ABOUT THOSE COUNTERSTAMPS -

SPANISH COPPER COINS AND THEIR COUNTERSTAMPS IN THE 17th CENTURY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The field of counterstamps or countermarks is fascinating. In a previous article I mentioned many of the reasons for their coming into being. It is clear that at least the official ones usually originate as reactions to stress situations. These may be caused by political, military or economic circumstances or, as often is the case, by a combination of these factors. Nowhere is this more clear than when we study one of the most common, and probably the ugliest, series in this field, the 17th century coppers of Spain, or rather Castile.

Even at present, Spain contains many regions with their own laws, languages and privileges. In former times this was even more the case. The country developed as the result of one family inheriting, or conquering, several states, and so uniting them under one crown. We can see a parallel in Great Britain, where likewise there are still many differences in the various parts that make up the United Kingdom.

Spain proper in the 16th and 17th centuries consisted of three main kingdoms or "crown" (Fig. 1). Of these, Castile, itself a union of the major kingdoms of Leon and Castile, was the most powerful and important state. It contained maybe five million of Spain's estimated population of eight million at the beginning of the 17th century. Also, here the power of the sovereign was the strongest.

The second in rank and power was Aragon, again itself a union of the Kingdoms of Aragon, Valencia and the Baleares. It also comprised the combined country of Barcelona and principality of Catalonia. Despite its lesser titles, the latter area was actually the most important part of the crown of Aragon. In this conglomerate the power of the ruler was often severely restricted. The third kingdom was that of Navarra, most of which had been conquered in the early 16th century from its lawful princes. It was of no economic importance.

Because the power of the monarchs, especially in the field of raising taxes and controlling the economic life, was greatest in Castile, the overseas colonies were administered strictly from that kingdom, particularly from Seville. Subjects of the other "crowns" were not allowed to deal directly with the "Indies", but had to obtain a Castilian license.

In addition to the great number and variety of states that belonged to Spain proper, its kings also controlled many other countries.



Fig. 1

Foremost among these was Portugal, which lost its independence, but not its separate identity, nor its colonies, in 1580. Many parts of Italy, such as Sicily, Naples and Milan, also belonged to the Spanish empire, as did most of the Netherlands.

The association of such widespread territories was not always to the advantage of either the separate states or that of the whole. Many wars were fought for dynastic or religious reasons that were detrimental to the interests of the subjects. This often led to great discontent and not infrequently to disobedience and revolt.

The major revolt in the Spanish empire had been raging since 1568 in the Low Countries. There, despite the exertion of great efforts in manpower and treasure by the kings, the northern part had succeeded in becoming independent in all but name. This war, as it had become, also embroiled the Spanish in conflicts with England and France. In fact, it was the major drain on the Spanish treasury. As if that were not enough, there were continuous hostilities with the Ottoman Turks and their North African vassals. And, because the Spanish kings considered themselves the champions of Catholicism, they intervened in the religious battles that raged all across Europe.

The combination of these problems exhausted the resources of the crown, notwithstanding the enormous income of the kings. There were state bankruptcies, in law or in practice, in 1557, 1575 and 1596. In the discussion of the numismatics of the 17th century, we shall encounter more. Many of the states, where the king's powers were restricted, became more and more reluctant to vote money for causes that they

deemed not to be in their interest. Internationally, Spain's credit rating sank very low, as many banking houses went under as the result of dishonored loans to its crown. This meant that the kings had to get more and more money out of Castile, where they had the power to do so. In that unhappy land, though, clergy and nobility were basically exempt from paying taxes, though occasionally they could be persuaded or pressured to contribute.

So the financial burden was mainly borne by the lower classes, the manufacturers, the laborers and the poorer merchants - the richer usually had been able to purchase letters of nobility. Industry was not in high esteem in Castile, unlike soldiering, and the fragile economy was already suffering badly from a depression. Agriculture was in even worse shape, partly because of neglect, partly as result of a deteriorating climate. Many people moved from the rural areas to the cities, where they swelled the ranks of the unskilled, the unemployed, the vagrants and the mendicants, and contributed to the pauperization of general society. Most people lived far removed from the splendour of gold and silver and beautiful paintings for which Spain is mainly known at this time.

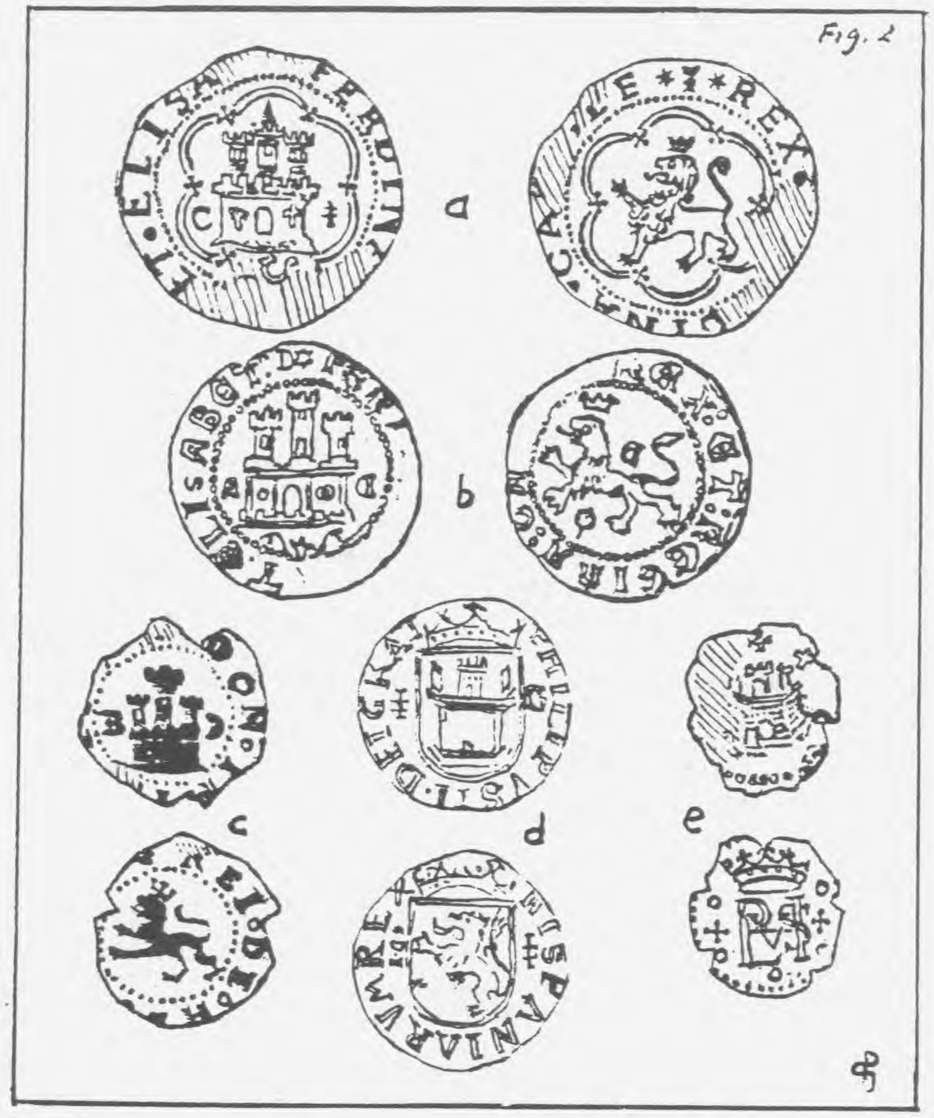
One remark needs to be made concerning the countermarks. Because of the wretched state of most of these coins, they are best illustrated by drawings. Many pieces carry several generations of stamps. For each category of stamps illustrated, I have turned the coins to show the pertinent countermark(s) in an upright position. It should not be too hard to spot them.

2. FROM THE CATHOLIC KINGS TO 1602

For the discussion of the 17th-century counterstamps we have only occasionaly to refer to gold and silver coins. On the one hand, these were the preserve of the rich and powerful, who could defend themselves against the depredations of the crown, if they did not themselves participate. On the other hand these species were used internationally, for trade and military and political purposes, so that it was essential to conserve their integrity. Let it suffice to mention that the basic coin in Spain was the silver real. Since 1497 this was subdivided into 34 maravedis, and this awkward division lasted into the 19th century.

