the Segovia mint.

The coin pictured here is a near gem example with beautiful coppery iridescent toning, transitioning from dark to light as the coin is tilted and rolled in hand.



Spain 1852 décima de real Segovia mint PCGS MS63BN
AE (copper) 3.95g 19.6mm x 1.8mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Crowned Ornate Arms
O'Connor p.107 DR-1852a

The first decimal period is defined primarily by the copper coinage denominations based on décima de real (tenths of a real). This is the 1 décima de real. There was only one type of the décima de real (1850-1853). The aquaduct mint mark above the date identifies these coins as being struck at the Segovia mint.

The coin pictured here is a lustrous example with attractive mottled toning.



Spain 1848 medio real Madrid mint NGC MS63BN
AE (copper) 31mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Crowned Ornate Arms - Plain Ring Reverse
O'Connor p.110 MR-1848M

This is a 5 décima de real, most commonly referred to as medio real (half real). There were four types of the medio real (1848-1853). They are distinguished by what appears in the area above the denomination on reverse: starburst, plain, small wreath, or large wreath. The first three of these varieties were essentially tests, though a number of plain and small wreath types did enter circulation. The large wreath type was ultimately settled on for production in 1850 and was produced each year until 1853. The example above is of the plain variety and the M mint mark above the date identifies it as being struck at the Madrid mint. Eye appealing uncirculated examples are quite scarce.

The coin pictured here is an attractive uncirculated example with pleasing brown color accented by hints of remaining luster in the protected areas.



Spain 1850 medio real Segovia mint NGC MS63BN
AE (copper) 31mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Crowned Ornate Arms - Large Wreath Reverse
O'Connor p.112 MR-1850a

This is a 5 décima de real, most commonly referred to as medio real (half real). There were four types of the medio real (1848-1853). They are distinguished by what appears in the area above the denomination on reverse: starburst, plain, small wreath, or large wreath. The first three of these varieties were essentially tests, though a number of plain and small wreath types did enter circulation. The large wreath type was ultimately settled on for production in 1850 and was produced each year until 1853. The example above is of the large wreath variety and the aqueduct mint mark above the date identifies it as being struck at the Segovia mint. Eye appealing uncirculated examples are quite scarce.

The coin pictured here is an attractive uncirculated example with pleasing brown color accented by hints of remaining luster in the protected areas. Lines and hazy areas on the reverse are on the NGC holder, not the coin.



Spain 1853 10 reales Barcelona mint PCGS MS62
AR (0.900 silver) 29mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY * * *
Type: Looped Braid Head Right
O'Connor p.116 10R-1853B

The silver and gold coins of this period are characterized by the Looped Braid Head Right type on the obverse. As with the designs of the Kingdom period the engraver adapted the queen's appearance and hairstyle for the coins. The queen often wore a looped braid hairstyle which was depicted in various forms on the decimal coins from this point onward.

This particular coin is well struck with dark toning at edges and subdued luster in those areas. The remaining surfaces are lustrous and devices are sharp with relatively few marks.



Spain 1851 20 reales Madrid mint NGC MS64
AR (0.900 silver) 37mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Looped Braid Head Right
O'Connor p.119 20R-1851M

This looped braid design by Remigio Vega adorned the silver and gold coins of the 1st Decimal Period. The high points of obverse and reverse dies for this design type are directly opposite each other which, on 20 reales of this type, often results in characteristic weakness in the central hair details on obverse and top of shield, bottom of crown on reverse.

This is a well struck example for the type. The glowing luster of this coin's devices combine with dusted mirror fields to produce a pleasing semi cameo appearance.

The constant export of Spanish 20 reales during the mid 1800s makes finding an eye appealing example very challenging so a coin in this condition is a truly rare piece and this is certainly one of the finest known examples of this type.

The 2nd Decimal Period (1854 - 1864)

If the Spanish sought to emulate the French decimal coinage in order to supplant it with true Spanish coinage, the use of 1/10ths likely came from their observation of the French decime and 1/2 franc. However, while the French had 1 centime coins prior to 1800, Spain's recent decimalization was limited to tenths. Amounts of less than 10/100ths had to be rounded or old maravedís coins used. Some ministers were also concerned with the potential for counterfeiting of the recently implemented copper coins which had relatively simple designs. Additionally, the sheer volume of small change needed for commerce was immense. While old maravedís continued to circulate, to fully convert to decimal denominations was a daunting task, indeed.

The Royal decree of 19 August 1853 replaced the 1/10 division "décima" copper coinage with 1/100 division "céntimos". The denominations of silver and gold remained the same, but copper coins were issued as 5, 10, and 25 céntimos de real. Additionally, it re-opened the mint at Jubia in an effort to dramatically increase the production of copper coin and ordered that all available obsolete copper coins (maravedís and cuartos) currently on hand in Cataluna be moved to Jubia for use in manufacturing new coins. It further required that the queen's image appear on each coin. Article 4 of the royal decree references the 1 January 1854 start date and requires approval of the queen for the coin design.

Art 4. All copper coin that is struck, counting from January 1st 1854, will bear My Royal effigy on the obverse, with the coat of arms of Spain on the reverse, and accessory and legends which I reserve for My approval. ⁽¹⁾

Although an 1855 decree confirmed the real and its 1/100th divisions as the unit of account, coinage denominations below five céntimos would not appear until 1865. A desperate need for small change continued to keep décimas and maravedís in circulation.

After the discovery of large quantities of gold in California, the value of gold relative to silver on the world market dropped. As silver 20 reales still contained more silver than other European coins of similar value, the export of 20 reales to the melting pots of Europe and elsewhere accelerated. The gold coins intended to act as a store of value were being dumped on the commercial centers and government of Spain in exchange for more valuable silver even as the value of gold dropped. Spain's government responded by suspending the minting of gold coins in 1851. Despite this decree occurring early in 1851, gold coins of this date and 1852 were issued. No Spanish gold coins were issued with a date of 1853. The Royal decree of 3 February 1854 restored the issuance of gold coins and again reduced the weight of the silver 20 reales.



Queen Isabella II of Spain
- painting by
Franz Xavier Winterhalter, 1852

As of 1856 the "Laureate Head" and "Draped Laureate Bust" designs were henceforth used on silver and gold coins, respectively. These beautiful representations of the queen make the coins of 1856-1868 among the most sought after coins of her reign. Luis Marchionni's initials "LM" appear at the base of the neck on the bust of each coin.

ROYAL ORDER of 2 February 1856:

Office of the Minister of Finance to Director Lotteries, Mints and Mines authorizing the engraver of Mint Madrid, Luis Marchionni, to place the initials of his name, stamped upon the currencies. (2)

Several more decrees would be issued regarding the coinage in this period, including the addition of 20 and 40 reales gold coins by decree of 31 January 1861.

The coins of the 2nd Decimal period (1854-1864) include:

Copper: 5, 10, 25 céntimos de real

Silver: 1, 2, 4, 10, 20 reales

Gold: 20, 40, 100 reales

The Manila mint established in 1861 began striking coins of the Spanish Philippines:

Gold: 1, 2, 4 pesos



Spain 1859 5 céntimos de real Segovia mint MS64+BN - ex Permanyer
AE (bronze) 17.1mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Laureate Head Right - ribbon on neck
O'Connor p.123 5CR-1857a

The 5 céntimos de real were of a single type issued from 1854 to 1864 and all minted at Segovia. The coin pictured here exhibits beautiful red-brown surfaces with red iridescent luster in the reverse fields.

(1) "Parte Oficial." *Gaceta de Madrid*. Madrid, Spain. (24 August 1853): No. 236, page 1 (translated).

(2) de Grau, Gabriel Calbeto. *Compendium VIII Reales Volume II*. San Juan: Ediciones Juan Ponce de Leon, 1970 (translated).



Spain 1859 10 céntimos de real Segovia mint PCGS MS64RB
AE (bronze) 20.1mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Laureate Head Right - ribbon on neck
O'Connor p.124 10CR-1859a

The 10 céntimos de real were of a single type issued from 1854 to 1864 and all minted at Segovia. The coin pictured here exhibits beautiful red-brown surfaces with lustrous highlights in the hair and laurel wreath.



Spain 1859 10 céntimos de real Segovia mint NGC MS65RB
AE (bronze) 20mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Laureate Head Right - ribbon on neck
O'Connor p.124 10CR-1859a

The 10 céntimos de real were of a single type issued from 1854 to 1864 and all minted at Segovia. The coin pictured here exhibits beautiful red-brown surfaces. An excellent example of the type.



