

Crown and Minor Commemorative Coins of the 19th and 20th Centuries

American Numismatic Association

Lecture Set #27

Part 2 – Western Hemisphere

El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Peru,
Argentina, Uruguay

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries

What is a commemorative coin?

One Answer:

A commemorative coin must be legal tender of a duly constituted government and struck in denominations usually found in that country.

Its devices, legends and mottoes must clearly indicate that it does memorialize some event or person in that country's history.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Obverse features conjoined busts of Pedro Alvarado, a Spanish General under Cortes who was sent in 1524 to conquer the land that is now El Salvador. This coin commemorates four centuries since its founding. Quiones, the other bust was president of El Salvador at the time of the minting.

The legend reads in Spanish, "IV Centenary of the Founding of San Salvador" El Salvador's capital city. Edge is reeded and coin is silver.

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This coin is a 1 Balboa commemorating 50 years of the republic. Panama was founded through the efforts of the United States in building the Panama Canal. They were designed and struck at the Mexico City mint and placed into circulation on October 28, 1953.

Obverse is Vasco Nunez de Balboa, Spanish discoverer of the Pacific Ocean.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



This coin is also a 1 Balboa commemorating 50 years of the republic, reeded edge, silver.

Obverse is a Standing Female holding a fasces (bundle of sticks surrounding an axe); her right hand supports a shield on which is the Panamanian coat of arms and she holds a three pronged twig symbolizing the three branches of government. The female figure symbolizes Justice and Country combined.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



This is a 1 Centesimo, a minor copper coin, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Panama.

Obverse is a Urraca, a chief of the native peoples who waged guerilla warfare against the Spaniards for 9 years.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Costa Rica issued a commemorative 1 real in 1847, issued to honor the constitutional reforms of June 1846 and the new constitution which was authorized on January 25, 1847. Edge is security on some, reeded on others, silver.

Obverse has a coffee tree as the central figure, legend surrounding. Reverse features a young native girl in traditional dress, shawl over her head. The legend reads, "Reforms proclaimed June 7, 1846."

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Columbia's 50 Centavos does not fit all commemorative rules, but is considered a commemorative by many because it honors the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the new world.

On the obverse is a portrayal of Columbus, Italian explorer and the reverse has the Colombian coat of arms, a Condor atop the shield, Cincuenta Centavos (50 cents) and the weight and fineness at the bottom.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Columbia issued this commemorative in 1956 to honor the anniversary of the striking of the first round perfectly struck coins. The mint was actually founded on April 1, 1620 by royal decree of Phillip III. The first coins were struck in 1627 and were doblones de oro, but the first round perfectly struck coins did not arrive until 1756.

Obverse shows the massive doorway of the mint (Casa de Moneda) in Bogota, reverse features the country's arms.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Columbia issued a number of commemoratives in 1960 honoring the uprising against Spain, a 50, 20, 10, 5, and a 1 centavos, all regular issue coins with the commemorative dates added.

Obverse has a portrait of Simon Bolivar, the Liberator and first president. Reverse pictures the arms of the country, copper-nickel.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



A 20 centavos issued to commemorate the founding of the republic; dates on either side of the neck of Bolivar.

Reverse features the arms of the country, copper-nickel.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Head of Calarca, an Indian (native) who was the last chief of the Pijaos, the last indigenous tribe conquered by the Spanish. He was killed in battle in 1606 by Batasar, Chief of the Indian Militia. Calarca became a symbol of Indian resistance to the Spanish.

Reverse features the country arms and commemorative dates 1810-1960, reeded edge, copper-nickel.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



The design for the V centavos and 1 centavo is the same, a liberty cap enclosed in an open wreath. Republic de Columbia surrounds the wreath, dates 1810-1960 at bottom.

Reverse has Roman numeral V with centavos at bottom, cornucopia at top and sprays of coffee and fruit plants on either side of the Roman numeral. Copper, plain edge.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Aluminum bronze coin showing a winged liberty head by artist Acuna. Republic of Columbia around top, commemorative dates at bottom, 1810-1960.

Reverse has Roman numeral II with centavos at bottom, all enclosed by open laurel wreath. Plain edge,

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



The Republic of Peru issued commemoratives in 1954 featuring Ramon Castilla, a soldier, patriot, and statesman. He was born in 1792 and died in 1867, served as president for two terms, established peace, stabilized finances, consolidated the national debt, promoted the telegraph, and other public works.

Obverse of the 5, 10, and 20 centavos is the same featuring Castilla's bust, date, and legend below (Liberator Mariscal Castilla=Liberator Marshall Castilla). Reverse has the denomination, a torch of liberty, and broken chains.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Uruguay issued two commemoratives in 1930, 10 and 20 centesimos to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first Uruguayan constitution which was formally adopted and proclaimed on July 18, 1830, and the inauguration of the first president, Jose Fructuoso Rivera. Rivera was considered one of the 30 immortals who fought for freedom; he took office in 1830.

Obverse features the head of Liberty with liberty cap (similar to a French representation) with legend around reading "Republica Oriental del Uruguay" and date. Reverse features a jaguar and stylized sun and rays, and at top, "Centenario de 1830" or Centenary of 1830, 10 Cts at bottom. Aluminum-bronze, plain edge.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



This 20 centesimos also commemorates the 100th anniversary of the first Uruguayan constitution which was formally adopted and proclaimed on July 18, 1830.

Obverse features a seated liberty design with a billowing cape, right hand on a fasces, left resting on a plaque which carried the legend "Centenary of 1830." In exergue is the date 1930. Reverse features a spray of wheat stalks dividing the denomination of 20 cts. Silver, reeded edge.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Uruguay also issued a 10 Pesos in 1961 for the 150th anniversary of the Uprising against Spain. The uprising led to the creation of independent Uruguay. Jose Artigas (1764-1850) led the revolt assisted by Argentina. After driving the Spanish out of Montevideo, he broke with Argentina and successfully freed Uruguay from any influence.

Obverse portrays the Gauche, a symbol of freedom as they helped drive the Spanish out of Uruguay. Around the head it reads, "El Gauche Heroe Nacional" or The Gauche National Hero. The name of the country surrounds the Gauche legend, "Republica Oriental Del Uruguay." Reverse pictures the denomination 10 Pesos encircled by a wreath and legend reads, "150th Year of the Historical Events of 1811." Silver, reeded edge

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Argentina issued 3 coins in 1950 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Jose de San Martin. All obverses portray the bust of San Martin (1778-1850).

Reverse features the denomination 20 centavos surrounded by legends, Republica Argentina, Year of Liberation, and General San Martin. Nickel, reeded edge.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries



Argentina also issued a 1 Peso in 1960 commemorating 150 years of independence.

Obverse features the arms of the country, with legend surrounding, "Republica Argentina and Un Peso. Reverse features May 25th and the dates 1810-1960.

Crown & Minor Commemoratives of the 19th & 20th Centuries

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