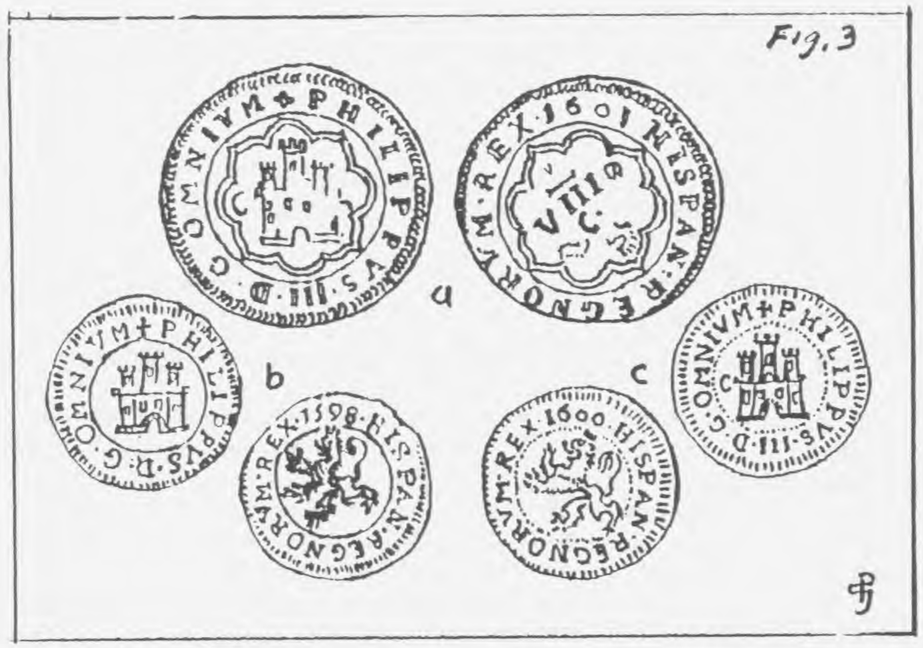
At the end of the reign of the "Catholic Kings", Ferdinand of Aragon (+ 1516) and Isabella of Castile (+ 1504), large copper coins were for the first time introduced in great numbers in Castile. This series comprised a double cuarto, valued at 8 maravedis (or cuartillo of 8 1/2 m.), a cuarto of four maravedis (Fig. 2a, 22a), and half cuartos or ochavos (Fig. 2b), worth two maravedis. In addition there were two billon coins (in Spanish: vellon, i.e. with small amounts of silver), a double blanca of one maravedi, and a blanca of 1/2 maravedi. These pieces continued to be struck, probably to about 1566, without change of title. From around that year may date some coins with the title of Philip II, but of the type of the Catholic Kings (Fig. 2c).

Then, at the end of 1566, it was decreed that the following coins be struck: from "rich" billon (0.215 silver) a cuartillo of 8 1/2 maravedis (Fig. 2d), cuartos of 4 maravedis, and half cuartos of two



maravedis; from "poor" billon (0.014 silver, in order to be able to strike larger pieces), blancas of one-half maravedi (Fig. 2e). Most of these coins are scarce; many were withdrawn from circulation at the time of issue of the next series in 1597. There were several mints working at this time: Burgos, Cuenca, Granada, La Coruna, Segovia, Toledo and Valladolid were all active in this minting. All these coins, which were in circulation before 1597, were later called calderilla.

Philip II had suffered his third bankruptcy in 1596. On 31 December of that year it was ordered to strike billon coins without any silver! This caused such an uproar that on 1 February 1597 it was decided to return to true billon pieces with at least some silver content. The coins were to be struck at the Ingenio, the new mint of Segovia. This was constructed in 1582, and was a better facility than could be found anywhere else in Europe, except at Hall in Tirol. The resulting coins are very attractive and well made. This series comprises coins of four, two (Fig. 3b), and one maravedis. They are clearly differentiated in size, and the 4-maravedis-coin has a distinctive design



(Fig. 3a, of Philip III). They are much heavier than the previous series. The circulating copper and billon coins now apparently settled down to the values of the new coins of the same size.

When Philip II died in 1598, his son Philip III, a not very able ruler, succeeded him. He abandoned the actual power to his favorite, the duke of Lerma. The king and his entourage could not cope with the bad state of the treasury. Corruption, the sale of offices, etc. led to a dwindling respect for the crown. During the first four years of the new monarch the striking of the copper coins continued with only a change in the cypher behind the name. From 1599 a C appears to the left of the castle, the initial of the mint assessor Juan Castellano (Fig. 3a,3c). The next year the mint at Cuenca also started to strike these coins. Its products are easily recognizable from the machine made pieces that came out of the Ingenio, because they were made with the hammer. In addition they show the chalice mint mark and I with a small o above it. Because of their great similarity to the older circulating coins, in practice they later followed the vicissitudes of the calderilla.

3. FROM 1602 to 1626

Philip II had left the remaining Spanish Netherlands to his daughter Isabella, a competent woman, and her husband Albert. Unfortunately, he had not separated them from control by the Spanish crown. This kept Spain involved in widespread and expensive warfare. The advisers of the imcompetent new king were men whose ability was not equal to their ambition. This situation led, of course, to a chronic shortage of money.

One of the schemes to combat this shortage left its traces in the numismatic history of the country. In June 1602 it was decided to double the face value of the circulating copper and billon coins by counterstamping. At the same time a new series of coins was to be struck which was adapted to the new valuation. The old coins were

recalled and the owners received an equal face amount in newly-minted pieces or counterstamped old ones. Only those old coins were marked that circulated for four and two maravedis. These comprised three groups:

1) the calderilla, that is, those coins struck before 1596, mainly types with the names of Ferdinand and Isabella and those in the name of Philip II,
2) the coins struck from 1597-1602 at the Ingenio of Segovia in the names of Philip II and Philip III,
3) the pieces struck with the hammer from 1600-1602 at Cuenca.

The stamp was applied on only one side, and consisted of the new value, written as VIII (Fig. 4) or IIII (Fig. 5), between a crown above and the mintmark below (B - Burgos, C - Cuenca, G - Granada, scallop - La Coruna, aquaduct - Segovia, S - Seville, T with small o on top - Toledo, three or four wavy bars - Valladolid). The crowns are also different for each place. Sometimes there seems not to be any mint-mark. It must be noted that in the case of these counterstamps as well as of all later ones, the marks have not always been carefully applied. A worse problem for all of them is the fact that they are often obscured by later counterstamps, and these in turn are often not complete because of the interference of the previous ones with the new designs.

The new coins were struck without any admixture of silver, even though they were officially called billon! Those struck at the Ingenio were still of excellent workmanship. As may be seen on Fig. 6 and Fig. 22b, only the 8-maravedis, struck to the specifications of the old 4-maravedis piece, showed a new design. The other coins have similar designs to the old pieces of the same size. All these coins, except the new maravedi, now show a mark of value (VIII, IIII, II) on the obverse, the side with the castle. The need for great amounts of the new coins was foreseen, so all the old mints were also pressed into service. Their products were, as could be expected, far inferior to those of the Ingenio. Fig. 7 shows coins from these mints of this reign and the next.

The flooding of the country with large quantities of minor coins not surprisingly did not better the economic situation of the people, nor improve in the long run the solvency of the crown. The removal of the capital from Madrid to Valladolid, from 1601-1606, was a costly disaster. The breathing space afforded by peace treaties with England in 1598 and France in 1604 was wasted. In 1607 the state was again nearly bankrupt. The situation was so bad that Spain was forced to start negotiations with the rebelling northern Netherlands, that led to a truce in 1609 and virtual recognition of their independence. In May of 1607 the Cortes (Parliament) used this state of affairs to obtain a cessation of the overabundant minting of "billon" against the payment of more than a half a million reals. Indeed, from the end of 1608 no "billon" coins were being struck, but this solemn undertaking was broken after only three and a half years. The reason was that the treasury was again becoming bare, partly as the result of the expulsion of the Moriscos, the most industrious part of the population, in 1609-11.



Fig. 4



Fig.5

From March 1612 on, the Ingenio again struck large quantities of 8 and 4 maravedis pieces, and small quantities of double maravedis. In 1618 the old mint of Segovia, as well as those of Burgos, Cuenca, Madrid (a new mint with old-fashioned methods, mintmark MD), Toledo and Valladolid, started to strike 8 and 4 maravedis as well. This was possibly in response to new requirements of money caused by the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in Germany. The old mints did not produce 2 maravedis pieces, and the one maravedi disappeared altogether. In 1619 a new cessation of minting was ordered, again for twenty years. Only for the two mints of Segovia are copper pieces known with the date 1620.