Spain 1854 25 céntimos de real Segovia mint NGC PF66BN
AE (bronze) 26mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Laureate Head Right - ribbon on neck
O'Connor p.125 25CR-1854a

The 25 céntimos de real were of a single type issued from 1854 to 1864. In addition to Segovia, the Barcelona mint issued these in 1863 and 1864. Prior to the initial issue in 1854 several proof examples were made. The coin pictured here is one of those proof issues. It has exquisite chocolate brown surfaces and razor sharp details. Tied for finest seen by this author (with the other example offered in this group).



Spain 1854 25 céntimos de real Segovia mint NGC PF66RB - ex Lissner
AE (bronze) 26mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Laureate Head Right - ribbon on neck
O'Connor p.125 25CR-1854a

The 25 céntimos de real were of a single type issued from 1854 to 1864. In addition to Segovia, the Barcelona mint issued these in 1863 and 1864. Prior to the initial issue in 1854 several proof examples were made. The coin pictured here is one of those proof issues. It has gorgeous red-brown surfaces with a subtle cameo appearance to the devices on the reverse. Luster shimmers over the entire surface as the coin is tilted and rolled in hand. Tied for finest seen by this author (with the other example offered in this group).

The O'Connor Collection



Spain 1859/7 1 real Madrid mint Gem Uncirculated
AR (0.900 silver) 15mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.126 1R-1859M

The 1 real coins of this type were issued from 1857 to 1864.

This particular coin has lustrous mirrorlike fields with frosty devices and a hint of pleasing edge toning. Though small silver coins of this period are more readily available in XF condition or above than their larger siblings, this example is the closest to perfection that this author has encountered for the type.



Spain 1863 2 reales Seville mint NGC MS64
AR (0.900 silver) 18mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.127 2R-1863S

The 2 reales of this type were issued from 1857 to 1864.

This particular coin has brilliant luster with pleasing champagne toning. Certainly among the finest examples seen by this author.



Spain 1861 4 reales Madrid mint NGC AU58
AR (0.900 silver) 23mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.128 4R-1861M

The 4 reales of this type were issued from 1856 to 1864. The 4 reales was also commonly referred to as a peseta. Coins of this size were among the more frequently used silver coins in Spain.

The 4 reales and later 40 centimes de escudo were workhorse coins of their day and are now challenging to find in XF condition or better.

This particular coin has lovely surfaces with a hint of colorful toning in some areas of the date and legends on the obverse. Although the luster of the reverse is subdued, the devices are sharp.



Spain 1864 4 reales Madrid mint Uncirculated
AR (0.900 silver) 23mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.128 4R-1864M

The 4 reales of this type were issued from 1856 to 1864. The 4 reales was also commonly referred to as a peseta. Coins of this size were among the more frequently used silver coins in Spain.

The 4 reales and later 40 centimes de escudo were workhorse coins of their day and are now challenging to find in XF condition or better.

The darker areas on the obverse of this coin belie the deep, shimmering, lustrous fields and delightful colors that come to life on both obverse and reverse when examined in hand.



Spain 1857 10 reales Madrid mint PCGS MS62
AR (0.900 silver) 29.4mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.130 10R-1857M

The 10 reales of this type were issued from 1857 to 1864.

The coin pictured above is an attractive example of the type. Remaining luster on the bust helps it stand out from the fields, giving this 1857 10 reales coin a beautiful semi-cameo appearance amid lightly marked fields and champagne color near the rim. The reverse has few marks, notable luster, and the same pleasing champagne color.



Spain 1863 10 reales Madrid mint PCGS AU55
AR (0.900 silver) 29mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.130 10R-1863M

The 10 reales of this type were issued from 1857 to 1864.

This example is typical for the series in AU condition.



Spain 1856 20 reales Madrid mint NGC MS62+
AR (0.900 silver) 26.01g 36.9mm x 2.6mm 12h
Edge: LEY PATRIA REY * * *
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.132 20R-1856M

The 20 reales of this type were issued from 1856 to 1864 at the Madrid, Seville, and Barcelona mints. As the primary store of silver among coins of Spain and possessing more silver content than most similarly sized coins of Europe at the time, 20 reales coins were heavily exported throughout Isabel's reign. Finding an appealing example is very challenging in any grade. AU examples are rarely seen and uncirculated examples are almost never seen. So scarce are these coins in eye appealing, problem free condition that coins with nice eye appeal which exhibit mild cleaning or small scratches are often acceptable to collectors.

This particular coin exhibits frosty devices and lustrous fields with marks commensurate with the grade. Very attractive and very rare in this problem free uncirculated condition.



Spain 1864 20 reales Madrid mint PCGS AU details
AR (0.900 silver) 37.1mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Laureate Head Right

The 20 reales of this type were issued from 1856 to 1864 at the Madrid, Seville, and Barcelona mints. As the primary store of silver among coins of Spain and possessing more silver content than most similarly sized coins of Europe at the time, 20 reales coins were heavily exported throughout Isabel's reign. Finding an appealing example is very challenging in any grade. AU examples are rarely seen and uncirculated examples are almost never seen. So scarce are these coins in eye appealing, problem free condition that coins with nice eye appeal which exhibit mild cleaning or small scratches are often acceptable to collectors.

This particular coin exhibits soft, even wear on the highpoints of the obverse with luster peeking out from protected areas of the bust and letters of the legend. The reverse is well struck with significant luster remaining and only a few marks other than the scratches at 12 o'clock. Aside from the two scratches at the rim on the reverse, this is among the most attractive examples of the type.

The O'Connor Collection



Spain 1863 40 reales Madrid mint NGC MS64
AV (0.900 gold) 18mm 12h medal alignment, reeded edge
Type: Draped Laureate Bust Left
O'Connor p.135 40R-1863M

The 40 reales of this type were issued from 1856 to 1863 at the Madrid and Barcelona mints.

This particular coin was minted in Madrid as indicated by the 6 pointed stars at either side of the denomination on reverse. Frosty luster pervades fields and devices on both sides of this remarkable coin. Without a doubt one of the finest examples of the type.



Spain 1857 100 reales Barcelona mint PCGS MS64
AV (0.900 gold) 22.1mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Draped Laureate Bust Left
O'Connor p.137 100R-1857B

The 100 reales of this type were issued from 1856 to 1862 at the Madrid, Seville, and Barcelona mints.

This particular coin was minted in Barcelona as indicated by the 8 pointed stars at either side of the denomination on reverse. Mint frost can be seen in the hair and other aspects of the bust. Both sides are highly lustrous with a number of small marks throughout.

The 3rd Decimal Period (1864 - 1868)

In the late 1850's and early 1860's an influx of foreign investment combined with Spanish military victories in northern Africa dramatically improved the morale of Spain. Nationalism and prosperity were on the rise.

However, Spain's many revisions of its coinage continually failed to prevent export of its silver coins. Despite reducing the purity and weight in 1848 and again in 1854 the silver 20 reales coins still contained more silver than the 25 gram French 5 francs which were used interchangeably in commerce. Enterprising persons could exchange French 5 franc coins or 100 reales gold coins for an equal face value of Spanish 20 reales silver coins and make a profit simply by moving them from one place to another. All the better if the current gold to silver exchange ratio was favorable. Repeating the process several times was quite lucrative. However, it was devastating to Spain's limited supply of silver and to routine commerce. Average citizens of Spain were left with fewer and fewer coins with which to conduct daily business. Since very little paper money was issued by Spanish banks relative to the supply of coin, what coins remained were used to exhaustion. And despite efforts of Spanish government to ban foreign coins, the coins of France and other countries continued to circulate in Spain.



Isabella II of Spain
- painting by Jose Casado del Alisal
circa 1865



Fountain of Canal de Isabel II
in Madrid

By 1864 officials from several countries in Europe were meeting to discuss standardization of coinage to facilitate trade and combat the problems of having different gold to silver exchange ratios. The Latin Monetary Union was formed in 1865 among France, Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland. It standardized the exchange ratio of gold to silver and established coin specifications based on the existing French coins. Based on this, the correct weight of a 5 franc or 20 reales coin to make them directly interchangeable would be 25.0g at 0.900 fine yielding 22.5g of pure silver.

A royal decree of 26 June 1864 introduced the escudo as the primary monetary unit of Spain and began the Third Decimal period. This was the perfect opportunity to again revise the specifications of Spain's silver duro to match the specifications of the French 5 franc, thus preventing export of these large silver coins. That did not occur. The decree was the first in Spain to specify coin weights in grams rather than "marco". It slightly reduced the weight of the 1 escudo (which replaced the 10 reales) and reduced the purity of smaller silver coins. However, the silver 2 escudos replaced the 20 reales at...exactly the same purity and weight as before. As a result, the 2 escudos and 1 escudo coins continued to be exported.

As the French 5 franc had been a 25.0 gram 0.900 fine coin for decades the Spanish government's repeated failure to match the 20 reales coin to the weight and purity of the 5 franc is puzzling. The Spanish silver duro had been the world standard for so long that one wonders if something as simple as national pride may have continually prevented Spanish ministers from taking the more logical course of action.

After the revolution of 1868 and Isabel's departure for France a provisional government was formed that would soon revise the coinage system again. This new coinage system would establish the peseta as the standard unit of account. Five pesetas was equivalent to 2 escudos and the new 5 peseta coins were finally made equal in weight and purity to the French 5 franc coins.

The coins of the 3rd Decimal period (1864-1868) include:

Bronze: 1/2, 1, 2 1/2, 5 céntimos de escudo

Silver: 10, 20, 40 céntimos de escudo, 1 and 2 escudos

Gold: 2, 4, 10 escudos

The Manila mint established in 1861 struck coins of the Spanish Philippines:

Silver: 10, 20, 50 centavos de peso

Gold: 1, 2, 4 pesos



Spain 1867 1 céntimo de escudo Seville mint NGC MS65BN - ex Lissner
AE (bronze) 18mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Ringlet Head Right
O'Connor p.144 1CE-1867S-OM

Isabel II 1 céntimo were struck from 1865 through 1868 of one type and two major varieties. The first variety without the initials "OM" on the reverse beneath the oval and the second variety with the "OM" mark. Both varieties were struck by Oeschger Mesdach & Co., but early issues lacked the "OM" marking.

The coin pictured above is of the variety "with OM". The seven pointed stars on either side of the date identifies the Seville mint. This coin is lustrous and attractive. The reverse shows extensive die wear at the edges contrasted with sharply struck central devices. This demonstrates the fact that production of copper and bronze coinage during the reign of Isabel II was clearly an industrial rather than purely artistic affair.



Spain 1866 2 1/2 céntimos de escudo Barcelona mint NGC MS64RB - ex Lissner
AE (bronze) 25mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Ringlet Head Right
O'Connor p.146 2MCE-1866B-OM

Isabel II 5 céntimos were struck from 1865 through 1868 of one type and two major varieties. The first variety without the initials "OM" on the reverse beneath the oval and the second variety with the "OM" mark. Both varieties were struck by Oeschger Mesdach & Co., but early issues lacked the "OM" marking.

The coin pictured above is of the variety "with OM". The eight pointed stars on either side of the date identifies the Barcelona mint. An excellent example of the type with much of the mint red luster remaining.



Spain 1867 2 1/2 céntimos de escudo Juvia mint PCGS MS64BN
AE (bronze) 25mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Ringlet Head Right
O'Connor p.146 2MCE-1867J-OM

Isabel II 5 céntimos were struck from 1865 through 1868 of one type and two major varieties. The first variety without the initials "OM" on the reverse beneath the oval and the second variety with the "OM" mark. Both varieties were struck by Oeschger Mesdach & Co., but early issues lacked the "OM" marking.

The coin pictured above is of the variety "with OM". The four pointed stars on either side of the date identifies the Juvia mint. This coin is well struck, with attractive brown toning and luster throughout.



Spain 1866 5 céntimos de escudo Segovia mint NGC MS64BN - ex Lissner
AE (bronze) 32mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Ringlet Head Right
O'Connor p.148 5CE-1868B-OM

Isabel II 5 céntimos were struck from 1865 through 1868 of one type and two major varieties. The first variety without the initials "OM" on the reverse beneath the oval and the second variety with the "OM" mark. Both varieties were struck by Oeschger Mesdach & Co., but early issues lacked the "OM" marking.

To augment Spain's existing mint production, the government of Spain contracted with Oeschger Mesdach & Co. Representatives of this company took up residence at existing Spanish mint facilities and were responsible for striking the bronze issues during the 3rd decimal period.

The coin pictured above is of the variety "with OM". The three pointed stars on either side of the date identifies the Segovia mint. This coin is well struck, with attractive mottled toning on the obverse and reverse, and luster throughout.



Spain 1866 40 céntimos de escudo Madrid mint NGC MS61 - ex Barinaga
AR (0.810 silver) 23.5mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.151 40CE-1866M

The 40 céntimos de escudo was issued from 1864 to 1868. It had a value in the range of common purchases while having a lower silver content than the larger silver coins being exported at this time. As such, this was the workhorse silver coin of its day. Most are encountered heavily worn or damaged. Problem free examples above XF are extremely difficult to find.

The example pictured above has lustrous surfaces with hints of champagne toning and a few light marks. A attractive example of the type.



Spain 1868(68) 40 céntimos de escudo Madrid mint NGC MS64
AR (0.810 silver) 23mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.151 40CE-1868(68)M

The 40 céntimos de escudo was issued from 1864 to 1868. It had a value in the range of common purchases while having a lower silver content than the larger silver coins being exported at this time. As such, this was the workhorse silver coin of its day. Most are encountered heavily worn or damaged. Problem free examples above XF are extremely difficult to find.

The example pictured above has booming luster with champagne and orange toning. A beautiful example of the type.



Spain 1867 1 escudo Madrid mint PCGS AU58 - ex Barinaga
AR (0.900 silver) 29.5mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY * * *
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.152 1E-1867M

The 1 escudo was issued from 1865 to 1868. This coin is identical in appearance to the 10 reales coin that it replaced, save for the denomination on the reverse.

The coin pictured above has considerable luster remaining with numerous marks commensurate with the grade. A very nice example of the type.



Spain 1867 1 escudo Madrid mint NGC MS64
AR (0.900 silver) 29.5mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY * * *
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.152 1E-1867M

The 1 escudo was issued from 1865 to 1868. This coin is identical in appearance to the 10 reales coin that it replaced, save for the denomination on the reverse.

The coin pictured above has considerable luster on the obverse with subtle toning at the base of the bust and around the date. The reverse is fully lustrous with almost no marks. The finest example of this date seen by this author.



Spain 1867 2 escudos Madrid mint NGC AU55
AR (0.900 silver) 37mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.153 2E-1867M

The 2 escudos was issued from 1865 to 1868. This coin is identical in appearance to the 20 reales coin that it replaced, save for the denomination on the reverse.

As the primary store of silver among coins of Spain and possessing a greater total weight of silver than most similarly sized coins of Europe at the time, silver 2 escudos coins were heavily exported throughout Isabel's reign. Finding an appealing example is very challenging in any grade. AU examples are rarely seen and uncirculated examples are almost never seen. So scarce are these coins in eye appealing, problem free condition that coins with nice eye appeal which exhibit mild cleaning or small scratches are often acceptable to collectors.

The coin pictured above possesses luster and marks commensurate with the grade.



Spain 1868 2 escudos Madrid mint PCGS AU58
AR (0.900 silver) 37mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.153 2E-1868(68)M

The 2 escudos was issued from 1865 to 1868. This coin is identical in appearance to the 20 reales coin that it replaced, save for the denomination on the reverse.

As the primary store of silver among coins of Spain and possessing a greater total weight of silver than most similarly sized coins of Europe at the time, silver 2 escudos coins were heavily exported throughout Isabel's reign. More so than even the 20 reales that preceded them, finding an appealing example of a silver 2 escudos of Isabel II is extremely challenging in any grade. AU examples are rarely seen and most of those are very unappealing. So scarce are these coins in eye appealing, problem free condition that coins with nice eye appeal which exhibit mild cleaning or small scratches are often acceptable to collectors.

The coin pictured above has numerous marks on the obverse, considerable luster remaining, and the reverse is exceptional for lack of marks. At AU58 this coin is the 3rd finest example with only 2 graded higher by NGC and none higher by PCGS.



Spain 1866 4 escudos Madrid mint NGC MS64
AV (0.900 gold) 17mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Draped Laureate Bust Left
O'Connor p.156 4E-1866M

The 4 escudos was issued from 1865 to 1868.

The coin pictured above has relatively few marks and mint fresh luster throughout. The portrait of Isabel II is beautifully accentuated by frosty luster over most of her face and hair. Similarly bold luster and frosty devices appear on the reverse. The finest example of this date and certainly among the finest of any date seen by this author.



Spain 1865 10 escudos Madrid mint NGC MS65
AV (0.900 gold) 22mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Draped Laureate Bust Left
O'Connor p.157 10E-1865M

The 10 escudos was issued from 1865 to 1868.

The coin pictured above has relatively few marks and mint fresh luster throughout. The portrait of Isabel II is beautifully accentuated by frosty luster over most of her face and hair. Similarly bold luster and frosty devices appear on the reverse. The finest example of this date and certainly among the finest of any date seen by this author.