At the death of Philip III early in 1621, his 16-years old son Philip IV, an even less competent ruler, took over. There was a corresponding

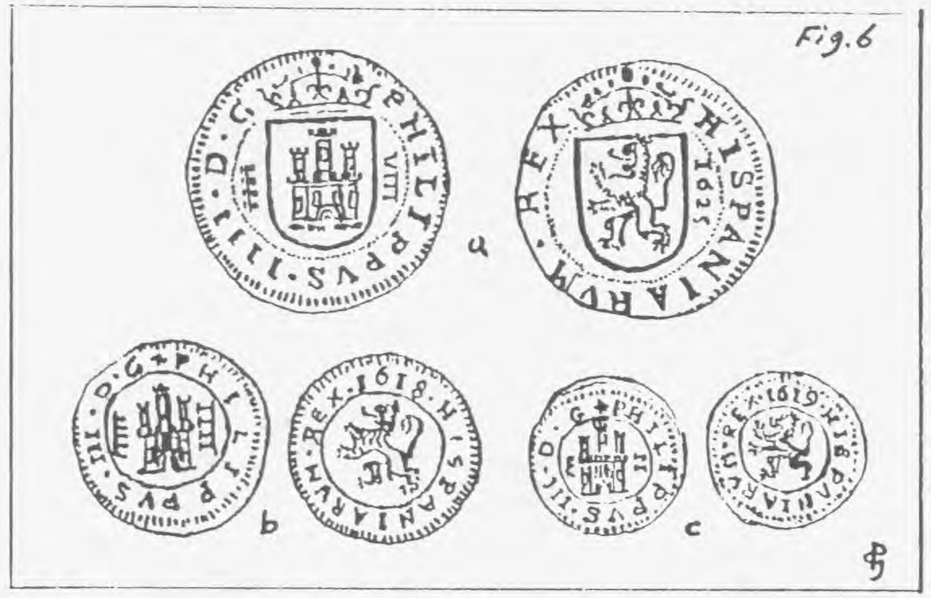


Fig.6

change in favorite. The duke of Olivares now took control. He was not devoid of ability, but was unscrupulous, and his ambition to restore Spain's former greatness made him blind to the country's economic exhaustion. As a result he renewed hostilities in the Netherlands, which Philip IV inherited at the same time that the 12-years' truce ended. Forty years of mainly disastrous wars followed. A very inauspicious beginning of the reign was formed by the loss of a large part of the treasure fleet of 1622.

From 1621 to 1626 the same species as were minted in the last years of the previous reign were continued, with only a change in the king's cypher (Fig. 7). Seville (S) now joined the other "primitive" mints. Cuenca seems to have been the only mint to strike rare two-maravedis coins.

4. FROM 1626 to 1636

In 1626 a laudable attempt was made to clean up the currency circulation. The populace had to bring in their calderilla, for which they received eighty percent of the face value in silver, the rest would be deposited and its value would be reduced to one quarter. In 1627 it was decided that the members of the overseeing committees would be fully compensated for the amounts that they brought in, thus guaranteeing them a tidy profit! But with bad harvest and bad management things soon resumed their former course. Depredations by Spain's enemies, and storms, caused a serious decrease of income from the American silver mines. This was very important, because this silver was, among other things, used to pay Spain's armies. Even Spanish soldiers, at the time the best paid in Europe, did not fight well when they were not being paid. From 1625 on, Philip IV connived with the duke of Olivares in trying to compel the Cortes of Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia to share the burden of Castile's foreign adventures. Once again a virtual state bankruptcy occurred in 1627. From 1627 to 1632 the confiscatory measures were worse than



ever, and it was during these years that many large international banking houses, which had supported the Spanish monarchy, went under. Among the victims was the famous Augsburg firm of Fugger.

In August 1628 a new regulation was passed, reducing all the "billon" coins, including the calderilla, to the values which coins of each size had before 1602. Thus the cuartillo that passed for 8 maravedis, was reduced to four, the cuarto was reduced to two maravedis, the double to one, and the maravedi to one blanca. The products of the Ingenio after 1602 may have escaped this measure, but those of the old mints were included. It had been contemplated to recall all the coins mentioned and to have substitute new pieces with the new values.

Nothing came of this but a beautiful set of essais in 1631 by the Ingenio. This could partly be blamed on developments outside of Spain proper. The wars did not go well. In a spectacular coup, the Dutch in 1628 captured a Spanish plate fleet, and financed with its treasures the very ambitious and costly (for both parties) siege of 's-Hertogenbosch. In 1635 Spain, which already was waging wars in the Netherlands and Germany, got involved in hostilities with France as well.

Naturally, the monetary situation worsened again. The relationship between the silver money and its billon and copper fractions became more tenuous. In March 1636 it was decided that the coins that had been stamped in 1602 were to become current for three times the value





Fig. 9

at which they were valued at the present, so that the cuarto of four maravedis would become worth 12 maravedis, and the ochavo of two maravedis was to be valued at six. These pieces were to receive two countermarks, on the obverse one with the crowned date, on the reverse the new values, inscribed as XII (Fig. 8) and VI (Fig. 9). The mintmark appears on the obverse in Segovia, Toledo and Valladolid (here the whole stamp often looks more like a spade), on the reverse in Cuenca, Granada, La Coruna, Madrid and Seville, and on both sides in Burgos.

The coins that had not been stamped in 1602 remained current for the values at which they circulated at the time of this order. This meant, of course, that there were now two of most coins of the same size, one of which was worth much more than the other, while both looked similar to the illiterate majority. In addition one real in silver now was to be worth in billon money 42 1/2 maravedis instead of 34 maravedis, a premium of 25 percent. It is not surprising that the confused population was driven to rioting, which in turn exposed them to severe penalties.

(To be continued)

ABOUT THOSE COUNTERSTAMPS -

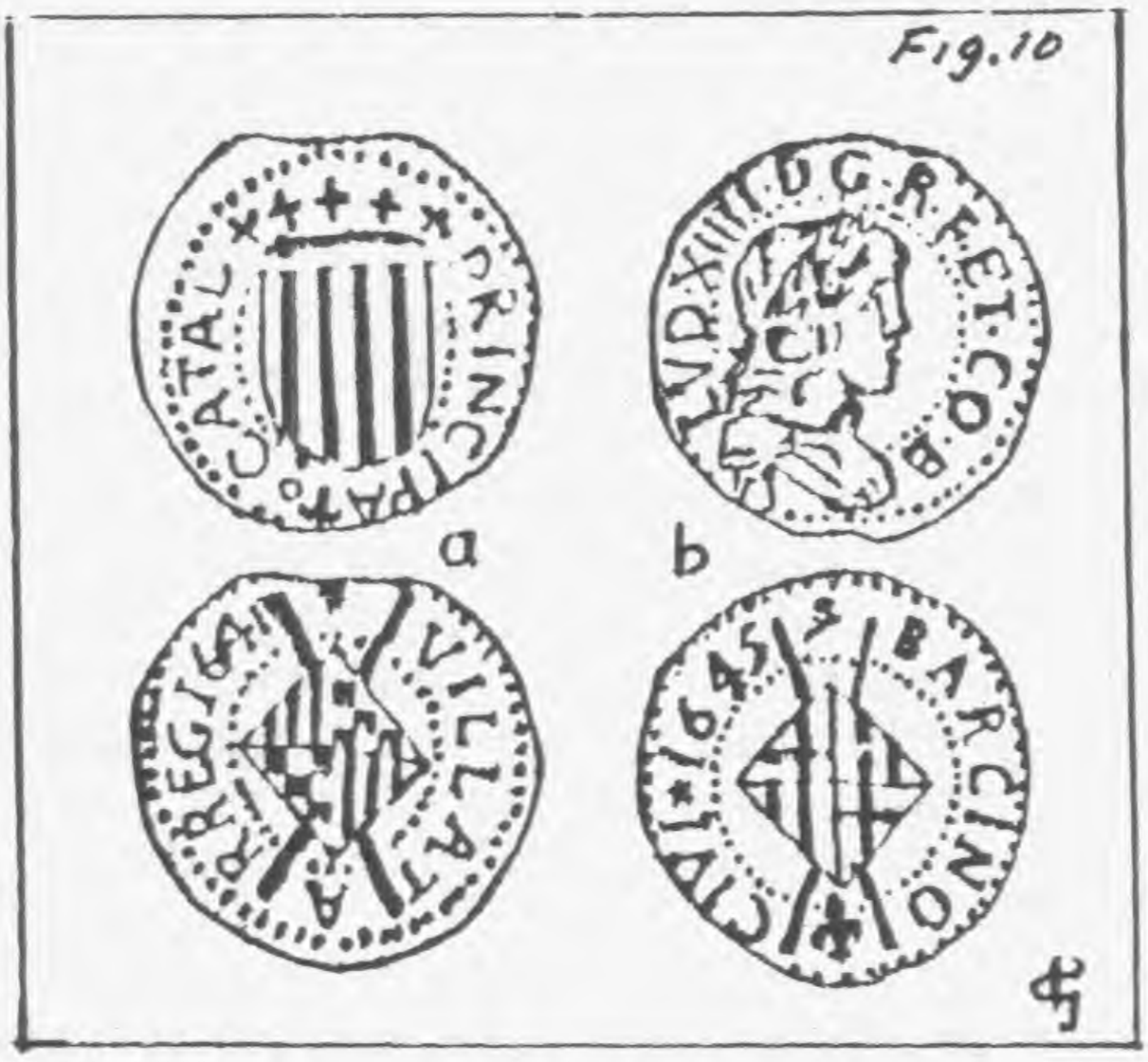
SPANISH COPPER COINS AND THEIR COUNTERSTAMPS IN THE 17th CENTURY