Spain 1866/5 10 escudos Madrid mint PCGS MS62
AV (0.900 gold) 22mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Draped Laureate Bust Left
O'Connor p.157 10E-1866M

The 10 escudos was issued from 1865 to 1868.

The 1866 10 escudos had the lowest mintage of the series, with the Madrid issue at just 29,404 pieces and the Seville issue unknown, but extant pieces being very rare, possibly fewer than 10 pieces. This particular example also exhibits an overdate 1866/5.

The coin pictured above has considerable luster throughout and marks commensurate with the grade. An excellent example of this scarce date.



Spain 1868(68) 10 escudos Madrid mint PCGS MS63
AV (0.900 gold) 22mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Draped Laureate Bust Left
O'Connor p.157 10E-1868(68)M

The 10 escudos was issued from 1865 to 1868.

Beginning in 1868 very small, incuse numbers appear within the mint mark stars on the reverse. The date appears as normal on the obverse and on the reverse within the left star is "18" and within the right star "68". In 1873, when more gold coins were needed, but time and effort was at a premium, the 1868 dated Isabel II coin design was used again, despite the fact that Isabel was no longer Queen, with only a change to the right side star numerals on the reverse to "73". This method continued to be used well into the age of the peseta when the date on obverse would continue unchanged and only the very small date within the stars would be revised to reflect the actual year of issue.

The coin pictured above has considerable luster throughout and marks commensurate with the grade. An attractive example of the type.



Spain 1868(73) 10 escudos Madrid mint PCGS MS63
AV (0.900 gold) 22mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Draped Laureate Bust Left
O'Connor p.157 10E-1868(68)M

The 10 escudos was issued from 1865 to 1868.

Beginning in 1868 very small, incuse numbers appear within the mint mark stars on the reverse. The date appears as normal on the obverse and on the reverse within the left star is "18" and within the right star "68". In 1873, when more gold coins were needed, but time and effort was at a premium, the 1868 dated Isabel II coin design was used again, despite the fact that Isabel was no longer Queen, with only a change to the right side star numerals on the reverse to "73". This method continued to be used well into the age of the peseta when the date on obverse would continue unchanged and only the very small date within the stars would be revised to reflect the actual year of issue.

The coin pictured above has considerable luster throughout and marks commensurate with the grade. A premium quality, very attractive example.

Commemorative



Spain 1868 25 milésimas de escudo Segovia mint NGC MS63BN - ex Barinaga
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AE (bronze) 25mm 12h
Type: Aqueduct
O'Connor p.159 25M-C-1868a

Following the Battle of Alcolea and the departure of Queen Isabel II on 29 September 1868 the first and only commemorative coin associated with Isabel II's reign was issued. This coin commemorates the event and proclaims Spain free.

The central type is an aqueduct symbolic of Segovia with legend SOBERANIA NACIONAL on the obverse and ESPAÑA LIBRE 25 MILESIMAS DE ESCUDO with center inscription 29 DE SETIEMBRE 1868 on the reverse.

This commemorative was issued with a value of 25 milésimas de escudo. The then current standard for fractional coinage at the time was céntimos de escudo and so this denomination is equivalent to 2.5 céntimos de escudo.

It is true that this coin was made after Isabel II was deposed and many think of it as exclusively a provisional government issue. However, the prominence of the date of Isabel's departure on the coin and the fact that its denomination is based on the escudo system of Isabel's Spain allows for some interpretation. In this author's opinion, this can fairly be considered the final coin of the era of Isabel II and an interesting link between her reign and the new provisional government which soon after established a monetary system based on the peseta.

This particular coin has stunning deep purple iridescent luster on both sides with hints of red at the perimeter on the reverse.

Coins of Cataluña



Cataluña 1838 3 cuartos Barcelona mint
AE (copper) 26.1mm 6.96g 12h Edge: dots within overlapping circles
Type: Crowned Arms 3 CUAR
O'Connor p.163 3C-1838B

The copper coins of Cataluña exist in five major types. The III quartos, III cuartos, 3 cuartos, VI quartos, and 6 cuartos. These are abbreviated QUAR and CUAR on the actual coins. Those with QUAR are much harder to find than those with CUAR, but all are scarce in XF condition or better.

These coins were essentially a form of emergency money and quantity was of greater concern than quality. Planchet flaws, porosity, and heavy die wear are common on these coins.

The coin pictured above is of the 3 cuartos type and exhibits signs of a heavily worn die used in its minting and wear consistent with its VF grade. The obverse has dark brown toning with some darker areas and light spotting around the devices as well as a minor planchet flaw at 3 o'clock on the rim. The reverse has attractive light brown toning throughout with a few darker areas within the central devices.



Cataluña 1841 6 cuartos Barcelona mint NGC MS63BN
AE (copper) 32mm 12h Edge: dots within overlapping circles
Type: Crowned Arms 6 CUAR
O'Connor p.165 6C-1841B-5petals

The copper coins of Cataluña exist in five major types. The III quartos, III cuartos, 3 cuartos, VI quartos, and 6 cuartos. These are abbreviated QUAR and CUAR on the actual coins. Those with QUAR are much harder to find than those with CUAR, but all are scarce in XF condition or better.

These coins were essentially a form of emergency money and quantity was of greater concern than quality. Planchet flaws, porosity, and heavy die wear are common on these coins.

The coin pictured above is an uncirculated example of the 6 cuartos type with lustrous brown surfaces. Despite a planchet flaw which appears as dark areas on the obverse, this is one of the most attractive examples of the type seen by this author.



Cataluña 1837 1 peseta Barcelona mint NGC MS62
AR 25mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Crowned Shield
O'Connor p.165 1P-1837B-PS

The silver coins of Cataluña exist in one type and were minted in 1836 and 1837 at the Barcelona mint. These are very difficult to find in problem free uncirculated condition.

These coins were essentially a form of emergency money and quantity was of greater concern than quality. Planchet flaws, porosity, and heavy die wear are common on these coins.

The coin pictured above is a well struck example with luster that is somewhat subdued by toning. One of the most attractive examples of the type seen by this author.

Coins of the Philippines



Philippines 1868 10 centavos de peso Manila mint NGC MS65
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AR (0.900 silver) 18mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.174 10CP-1868m

The Isabel II silver 10 centavos de peso was minted from 1865 to 1868 and has only one type. It is similar in size and weight to the 20 céntimos de escudo of Spain, but with higher purity, and has the same design elements with the exception of the denomination on the reverse and the five pointed stars surrounding it. The five pointed stars identify it as a product of the Manila mint.

It is difficult to find Philippine coins of this era depicting Isabel that are not heavily worn. Problem free examples of all dates in uncirculated condition are rare.

The coin pictured above has bold luster with hints of champagne toning on both obverse and reverse. The finest and most attractive example of this issue seen by this author.



Philippines 1868 20 centavos de peso Manila mint NGC MS63
AR (0.900 silver) 23.8mm 12h Edge: Reeded
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.175 20CP-1868m

The Isabel II silver 20 centavos de peso was minted from 1864 to 1868 and has only one type. It is similar in size and weight to the 40 céntimos de escudo of Spain, but with higher purity, and has the same design elements with the exception of the denomination on the reverse and the five pointed stars surrounding it. The five pointed stars identify it as a product of the Manila mint.

It is difficult to find Philippine coins of this era depicting Isabel that are not heavily worn. Problem free examples of all dates in uncirculated condition are rare.

This particular example is well struck and lustrous with marks commensurate with the grade. Champagne transitions to darker iridescent tones at the perimeter, especially on the reverse. An excellent example of the type.



Philippines 1868 50 centavos de peso Manila mint PCGS MS62
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AR (0.900 silver) 29.6mm 12h Edge: LEY PATRIA REY ***
Type: Laureate Head Right
O'Connor p.176 50CP-1868m

The Isabel II silver 50 centavos de peso was minted from 1865 to 1868 and has only one type. It is identical in size and weight to the 1 escudo of Spain and has the same design elements with the exception of the denomination on the reverse and the five pointed stars surrounding it. The five pointed stars identify it as a product of the Manila mint.

It is difficult to find Philippine coins of this era depicting Isabel that are not heavily worn. Problem free examples of all dates in uncirculated condition are rare.

The coin pictured above is an uncirculated example. It has lovely champagne toning with some mottled darker toning below and left of the bust on the obverse. The reverse has similar champagne toning on the devices with amazing rainbow iridescence throughout the fields. The most attractive example of this issue seen by this author.



Philippines 1868 1 peso Manila mint NGC MS62+
AV (0.875 gold) 15mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Laureate Head Left
O'Connor p.177 1P-1868m

The 1 peso was issued from 1861 to 1868.