Paul F. L. de Groot, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, NI #1786

(Continued from June, 1991)

5. FROM 1636 TO 1642

The situation was becoming desperate. The wars did not go well. The treasury was close to exhaustion. The duke of Olivares increased his efforts to fully integrate all Iberian states under one crown with Castile. This would enable him to extort larger contributions from them. The result was disastrous. In 1640 Portugal in the west and Catalonia in the east broke out in serious rebellion, and Andalusia in the south was on the verge of following. Both countries declared their independence. The central government could not raise enough troops to combat these uprisings. Largely due to its inability to pay, the crown could barely raise an army of 15,000 to combat the rebellion in the west, considered to be the more serious. Portugal did in fact regain its full liberty after a hard fight. Catalonia placed itself under the protection of the French king Louis XIII, and soon even recognized him and his heirs as its prince (Fig. 10, seisens of Tarrega and Barcelona).



In 1639 little silver had come to Spain from the Americas, and in 1641 the plate fleet did not arrive at all. The treasury was desperately in need of more money, and tapped any source that it could find. In February 1641 a decree ordered that all the unstamped coins that

were current for four maravedis, that is, the 8-maravedis of the old mints, which had been reduced to four maravedis in 1628, were to be called in and countermarked to raise their value to eight maravedis. The two and one-maravedi pieces kept their old valuation. The coins of the Ingenio also kept their value. The marks were similar to those of 1636, with a crowned date on the obverse, and the mintmark below the value VIII on the reverse (which, in contradiction to the wording of the decree, is not crowned, Fig. 11).

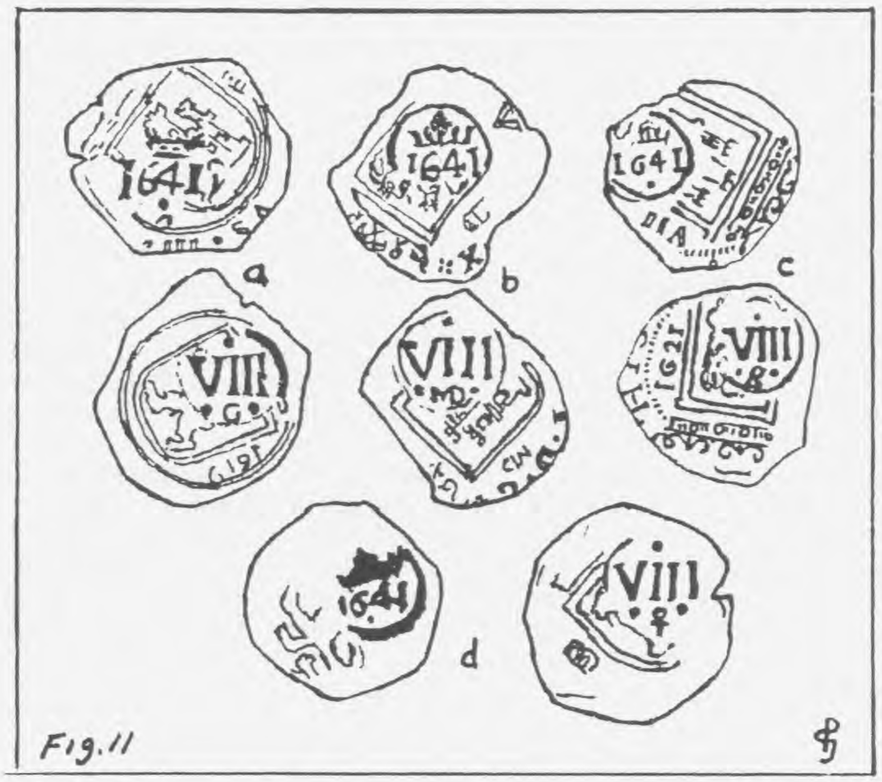


Fig. 11

Great confusion was still being caused by the circulation, side by side, of coins minted by the Ingenio, of the same size, but valued at different rates. In order to remedy this problem it was decided in October 1641 to counterstamp the Ingenio's unmarked four and two-maravedis pieces too. The marks chosen were again the crowned date on the obverse, and the values of XII (Fig. 12) and VI (Fig. 13) on the reverse. The mintmarks appear below the value. Though most possible combinations of value and mintmark have been found for 1641, this is not the case for 1642. Not surprisingly, many false counterstamps began to appear at this time. This practice continued every time the value of the coins was raised and became easier in time, because the coins lost any semblance to minted pieces. Even official stamps have been found on any copper flan at hand, such as Roman and Byzantine coins!

All these variations in the valuation of the circulating currency gave rise to many complaints. The confidence in the billon coins dwindled to the extent that at one point in 1642 a silver real was "worth" three reals in copper currency. As a result, and at the request of the Cortes, a drastic measure was taken in September 1642. By this, all coins which, in compliance with the decrees of 1636 and

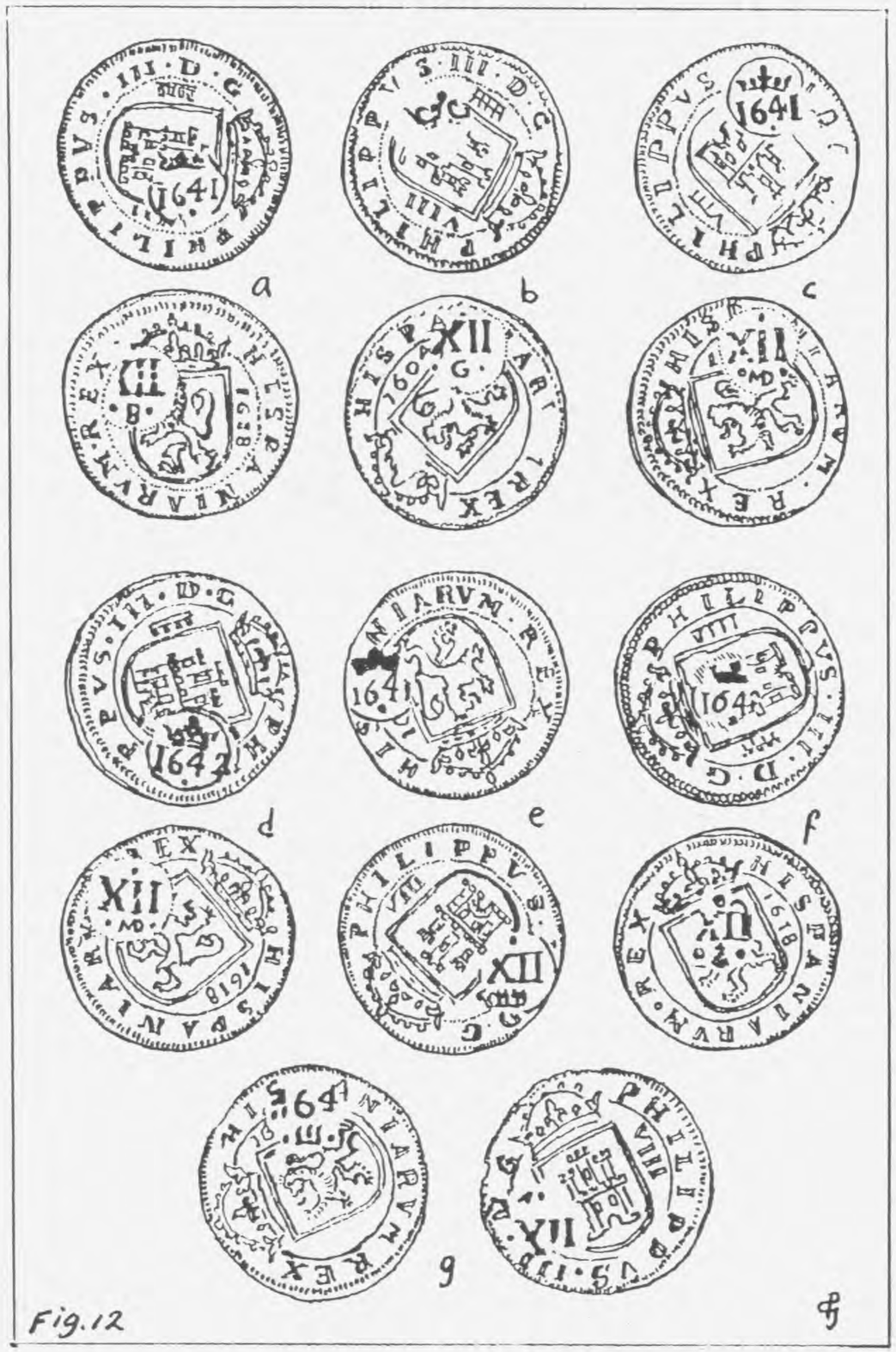


Fig. 12

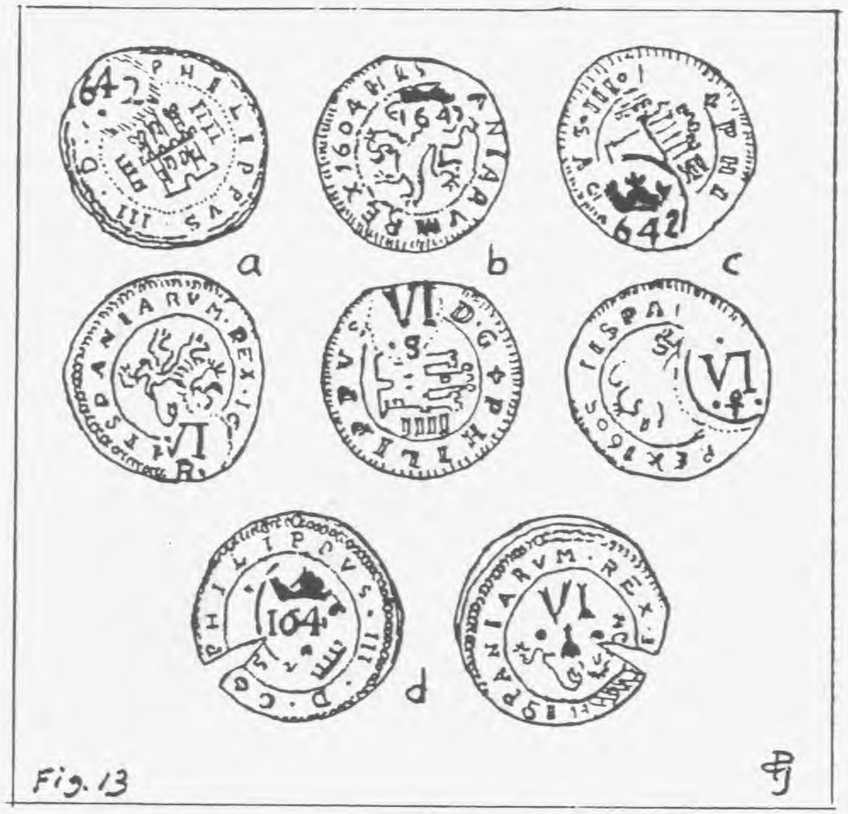


Fig. 13

1641, had been raised in value to 12- and 8-maravedis pieces, were to be reduced to the value of two maravedis. Those coins that had been raised to six maravedis, and any coin that might have circulated for four maravedis (one can see by this terminology how far even the authorities had become confused) should be reduced to one maravedi. However, the attempt at cleaning up the monetary situation did not last very long. In March 1643 already, the valuations were changed again. The calderilla that passed for two maravedis as the result of the measures of 12 September 1642, now was raised to eight maravedis, and what passed for one maravedi was raised to four. As was generally the case, the products of the Ingenio were valuated higher, and appreciated to 12 and 6 maravedis.

6. FROM 1642 TO 1653

Meanwhile, the domestic and international problems continued to sap Spain's resources and morale. In 1643 its once-invincible army was soundly beaten at Rocroi by the French, a great shock for the country's pride. Bad harvests, bad management, a general impotence of the Duke of Olivares and his clique to cope with the core of their problems, all contributed to the widespread malaise. Olivares was finally forced out of office, and died insane in 1645. Unfortunately, his successors were as incompetent as he had been in managing the state's affairs (their own were well looked after!). A new state bankruptcy in 1647 did not leave any numismatic traces, but contributed to Spain's willingness to participate in the negotiations that led to the end of war in Germany, and to the official independence of the Dutch Republic in 1648. In Naples a revolt under Masaniello led to a more serious one led by the French Duke of Guise from 1647-

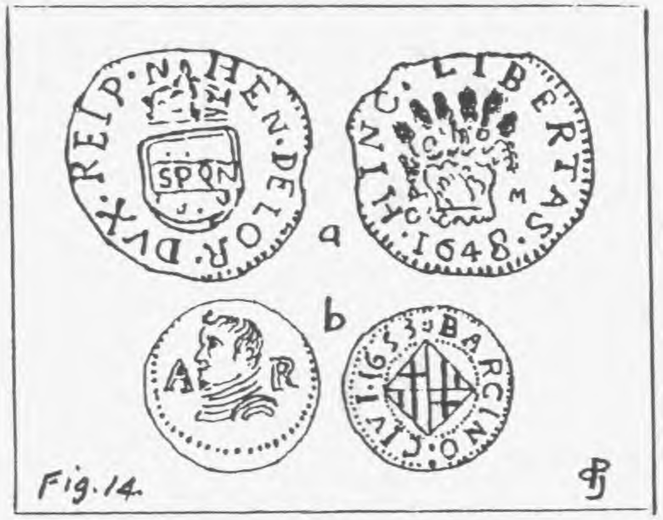


Fig. 14.

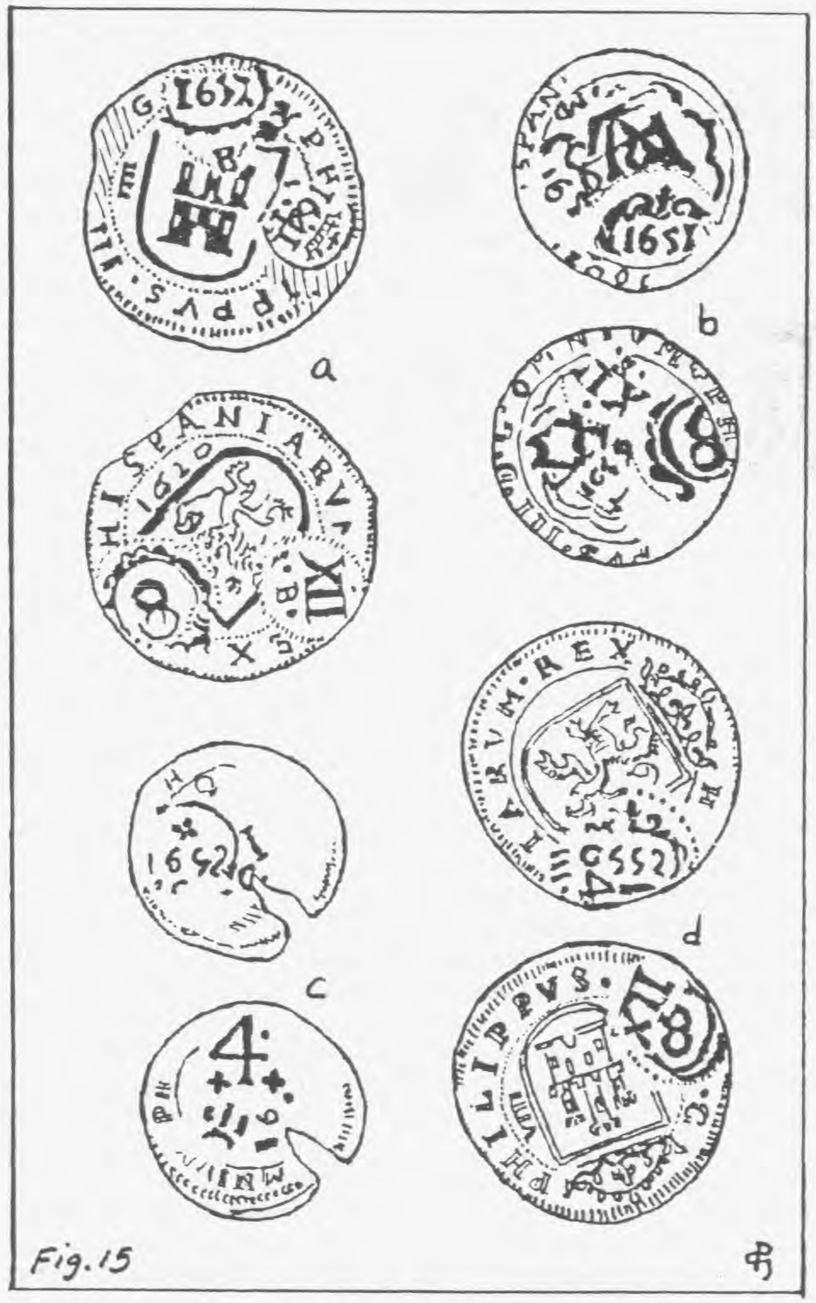
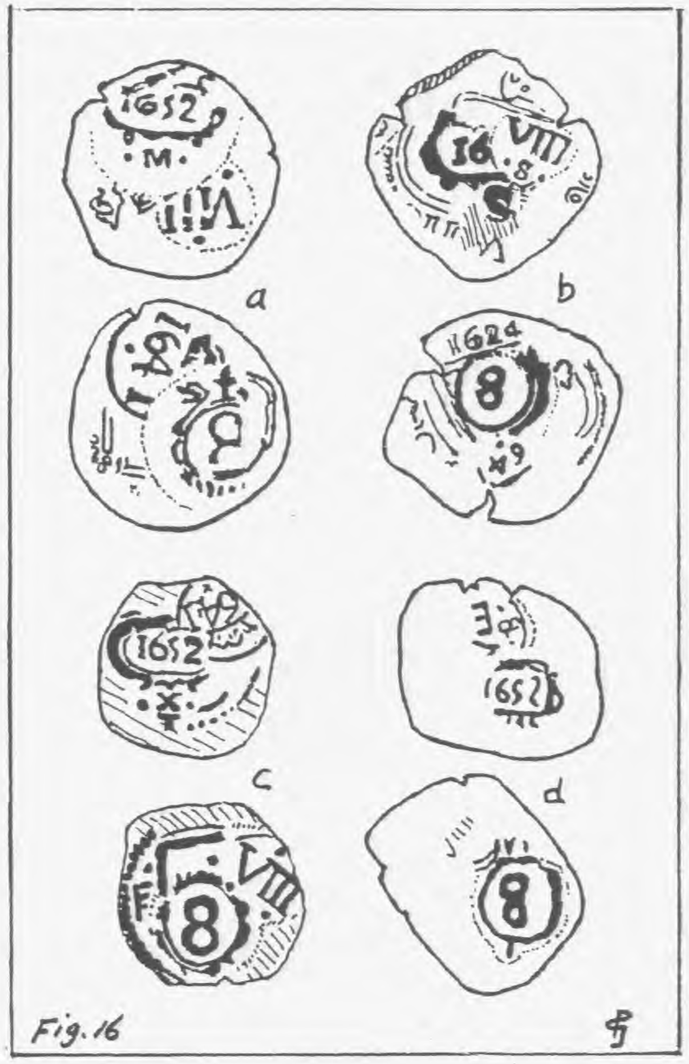