It is difficult to find Philippine coins of this era depicting Isabel that are not heavily worn. Problem free examples of all dates in uncirculated condition are rare.

The example presented here is lustrous with marks commensurate with the grade. An attractive example of the type.



Philippines 1868 4 pesos Manila mint PCGS MS64
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AV (0.875 gold) 21mm 12h Edge: reeded
Type: Laureate Head Left
O'Connor p.181 4P-1868m

The Isabel II gold 4 peso was minted from 1861 to 1868 and has only one type. It is slightly smaller in diameter and weight than the Spanish 100 reales and 10 escudos coins, as it was based on Kingdom period weights and gold to silver ratios, with one peso fuerte equal to 8 reales de plata fuerte or 20 reales de vellón. Thus, the Philippine 4 peso coin was equivalent to the Kingdom period 80 reales de vellón gold coin at 6.76g of 0.875 fine gold.

The Philippine gold pesos (1, 2, 4) are the only gold coins to use the Young Laureate Head type and the only appearance of the Laureate Head facing left on any coin of her reign. On the reverse, the "4" and "P" on either side of the central device and the "FILIPINAS" legend below identify this as a coin of the Philippines. The five pointed stars between the denomination and upper legend identify the Manila mint.

It is difficult to find Philippine coins of this era depicting Isabel that are not heavily worn. Problem free examples of all dates in uncirculated condition are rare.

The coin pictured above has some minor marks over the fields, cheek, and neck with strong luster over most of the surfaces on the obverse. The lustrous highlights of the laureate, hair, and much of Isabel's face beautifully accentuate the design of the obverse. The reverse of this coin has few marks on the pillars and other devices with full mint luster throughout. The white area on reverse is on the holder, not the coin. The finest and most attractive example of this issue seen by this author.

Medals of Queen Isabel II

The medals produced during the reign of Isabel II include a wide array of pieces marking events in the life of Isabella and her family, commemorating milestones in Spain's history, and recognizing participants at expositions and contests. Presented herein are some fine examples of medallic art produced during the reign of Isabel II.



Spain 1836 Medal - Honoring the City of Bilbao
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
Type: Young Queen Isabel II and her mother standing overlooking Bilbao
Engraver: Pierre Lévêque
AE 26.76g 41mm 12h Edge: plain (no markings)
O'Connor p.236 M1836AE-Bilbao41

This medal was issued to recognize the city of Bilbao's bravery and loyalty to Queen Isabel II during the first Carlist War. The defenders of the city repelled attacks of three separate Carlist commanders and ultimately overtook the Carlist's camp. This medal depicts the 6 year old queen and her mother, María Cristina, extending laurels to the city of Bilbao. The inscription on the reverse translates: Laurels for the banners of Isabel II, tears for the blood shed. The surrounding legend: The undefeated Bilbao • 25th of December 1836.

This medal was issued in a 50mm diameter and 41mm diameter. The piece pictured above is of the 41mm variety.

A chocolate mahogany tone characterizes the obverse while the reverse has an equally pleasing lighter tone.



Spain 1843 Medal - Isabel's Majority
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
Type: Young Queen Isabel II head right, starburst below
AE 22.25g 31.4mm Edge: plain
O'Connor p.242 M1843AE-Isabel II

This medal was issued in 1843 when Isabel reached the age of majority, enabling her to rule Spain in her own right. The politically progressive inhabitants of Barcelona were eager to be rid of her Regent, Espartero, who had ordered the bombardment of Barcelona in 1842. It is therefore possible that this medal celebrates the Queen's majority because it meant Espartero would no longer wield power as Regent.

The obverse features the head of young Queen Isabel II facing right, starburst below, legend surrounds: ISABEL SEGUNDA REYNA CONSTITUCIONAL. On the reverse is Minerva, mythological female figure representative of Spain, standing 3/4 left with spear in right hand, left arm leaning on shield emblazoned with royal arms. Lion stands left behind Minerva. Legend surrounds: DE ESPAÑA É INDIAS.

Although the engraver is unknown, the design is aesthetically pleasing and demonstrates a notable degree of artistic and engraving skill. As is often the case with medals, the original mintage is unknown. The number still extant is also unknown, but this is the only example encountered by this author in many years of collecting. It bears marks and wear commensurate with a grade of Very Fine.



Spain 1850 Medal - Engineering Regiment - NGC MS63BN

Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*

Type: Diadem Head Right

Engraver: Joseph Arnold Pingret Mint: Paris

AE 56.9mm 12h

Edge: plain with <hand with finger pointing right> and "CUIVRE" appearing at 6h

O'Connor p.246 M1850AE-Engr

This is a military service award recognizing the loyalty and courage of the Engineers Regiment and granting them the right to display the ribbon of the Military Order of San Fernando, the highest military award for bravery.

The inscription on the reverse translates: IN MEMORY OF THE HEROIC DEEDS OF THE ENGINEERS REGIMENT SYMBOLIZED IN THE RIBBONS OF THE ORDER OF SAN FERNANDO OBTAINED IN COMBAT 21 SEPTEMBER 1847

Although the regiment had already earned the ribbon during the second Carlist War in 1847, an award ceremony was held after the war on 15 November 1850 at which Queen Isabel II herself additionally presented this medal to those recipients. Thus, the actual date of issue is likely 1850.

As detailed in the O'Connor book, the bronze issue of this medal had an estimated mintage of 400 pieces, but examples of this medal are often fwith excessive handling, improper cleaning, and other problems. An eye appealing example such as this in uncirculated condition is scarce.

A few rim nicks and light marks on the obverse are overwhelmed by the light chocolate surfaces of this beautiful medal.



Spain 1850 Medal - Isabel II (Marchionni's masterwork)
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
Type: Diadem Head Right
Engraver: Luis Marchionni Mint: Madrid
AE 37mm 12h Edge: plain
O'Connor p.250 M1850AE-Isabel II

This medal bears the earliest known example of Luis Marchionni's beautiful Laureate Head design (1855-1868 silver coins) on obverse and the earliest known example of the Crowned Mantled Arms design (1863-1868 gold 100 reales and 10 escudos) on reverse. The date is established by RAH entry 606 stating that an example of this medal was delivered from the Royal Mint to the Royal Academy of History on 20 December 1850. Unfortunately, no other information about this medal is listed in that text.

This medal is something of a mystery. If it was made to commemorate a specific event it should have an inscription or icons to identify the event. If it is an award medal it should identify itself thus or have a place to inscribe a winner's name. As described in the O'Connor book, this medal may have been created by Luis Marchionni as an example of his work, perhaps his final project during his training as an engraver in the years before 1850 to prove his merit. Whether or not that was the actual origin of these medals it appears that a small number were made and given, possibly by the Queen herself, to visiting dignitaries when the occasion warranted. A single example in gold with mount attached and edge marking "MR JOHN WALKER" was offered at a May 2015 Baldwin's auction.

As of this writing there are four known examples of this medal, one in gold and three in bronze (one of which appears in RAH entry 606). All examples exhibit irregularities at the rim at 12h and 7h (except for the gold example on which the 12h irregularity may have been obliterated by the jewelry work evident at the mount). Whether all of these medals were originally mounted or later mounted and then subsequently the bronze pieces had the mounts removed, or if one or both marks are die flaws is unknown. Perhaps the new owner will undertake more research and finally unlock the mystery.

The RAH date of 1850 makes this the earliest example of Marchionni's beautiful Laureate Head and Mantled Arms designs. And they appear here in much greater relief than on the later coins of Isabel's reign. This truly magnificent medal is perhaps the best demonstration of Marchionni's masterful skill.

This is the very same medal pictured on page 252 of *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*.



Spain 1856 Medal - Espartero and Inauguration of Zaragoza Railway
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AE 10g 26.8mm 12h Edge: plain (no markings)
O'Connor M1856AE-ZRail

This medal commemorates Espartero's inauguration of a new railway from Zaragoza to Madrid. On the obverse is a crowned shield emblazoned with lion on gules tincture background, laurel leaves surround shield; legend surrounds: * AL DUQUE DE LA VICTORIA * REINANDO ISABEL SEGUNDA

On the reverse is a laurel wreath at top, Inscription below: EL 2º Y 3º BAT. / EL DE ARTILLERIA / Y LOS BOMBEROS / DE LA H.M.N. / DE / ZARAGOZA / INAUGURACION / DEL FERRO-CARRIL / A MADRID / MAYO 1856.

This is the very same medal pictured on page 252 of *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*.
A wholesome example of this medal.