Fig. 15



1648 (Fig. 14a). Luckily for Spain, internal turmoil made France nearly powerless from 1648 to 1653, enabling the former to recover most of Catalonia, and the city of Barcelona in 1652 (Fig. 14b).

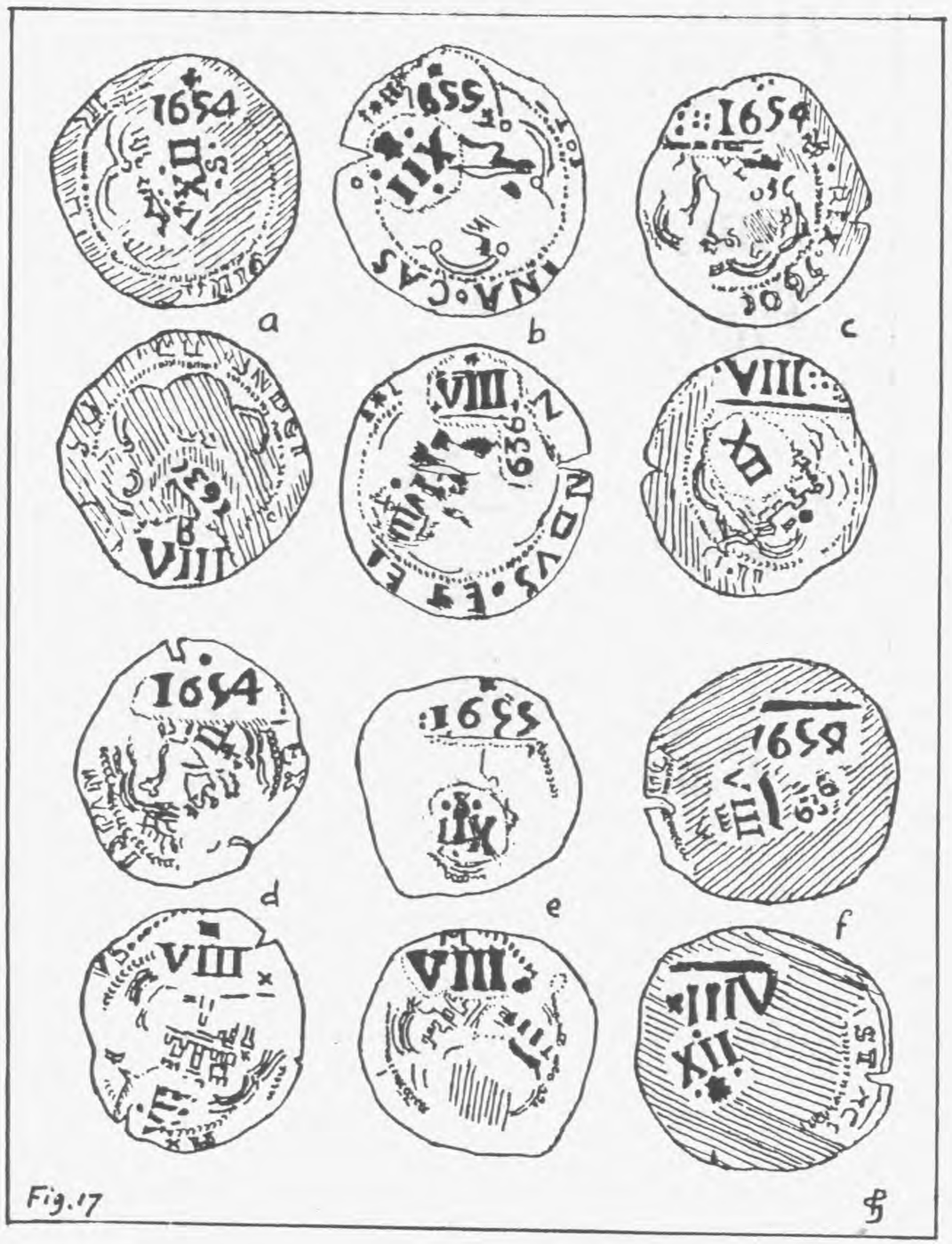
By this time it was decided once more to make en effort at cleaning up the currency mess. On 11 November 1651 it was ordered that all coins, except the calderilla struck before 1597, would revert to their valuation of before September 1642, with the understanding that the largest pieces in circulation would henceforth be current for 8 maravedis, and the smaller pieces for 4 maravedis. As there would now not be any coins of two maravedis, these were now to be minted at a quarter of the weight of the 8 maravedis pieces. Though I have never seen any of these pieces, or even seen their existence mentioned, a later decree refers to them. The stamps consisted on the large pieces of the date in an oval that often was ornate, and on the reverse an 8 in a usually ornate circle (Fig. 15 and 16). The mintmark, when present, was placed under the oval. Madrid changed its mark to a simple M. A T surmounted by an x is ascribed to Toledo. A few coins, from Madrid only, are found with the date 1651, the rest carry the year 1652. The stamp of the four maravedis is quite different. It consists on the obverse of the date, always 1652, with a flower above and the mintmark below, all within a circle, and on the reverse a large 4 between flowers, also within a circle (Fig. 15c). This value is much scarcer than the eight maravedis.

Then followed a bewildering number of decrees. On 21 June 1652 the previous decree was annulled, and all coins reverted to a quarter of their value, except the newly minted two-maravedis pieces, which became current for one. The calderilla continued to circulate at eight and four maravedis. The counterstamped coins of 1651 (and presumably 1652) would only remain valid till the end of the year. Then, on 11 November 1652, the calderilla, the only subsidiary coinage with an intrinsic value, because of its silver content, was recalled, and

kept at the mints until such time that it could be used for new mintings. The other coins now were to remain in circulation at their reduced value.