Spain 1856 Medal Award - Nobles Artes - NGC MS63BN
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AE 96.55g 56.3mm 12h
Edge: plain with <pointing hand> "CUIVRE"
Type: Diadem Head Left
Engraver: Bartolomé Tomás Coromina Mint: Paris
O'Connor M1856AE-NoblesArtes

This medal either commemorated or was given as an award for public exposition of art in Madrid in 1856. As of this writing, the only known example. This is the very same medal pictured on page 253 of *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*.

obv: Diadem Head Left signed I COROMINA; legend surrounds: ISABEL II P • L • G • DE • DIOS Y LA CONST • REINA DE LAS ESPANAS •

rev: Starburst above, laurel wreath below and surrounding inscription: NOBLES ARTES / EXPOSICION PUBLICA / MADRID MDCCCLVI / 1ª CLASE.



Spain 1857 Medal - Proclamation of Prince of Asturias
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AE 4.13g 20.3mm Edge: plain
O'Connor p254 M1857AE-P-Prince

This medal was issued for the proclamation of the birth of Alfonso XII, Prince of Asturias. Alfonso XII later became King of Spain from 1875-1885 and was considered a good king who cared about his people.

Obverse: two words between pillars of Gibraltar and laurel leaves, rays of sunlight extend up from center to inscription above: "28 / DE NOVIEMBRE / 1857 "

Reverse: crown with rays surrounding, inscription beneath: "AL FELIZ NATALICIO / DEL PRINCIPE / DE / ASTURIAS."

Engraved by Antonio Casals, who also created a related medal and at least two pattern coins of Isabel II.



Spain 1857 Medal - Madrid Agricultural Exposition - Exhibitor

Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*

AE 39.36g 43.5mm x 3.5mm

Edge: plain with <pointing hand> "CUIVRE"

O'Connor p258 M1857AE-ExpoExh

The Royal Decree of 11 March 1857 established the guidelines for the Agricultural Exposition in Madrid.

Categories of competition included all manner of plant crops, spices, fruits, wines, and other foodstuffs as well as livestock, new machinery, methods of cultivation, and even proposed designs for public works such as dams, irrigation canals, and roads. A jury appointed for the purpose of judging the contests had discretion to award medals, monetary prizes, honorable mentions, or some combination thereof.

The "Al Merito" or Merit medal in gold, silver, or bronze was generally given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards and honorable mentions (presumably paper certificates) for notable, yet lesser, submissions.

The "Expositor" or Exhibitor medal was given to persons who exhibited at the event, but who did not receive an award.

The "Por Servicios" or Service medal was given to persons in recognition of special services including event organizers, support staff, and companies that supported the exhibition.



Spain 1857 Medal - Madrid Agricultural Exposition - For Service
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AE 39.53g 43.5mm x 3.5mm
Edge: plain with <pointing hand> "CUIVRE"
O'Connor p259 M1857AE-ExpoService

The Royal Decree of 11 March 1857 established the guidelines for the Agricultural Exposition in Madrid.

Categories of competition included all manner of plant crops, spices, fruits, wines, and other foodstuffs as well as livestock, new machinery, methods of cultivation, and even proposed designs for public works such as dams, irrigation canals, and roads. A jury appointed for the purpose of judging the contests had discretion to award medals, monetary prizes, honorable mentions, or some combination thereof.

The "Al Merito" or Merit medal in gold, silver, or bronze was generally given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards and honorable mentions (presumably paper certificates) for notable, yet lesser, submissions.

The "Expositor" or Exhibitor medal was given to persons who exhibited at the event, but who did not receive an award.

The "Por Servicios" or Service medal was given to persons in recognition of special services including event organizers, support staff, and companies that supported the exhibition.



Spain 1858 Medal - Water Delivery from Lozoya River to Madrid
AE 10.34g 26.31mm x 2.57mm
Edge: plain with <pointing hand> "CUIVRE"
O'Connor p260 M1858AE-Lozoya

This medal commemorates the beginning of water delivery from the Lozoya River into Madrid. In 1848 engineers Juan Rafo and Juan de Ribera approached Juan Bravo Murillo, the Minister of Commerce, Education, and Public Works with plans to construct a canal from the Lozoya River to Madrid. With Murillo's recommendation the government of Isabel II issued a Royal Decree in 1848 directing engineers Juan Rafo and Juan de Ribera Rafo to begin work on the project. In 1851 the King Consort, Francisco, set the first stone for the canal that would eventually extend 70km from Lozoya River to Madrid. In 1858 a ceremony was held to celebrate the arrival of water from the Lozoya River to San Bernardo street in Madrid. This medal commemorates the presence of the royal family at the event.

The edge is plain except for the hallmark of a hand pointing to the right, which is the edgemark of Paris mint from 1845 to 1860, and the word "CUIVRE" which is French for "copper". On some medals the "C" in "CUIVRE" appears backwards or damaged, possibly due to a damaged punch.

A companion medal commemorating the inauguration of the Canal de Isabel II also exists (see next entry).



Spain 1858 Medal - Canal de Isabel 2 - PCGS MS65RD
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AE 23mm 12h Edge: plain (no markings)
Type: Laureate Head Left - no ribbon
Designer: José Pérez Varela Engraver: Francisco Coromina
O'Connor M1858AE-Canal

This medal commemorates the inauguration of the Canal de Isabel II which delivers water from the Lozoya River into Madrid. In 1848 engineers Juan Rafo and Juan de Ribera approached Juan Bravo Murillo, the Minister of Commerce, Education, and Public Works with plans to construct a canal from the Lozoya River to Madrid. With Murillo's recommendation the government of Isabel II issued a Royal Decree in 1848 directing them to begin work on the project. In 1851 the King consort, Francisco, set the first stone for the canal that would eventually extend 70km from Lozoya River to Madrid. In 1858 a ceremony was held to celebrate the arrival of water from the Lozoya River to San Bernardo street in Madrid. Today, the Canal de Isabel II continues to provide water service to 21st century Spain.

This "Laureate Head Left - no ribbon design" first appeared on pattern gold 100 reales and, facing right, silver 20 reales in 1855. Although a different design ultimately prevailed for those regular issue coins, the design appeared again on this medal issued by the Madrid mint in silver and copper.

Lustrous mint frost glows on the entire bust surrounded by glassy fields with very few marks on the obverse. The reverse has some mottled toning with considerable luster and very few blemishes. The finest example seen by this author.



Spain 1859 Medal - Africa Campaign - NGC MS61RB
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AE 57.6mm 12h Edge: plain (no markings)
Type: Crowned Bust of Queen Isabel II Left
Engraver: Louis Adolpe Gerbier; Editor: Francois Massonet
O'Connor M1859AE-AfricaWar

This medal commemorates Spain's military campaign in Africa.

The obverse depicts a crowned bust of Queen Isabel II facing left; legend surrounds: YSABEL SEGUNDA REYNA DE LAS ESPAÑAS. ; below: A. GERBIER. F.

On the reverse is a floral pattern intermixed with scrollwork that encircles inscription: QUE SE TASEN / Y VENDAN TODAS MIS / JOYAS, SI ES NECESARIO AL LOGRO DE TAN SANTA EMPRESA / QUE SE DISPONGA SIN REPARO DE / MI PATRIMONIO PARTICULAR PARA / EL BIEN Y LA GLORIA DE MIS HIJOS; / DISMINUIRÉ MI FAUSTO; UNA HUMILDE / CINTA BRILLARA EN MU CUELLO / MEJOR QUE HILOS DE BRILLANTES, / SI ESTOS PUEDEN SERVIR PARA / DEFENDER Y LEVANTAR LA / FAMA DE NUESTRA / ESPAÑA ; in scrollwork below: 21 OCTUBRE 1859 ; below scrollwork: MASSONNET. ED. ; legend surrounds: GUERRA DE AFRICA CONTRA MARRUECOS

This translates roughly to: I would price and sell all my jewels if necessary to achieve our holy quest and arrange that without remedy from my own heritage for the good and glory of my children; my splendor diminished, a humble cord would shine on my neck more brightly than strings of diamonds if it may serve to defend and lift the fame of our Spain.

Louis Adolphe Gerbier engraved the obverse and Francois Massonet designed the reverse. Based on these artists, one would expect this to be a Monnaie de Paris issue. However, there are no edge markings to support such a conclusion.

This is the very same medal pictured on page 264 of *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*.

Attractive coppery toning can be found throughout which is especially beautiful underlying the central inscription on the reverse. The finest example seen by this author.