7. FROM 1653 TO 1658

By this time France had recovered from its internal dissensions, and was back into the fray. So was Cromwell's England. As a result of these renewed onsloughts, Spain's financial troubles increased again. The lack of liquidity - real silver remained hoarded despite the efforts of the government - forced the authorities to put the stockpiles



of calderilla back into circulation. By decree of 22 October 1654 the large pieces were marked for eight, and the smaller pieces for four maravedis. Luckily for the confused user, and for the collector, these counterstamps differ considerably from the already present ones of 1602 and 1636. They consist of halfcircles outlined in dots, with on the obverse the date, and on the reverse the value as VIII (Fig. 17) and IIII (Fig. 18). The mintmarks can be found on either side, and frequently fall outside the circle segment.

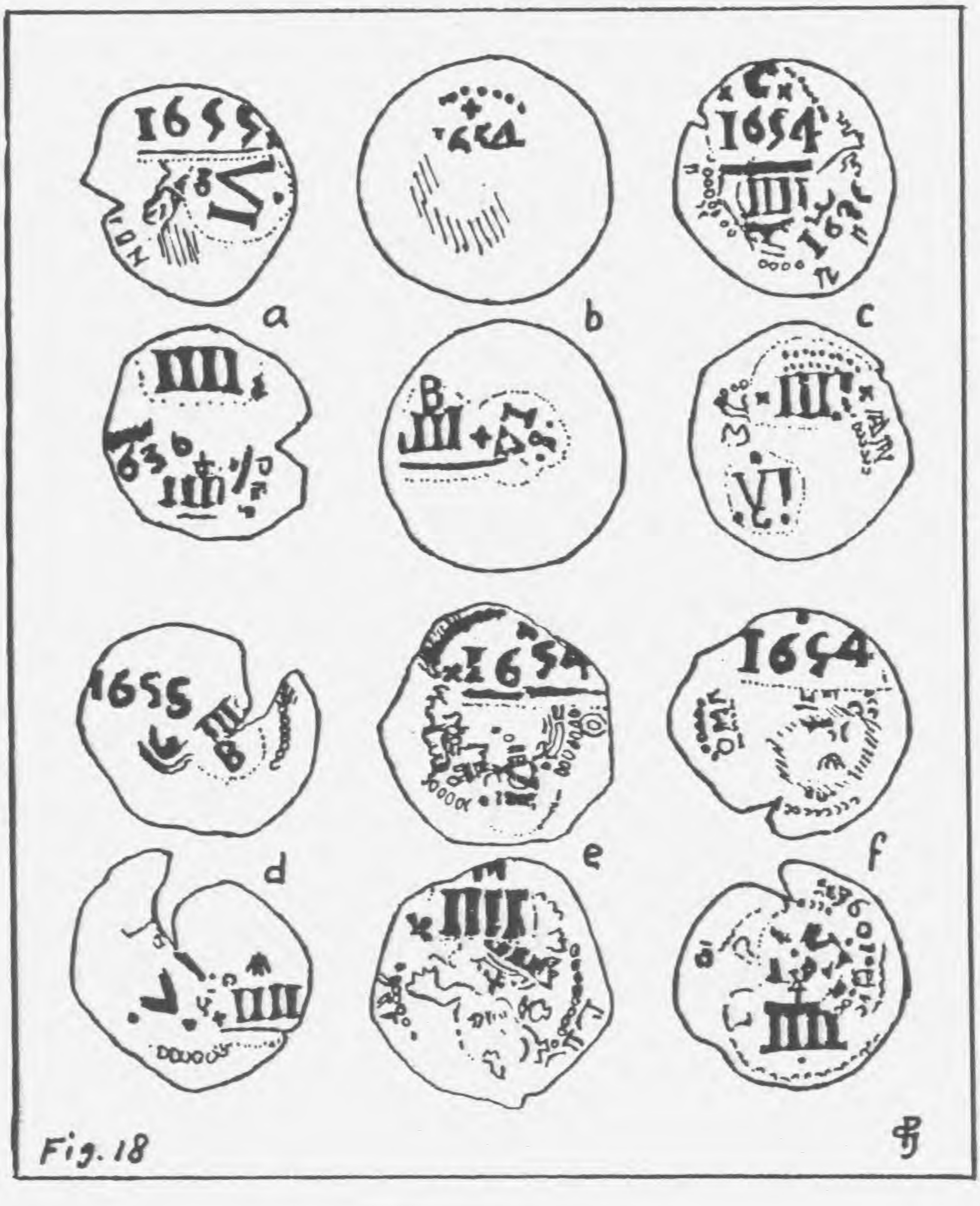


Fig. 18

(To be continued)

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8. FROM 1658 TO 1660

Meanwhile, the political and economic state of Spain remained disastrous. Although Rousillon was recovered at great costs, this success was only temporary, and at the end of the decade Spain had to negotiate a humiliating peace with its northern neighbor. The income of the Crown stayed low, and four-fifths of the public purse had to be used for the servicing of the national debt. Notwithstanding this, one more attempt was made at sanitizing the monetary situation and to remove the by now unsightly mess of counterstamped pieces from circulation. By decree of 24 September 1658 it was ordered that the billon which had been reduced by the decree of June 1652, was to be recalled. New coins were to be substituted. They were to have the weight and value of the corresponding calderilla. And they were to have a completely new design, consisting of on the obverse PHILIPVS in monogram under a crown, and on the reverse the crowned word REX, the value and date, both sides within a circle of arcs and a wreath. Whatever the intention of the government may have been, very few actual new coins were struck with this design, four and two maravedis pieces from the Ingenio. For the rest, many different dies, which more or less followed the instruction, but substituted the monogram for the word REX, were simply used to overstrike almost any billon or copper coin in circulation. The result was a worse looking mess than ever! Figures 19 and 20 give an impression of the variety of these dies for the four maravedis. The two maravedis piece is scarce, and not known for all mints. The only example in my collection is badly struck, and the value looks like a IIII, possibly as the result of interference with an older counterstamp or because the die may have been a fake (Fig. 20d).

The counterstamps of 1658-1659 are the last class of marks to be applied to the Castilian copper coins. They do not, however, form the last chapter in its ups and downs. Already on the 6th of May, 1659, the value of the newly "minted" coins was reduced to one-half. But they could still be used at the old valuation for payments to the Treasury that had been incurred before the end of 1658.

It must be mentioned that examples are known of many classes of stamps, which have four or more carefully placed marks on both sides. It is possible that these were test pieces to try the stamp dies.

9. FROM 1660 TO 1665

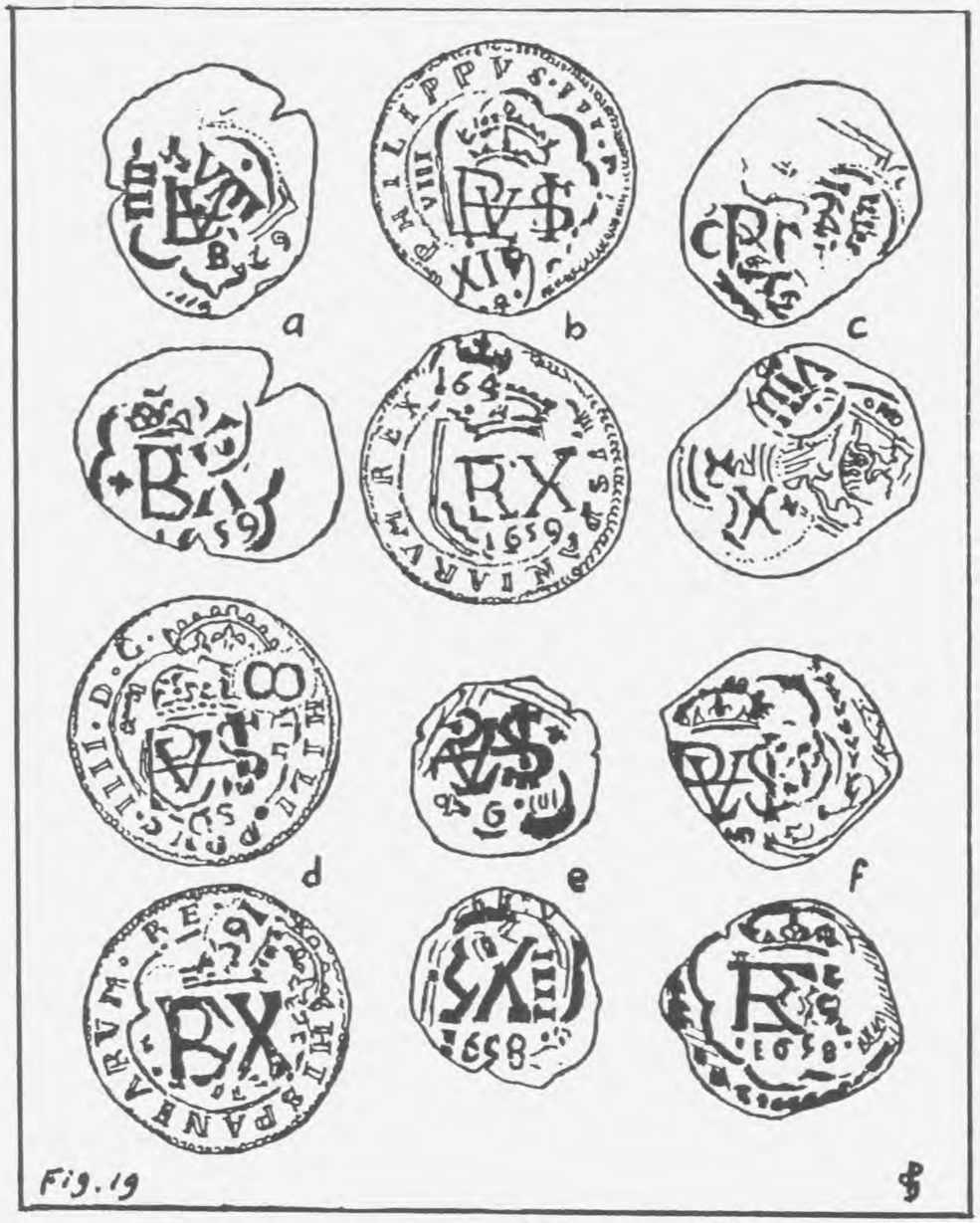


Fig. 19

Finally, on 11 September 1660, a clean break was made with the past. It was ordered that the billon coins valued at two maravedis would be recalled and melted down. From the obtained metal new coins were to be struck to a new weight and design: "...from each marco, which now holds 34 pieces of two maravedis there must be struck 51 pieces, to each of which the value of four maravedis shall be given....., so that after striking each marco will be worth 204 maravedis instead of the 68 that it is worth at present. And to make this new coinage more esteemed, it shall have on one side, our effigy, and on the other, the two columns and mark of value." The coins that were struck in accordance with these instructions are rare, because, as will be seen, only a month and a half later, their striking was ended, and presumably most of the already prepared stocks remelted. The surviving coins, all eight maravedis pieces, of most mints show the two columns under one crown; the examples from Madrid have each column crowned



Fig.20

separately. The known mints are B (Burgos), S (Sevilla), PL (possibly Linares), a shield with wavy bars (Valladolid) for the first type, and MD for the second. Fig. 21a shows a Valladolid piece.

As mentioned, it did not take long to countermand the fabrication of these pieces. By decree of 29 October 1660 it was decided "...to suspend the minting of the simple billon, and instead to strike new money with a silver alloy." These new coins had to show "...on the one side the effigy, and on the other, for the two maravedis a lion, for the piece of four a castle, for the eight maravedis a quartered shield with two castles and two lions, and for the piece of sixteen our full arms...". There are several types and many varieties of these abundant coins, which occur with the dates 1660 (Madrid only) to 1664 and were struck, mainly by rollerdie, at many mints. The portrait of Philip, admittedly not a handsome man, is generally most unflattering. Fig. 21b shows a 16 maravedis coin of Cuenca, Fig. 21c an eight maravedis piece from Madrid, Fig. 21d a four maravedis from Sevilla. In Madrid an auxiliary mint was installed in the Retiro palace, with as mintmark the monogram of Retiro. The design appears to be so primitive that it was easy to make forgeries, and these circulated widely.

By decree of 29 October 1664 the value of these new coins was reduced to half of their face value. At the same time the circulation of the older billon coins and the calderilla was forbidden. Yet I have



Fig.21

little doubt that they remained in use.

This was the official end of these issues. The Table and Fig. 22 give a recapitulation of the monetary vicissitudes of the large pieces of this currency.

Philip IV did not survive long enough for the introduction of any more monetary schemes. The decisive victory in 1665 of the Portuguese over the Spaniards, which paved the way for the final recognition of their independence, hastened the king's death in the same year.

One legacy of this long and turbulent period was the, sometimes official, distinction of reales de plata (silver) and reales de vellon (billon), that plagued the peninsula for a long time to come.

VALUE OF CURRENCY	– 1597	FEB 1597	JUN 1602	AUG 1628	MAR 1636	FEB 1641	OCT 1641	SEP 1642	MAR 1643	NOV 1651	JUN 1652	NOV 1652	OCT 1654	SEP 1658	MAY 1659	SEP 1660 NEW COINS	OCT 1660 NEW COINS	OCT 1664	
12					XII		XII												12
MARAV.					XII		XII												M.S
10 MARAV.																		TERMINATED	10 MS
8			VIII							8			VIII	?					8
MARAV.				?	?	?	? VIII		?	8 8									M.S
6 MARAV.																			6 MS
4														88					4
MARAV.														88 86				CIRCULATION	M.S
2															?	?	?		2
MARAV.																			MS

CALDERILLA 4 MARAVEDIS — INGENIO 4 MARAVEDIS 1597-1602

OLD MINTS 8 MARAVEDIS 1602-1626 — INGENIO 8 MARAVEDIS 1602-1626

JP 1991

Table for Copper Coinage 1597-1664



Fig. 22

10. POSTSCRIPT AND LITERATURE

The great quantity of monetary measures left its traces in the many often unsightly places that form the subject of this article. Many combinations of stamps, which should exist, have not yet been found. Several coin types are scarce without these marks. As a result I have been unable to illustrate some types in virgin state. Others are still lacking in my collection in any state. Much is yet to be discovered. An example is the heavy 8 maravedis piece struck in 1660 at Valladolid. I found it in a lot of undifferentiated Spanish copper pieces, that I bought unseen at an auction. To the best of my knowledge it had never appeared in the numismatic literature. Another type that, as far as I know, still has to be found, is the two maravedis of 1651 or 1652.

The drawings are all of coins that are or have been in my collection. Though most of these pieces are above the average in legibility of the stamps, they are not of the best quality. Still, they give a reasonable overview of what can be found by a collector with a sharp eye and a bit of luck.

Although I have used information from several, often conflicting, sources, the following numismatic references have been especially useful to me:

BURZIO, Humberto F., 1958, *Diccionario de la moneda Hispanoamericana.*

FONTECHA Y SANCHEZ, Ramon de, 1955, "La moneda Castellana de cobre en el siglo XVII," in *Numario Hispanico.*

FONTECHA Y SANCHEZ, Ramon de, 1968, *La moneda de vellon y cobre de la monarquia Espanola (Anos 1516 a 1931).*

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HEISS, Aloiss, 1865, *Descripcion general de las monedas Hispano-Cristianas desde la invasion Arabe.*

RUBIO DE URQUIA, Guadalupe, Dec. 1978-Jan. 1979, "La inestabilidad economica y la moneda de vellon en el siglo XVII," in *Cuadernos de Numismatica.*

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NUMISMATIC GLEANINGS

"This it is which gives zest to the study of the coins of Northern India, -- constant discovery of new coins which throw light on an imperfectly written and little known history of a constantly changing series of dyansties."

-- Charles J. Rodgers, *Coin Collecting in Northern India*, (1894), page 128.

(Submitted by David G. Briggs)

ABOUT THOSE COUNTERSTAMPS...SPAIN REVISITED

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Fig. 1

In Part 1 of my series on Spanish countermarks[1], I could not picture an unmarked Castillian 4 maravedis piece of the type struck at the New Mint (Ingenio) of Segovia (1597-1602) because I only had drawings of coins that had been revalued in 1602. This happened to most pieces, probably because even if costs had to be paid to the authorities, some profit might still go to the original owner from a transaction which doubled the value of his coin. Recently I acquired such an unmarked 4 maravedis from Bob Forrest, which I show in a slightly modified drawing of his (Fig. 1). It shows again the superior quality of the coins struck at the Ingenio.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

In Part 2 of the same series[2], I mentioned that these marks were applied to any copper piece at hand, even Roman and Byzantine coins. A short while ago Gregory Brunk sent me an article from the *Revue Numismatique 1910,* "Monnaies Romaines Contremarquées dans les Temps Modernes" (Roman Coins Countermarked in Modern Times), by Robert Mowat. Among other coins it has figures of two Roman pieces with Castillian counterstamps. An as of Domitian was marked in Granada in 1636 (Fig. 2), a bronze coin of Theodosius I was converted into a 4 maravedis in 1602 (Fig. 3). For the owners at that time this was a nice way of changing essentially worthless (to them!) pieces of copper to "real" money.

Notes.

1. "ABOUT THOSE COUNTERSTAMPS - Spanish Copper Coins and Their Counterstamps in the 17th Century", *NI Bulletin,* June 1991, pp.139-150.

2. "ABOUT THOSE COUNTERSTAMPS - "Spanish Copper Coins and Their Counterstamps in the 17th Century", *NI Bulletin,* August 1991, pp.181-188.