Spain 1860 Medal - Royal Academy of History - Medal of Merit
AE 51.43g 44.94mm x 4.70mm Edge: plain (no markings)
Type: Laureate Bust of Queen Isabel II Right
Engraver: Luis Marchionni
O'Connor p266 M1860AE-RAHMerit

This award medal was given by the Royal Academy of History to persons recognized for their skill or contributions. It bears a beautiful depiction of Queen Isabel II engraved by Luis Marchionni. This bust is the same style as that seen on M1850AE-LM-Isabel II and on the medal commemorating the Queen's visit to the new Madrid mint (M1862AE- QueenMintVisit). A beautiful medal that clearly demonstrates Marchionni's engraving skill.

Other than those in the inventory of the Royal Academy of History and the Patrimonio Nacional in Spain these are rarely seen in uncirculated condition. In fact, despite the seemingly common purpose of this medal, examples in any condition are seldom seen in the market.



Spain 1862 Medal - Queen's Visit to Seville in October
AE 28.63g 37.3mm x 3.3mm Edge: plain
Type: Laureate Head of Queen Isabel II Right
O'Connor p270 M1862AE-SevilleOct

The legend on obverse translates to Isabel II Queen of Spain. The latin legend on reverse translates roughly as "Seville thanks you for visiting" and the inscription NO 8 DO (the motto of Seville) followed by the long form date 14 October 1862.

Although the 8-pointed star on the reverse might seem to indicate this is a product of Barcelona mint, it seems odd that the local Seville mint would not have struck this medal if requested to do so. It is also possible that these were produced by a private manufacturer or several different manufacturers rather than at an official mint. Given the number of different sizes of these medals and subtle differences in their design this actually seems more likely.

Other medals in bronze, silver, and gold of varying sizes (23mm, 30mm, 33mm, 37mm) with the same or similar obverse design and a reverse based around the NO 8 DO motto exist with different legends and inscriptions and, in some cases, a different date of 17 September 1862. They are all of similar value for those of the same size as the example above and somewhat lower value for those of smaller diameter. One of the 30mm gold medal variants has an obverse legend with the spelling "ELISABET". There may also be silver and bronze examples of that variety.



M1862AE-SevilleOct: 1862 Medal - Queen's Visit to Seville in October

Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*

AE 28.63g 37.3mm x 3.3mm Edge: plain

Type: Laureate Head of Queen Isabel II Right

O'Connor p270 M1862AE-SevilleOct

The legend on obverse translates to Isabel II Queen of Spain. The latin legend on reverse translates roughly as "Seville thanks you for visiting" and the inscription NO 8 DO (the motto of Seville) followed by the long form date 14 October 1862.

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This is the very same medal pictured on page 270 of *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*.



Spain 1862 Medal - Queen's Visit to Almeria
Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*
AE 22.86g 36.8mm x 2.6mm Edge: plain
Type: Laureate Head of Queen Isabel II Right
O'Connor p271 M1862AE-Almeria

The obverse depicts Isabel II with an excessively abbreviated legend that appears to address her majesty Queen Isabel II, the King Consort, and Alfonso XII - Prince of Asturias on the visit to Almeria. The reverse identifies the city's archeological society and commemorates two visits to Almeria: the first in 1489 by Queen Isabel of Spain and the second in 1862 by Queen Isabel II.

This medal was likely commissioned by the archeological society in question to present to the Queen upon her visit and to sell to other members of the society and the public to commemorate the event. It is not clear whether this medal was struck at an official Spanish mint or by a private manufacturer.

This is the very same medal pictured on page 271 of *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*.



Spain 1862 Medal - Queen's Visit to Madrid Mint
AE 53.58g 50.1mm x 4.8mm Edge: plain
Type: Laureate Head of Queen Isabel II Left
Engraver: Luis Marchionni
O'Connor p273 M1862E-QMV

On 13 November 1861 the new mint at Madrid was officially opened with Queen Isabel II and Leopold O'Donnell in attendance. The new mint employed the latest coin making techniques and steam powered equipment. Almost a year later, on the fifth day of December 1862 the Queen and her family made another visit to the mint of Madrid.¹⁶⁵ Chief Engraver of the Mint, Luis Marchionni, engraved this medal as a physical reminder of the mint which the royal family could take home with them. He gave this medal to Queen Isabel II herself and several other dignitaries. He gave a smaller medal depicting the royal arms to the prince and princesses and others in attendance.

This medal was produced in very small quantities and finding one is extremely challenging.

The fields bear signs of handling, but the high relief depiction of Queen Isabel II in bold, mahogany bronze is near flawless and breathtaking as such.



Spain 1862 Medal - Queen's Visit to Madrid Mint NGC MS64BN
AE 50.85g 50.6mm x 4.2mm Edge: plain
Type: Laureate Head of Queen Isabel II Left
Engraver: Luis Marchionni
O'Connor p273 M1862E-QMV

On 13 November 1861 the new mint at Madrid was officially opened with Queen Isabel II and Leopold O'Donnell in attendance. The new mint employed the latest coin making techniques and steam powered equipment. Almost a year later, on the fifth day of December 1862 the Queen and her family made another visit to the mint of Madrid.¹⁶⁵ Chief Engraver of the Mint, Luis Marchionni, engraved this medal as a physical reminder of the mint which the royal family could take home with them. He gave this medal to Queen Isabel II herself and several other dignitaries. He gave a smaller medal depicting the royal arms to the prince and princesses and others in attendance.

This medal was produced in very small quantities and finding one is extremely challenging.

This near gem example is among the finest known of this rare type and its high relief depiction of Queen Isabel II is a stunning example of Marchionni's engraving skill.



Spain 1868 Medal - Dawn of Liberty

Actual piece pictured in *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*

AE 41.53g 47.3mm x 4.2mm Edge: plain

Type: Hispania seated left with right hand on lion

Engraver: José García Morago

O'Connor p278 M1868AE-Aurora

On the morning of 18 September 1868 Admiral Juan Bautista Topete raised the flag of revolution atop his frigate *Zaragoza* in the harbor at Cádiz. General Prim joined him there and the soldiers and folk of Cádiz began the march inland to the famous battle at Alcolea. By 29 September 1868 the Queen had fled the country. Shortly after this "Glorious Revolution" a proposal circulated among the glad Spaniards to raise a monument to the event. Some wise soul commented that monuments to bloodshed of brother fighting brother would not serve the country well and the idea faded. In Barcelona, however, some felt it imperative to memorialize the events at Cádiz and produced this medal. The obverse depicts the allegorical female figure of Hispania seated facing left with her right hand on a lion which stands beside her and her left hand on a shield with coat of arms. Banners, cannon, and muskets lay at her feet. The legend ALZAMIENTO NACIONAL (National Uprising) around and 29 SETIEMBRE 1868 in the exergue. On the reverse is the Admiral's frigate in a calm sea with legend AURORA DE LIBERTAD (Dawn of Liberty) and 18 SETIEMBRE 1868 in exergue.

This last medal of Queen Isabel's reign is among the rarest issued during the period. Over many years of searching this author has only encountered two examples, with this being the finest.

This is the very same medal pictured on page 278 of *The Coins of Queen Isabel II of Spain*.

Coins of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands



Netherlands 1906 10 cents PCGS MS63
AR (0.640 silver) 15mm 6h
Type: Young Head Left
KM #136

The early silver coins of Queen Wilhelmina were issued in relatively small numbers and circulated heavily.

This 10 cents issue is lustrous with hints of toning is an excellent example of the type.



Netherlands 1892 1 gulden PCGS MS64
AR (0.945 silver) 28mm 6h
Edge: ★ GOD ★ ZY ★ MET ★ ONS
Type: Young Head with Long Hair Left
KM #117

The early silver coins of Queen Wilhelmina were issued in relatively small numbers and circulated heavily. They are seldom encountered in problem free uncirculated condition.

The edge marking GOD ZY MET ONS translates roughly God be with us. This motto appears with slight variation on the edge of other coins of the Netherlands as GOD ZIJ MET ONS with the same meaning. The “zy” appears to be an older word that was replaced in common usage with “zij” (be or is in English).



Netherlands 1898 2 ½ gulden PCGS MS64 ex Lissner
AR (0.945 silver) 25g 38mm 6h
Edge: GOD ★ ZIJ ★ MET ★ ONS ★
Type: Young Head Left
KM #123

The early silver coins of Queen Wilhelmina were issued in relatively small numbers and circulated heavily. They are seldom encountered in problem free uncirculated condition. The 2 ½ gulden is the best example of this. It is estimated that fewer than a dozen of these coins remain in gem condition.

This example from the Lissner Collection is one of a handful in this lofty grade and possesses eye appeal that rivals its counterparts. This offering is a rare opportunity that collectors of Wilhelmina may not see again in their lifetime.

Medals of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands



Netherlands 1892 NGC MS63BN
AE 118.6g 66.2mm 12h Edge: plain
Type: Young Head with Long Hair Left
Engravers: Bart Van Hove, J.P. M. Menger, and W. Schammer

This is a prize medal awarded for a variety of purposes in the 1890s. The obverse design is very similar to and possibly the predecessor of or companion of the design used on silver and gold coins of the Netherlands during this period.

Obverse: Bust of young Queen Wilhelmina facing left. Beaded border and legend surrounds: WILHELMINA KONINGIN DER NEDERLANDEN Below at right: BART.V.HOVE. J.P.M. MENGER.

Reverse: complex design of oval escutcheon with lion figures and crown atop is surrounded by braches of laurel and berries. Inscription within oval center: 10 Juni / 1892.
At bottom edge: W.S. (W. Schammer)

Other Exceptional Medals



France 1907 Paris Automobile Exposition NGC MS65BN
AE 150g 68mm x 4mm 12h
Edge: <cornucopia> BRONZE
Type: Semi-nude female seated in ornate winged tricycle
Engraver: Jean Baptiste Daniel Dupuis (1849-1899)

This is a prize medal for the 1907 Exposition at Grand Palais in Paris that celebrated the first decade of the automobile. The original artwork seen on the obverse was commissioned by the Automobile Club of France (formed 1894-1895) and executed by Daniel Dupuis in 1895. As was common practice for medals of this period, the design was also used on this beautiful 1907 medal for the Automobile Club's exposition. This medal was either not awarded or given without engraving so the cartouche remains blank.

Obverse: Semi-nude female seated in ornate winged tricycle traveling through clouds, her right hand holding a torch and her left hand on the tiller; legend surrounds: EXPOSITION DECENNALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE 1907 1894-1895; signed below: DANIEL DUPUIS

Reverse: Gear of Industry with oak and laurel leaves surround cartouche; inscription above: SOCIETE D'ENCOURAGEMENT; legend surrounds: AUTOMOBILE • CLUB • DE • FRANCE

Gorgeous chocolate brown surfaces and flowing design elements characterize this exceptional art nouveau medal. Includes original box.

This medal's condition is exceptional for any medal, but more so for this particular issue as most examples of this type are encountered in much lower states of preservation. As of this writing this is the finest example graded by NGC and the finest example seen by this author.



Switzerland 1864 50th Anniversary of Unification NGC MS64BN
AE 59.82g 47mm 12h
Edge: plain
Type: Geneva and Helvetia standing
Engraver: Hughes Bovy

When Napoleon took control of the Swiss cantons in 1798 he unified them as the Helvetic Republic, primarily for ease of administration. The Republic collapsed in 1803 and reverted to a loose confederation of cantons. Considerable upheaval and discourse carried on until the Long Diet met and afforded Geneva full membership in the Confederation in 1814. Soon after, the Congress of Vienna recognized Switzerland as an independent country and permanently neutral in European affairs. This medal celebrates the 50th anniversary of Geneva joining the Confederation.

Obverse: Geneva and Helvetia standing with arms around each other and swords and shields in other hands. At side of pedestal: ANT. BOVY and within pedestal: D'APRES DOREA Legend surrounds: UN POUR TOUS * TOUS POUR UN * 12 SEPTEMBER 1814 *

Reverse: Oak Wreath encircling inscription: CELEBRE / A GENEVE / LE 12 SEPT.RE / 1864 with legend surrounding: 50ME ANNIVERSAIRE DE LA RÉUNION DE GENÈVE A LA SUISSE.

This medal is unlisted, but similar and likely the predecessor to Richter 594c and Martin 297.

This beautiful medal possesses sharp, near flawless design elements in a dark mahogany color characteristic of medals of this period. Those elements are framed by shimmering amber fields which give it a prooflike appearance. A stunning example of Bovy's work.



Great Britain 1710 Capture of Bethune, St. Venant, Aire PCGS SP64
AE Edge: plain
Engraver: John Croker
Eimer 447

Throughout the reign of Queen Anne the War of Spanish Succession occupied the thoughts of Europeans. The English and Dutch led the Grand Alliance against Spain and France to prevent control of those two countries by a single king. The power that those two countries held over Europe and overseas colonies would have made such a combined nation dominant in trade, military, and political terms.

A number of different medals were issued through Queen Anne's reign celebrating British victories in the war. Although early on morale was high, as the years passed with many young men dead and allied treasuries dwindling, the patience for continuing the fight became strained. This medal memorializes the surrenders of cities of Bethune, St. Venant, and Aire to Britain and her allies in 1710.

Obverse: Bust of Queen Anne facing left. Below bust engraver signature "I.C."

Reverse: Trophy of captured French arms & standards; legend surrounds: BETHVNIA • FANO • STI • VENANTII • ET • ARIA • CAPTIS •; in exergue: INSPECTANT • GALL • CENT • MILL • MDCCX •

The high relief demonstrating John Croker's skill combined with attractively contrasting light and dark chocolate color make this a notable example.



Great Britain (Italy) 1719 Princess Clementina - Escape from Innsbrück
NGC MS64BN
AE 41.6g 48mm Edge: plain
Engraver: Ottone Hamerani
Eimer 484

James Stuart, son of the recently deposed King James VII, led a long struggle to reclaim the thrones of England, Ireland, and Scotland. Princess Maria Clementina was the grand daughter of John Sobieski, King of Poland. She had many connections and a sizeable dowry. As such, James considered her the perfect choice for a wife. Of course, King George I of England opposed the marriage fearing the power and influence it might bring his enemy.

Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI had Clementina arrested on her way to Rome and confined her in Innsbrück Castle.

Clementina deceived the guards and escaped to Bologna, Italy where she was married by proxy to James. Pope Clement XI acknowledged James and Clementina as King and Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland and provided them a home in Rome. And it was the Pope's engraver, Otto Hamerani, who produced this medal to commemorate the events.

Obverse: Bust of Princess Maria Clementina facing left; engraver's signature below bust: OTTO HAMERANI; legend surrounds: CLEMENTINA • M • BRITAN • FR • ET • HIB • REGINA •

Reverse: Clementina with reigns in one hand driving ornately decorated chariot pulled by two horses in the foreground set against a background of Italian landscape with city at left, ship at center, rising sun at right; legend above: FORTVNAM CAVSAMQVE SEQVOR; below exergue: DECEPTIS • CVSTODIBVS • / • MDCCXIX •

The exquisitely detailed engraving of beautiful designs both obverse and reverse bring Maria Clementina and her plight to life some 300 years after the events. This exceptionally choice example has lustrous chocolate brown surfaces with minor marks from light handling. That it has survived 300 years in this condition is a wonder. A joy to behold.



Netherlands 1713 - *Peace of Utrecht* by D. Drappentier - NGC MS65
AR 48.63g 48.25mm x 3.01mm at edge, 6mm overall 12h
Edge: plain (no markings)
MI II 402/262; van Loon IV. 657-658 (VERY RARE)

This medal commemorates the Peace of Utrecht that brought an end to the 13 years long War of Spanish Succession between the Grand Alliance of the English, Dutch, and Austrians versus the French and Spanish. A product of the Dutch medallist D. Drappentier issued in 1713, this medal borrows much of its design from his earlier *Peace of Ryswick*. Both medals, issued by the city of Dordrecht, jubilantly celebrate a dawn of peace at long last and both are very rare. Symbology pervades the medal's design with mythological figures, cornucopias, sailing ships, and coins employed to symbolize hope for renewed trade and prosperity now that peace has returned to Europe.

On the obverse the female personification of Peace, crowned, holds olive branch and locks the door of the Temple of Janus, the columns around which are entwined with roses, lilies, and orange branches; Inscription on door: ANNO / MDCC / XIII; chained at either side of the door are War and Discord; in the background behind Peace are the globe, cornucopia from which coins pour, trade ships on the sea in distance, and Mercury, symbolizing commerce, holding caduceus and a scroll inscribed EUROPÆ PAX REDDITA. (Peace restored to Europe) In exergue: TRAIECTUM. (the city of Utrecht)

On the reverse Europa, female personification of Europe, sits facing left, a bountiful cornucopia in her left hand and an olive branch in her right; a sunburst coming through clouds above; in the background a fleet of sailing ships symbolizing trade and prosperity; in exergue: EUROPA

The exquisite engraving in high relief makes the figures come to life, as if about to emerge from the medal to share their hope for renewed safety and prosperity following a war that raged for too long. This masterpiece of Drappentier is a rare medal by any measure. This example further amazes with its remarkable state of preservation and gorgeous contrast of shadow and subtle toning. A wonder to behold!