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Almanzar's COINS OF THE WORLD



PERUVIAN COINS DURING THE WAR WITH CHILE
(1879-1883)

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On April 5, 1879, Peru declared war on Chile, protesting the Chilean intrusion into Bolivian territory, a country with whom Peru had a treaty of mutual defense. The outcome of the war resulted in the Chilean Victory and the Chilean occupation of Lima until October 1883.

The idea of this study is to catalog the coins that were minted in Peru during the years that the war and the occupation lasted. We will also be concerned with the different variations, even the less important ones, that we have been able to find.

The coins about which we will talk during this study were minted in copper, copper-nickel and silver, and we will refer to them in that order.

COPPER

2 Centavos 1879. The only copper coin minted during the period we are concerned with is the two centavos piece of 1879. This piece was minted in Lima, on a thick planchet, and has a diameter of 24.5 mm. Obverse: REPUBLICA PERUANA, date and radiate sun centered.

Reverse: Value (DOS CENTAVOS) between cornucopias



COPPER-NICKEL



20 Centavos 1879 and 5, 10 Centavos 1880 coins, minted in Brussels in copper-nickel, were minted during two years, with the exception of the 20 centavos piece that was minted only in 1879. They were provisional coins minted probably a short time after the beginning of the war. The diameters are:

5 Centavos - 17.0 mm.

10 Centavos - 22.0 mm.

20 Centavos - 26.5 mm.

The design of these coins is the same except for the diameter and value.

Obverse: REPUBLICA PERUANA, date and value. Radiate sun-face centered.

Reverse: MONEDA PROVISIONAL, value in the center.

Quantities minted were as follows:

VALUE	1879	1880	TOTALS
5 Centavos	12,000,000	2,000,000	14,000,000
10 Centavos	3,005,000	4,000,000	7,005,000
20 Centavos	497,500		497,500

SILVER

The silver coins of this period of Peruvian numismatics are many due to the situation created by the war, and later by the Chilean occupation of Lima that forced the Casa de Moneda de Lima (the Lima mint) to move to Ayacucho. In this study we have left the Soles at the end because it is the most extensive part of it, and for no other reason. If we had followed a chronological order we would have run into interference with the Pesetas from Lima and Ayacucho and this could have been confusing for the reader. Therefore we will start with the Pesetas from Lima, continue with the coins minted in Ayacucho, and after that move into the silver Soles.

PESETAS FROM THE LIMA MINT

The one and five pesetas coins of 1880 to 1882 were the result of the adoption of the Latin Monetary Union Coinage System based on the French franc.

In 1880 there were coins of one peseta (UNA PESETA) and five pesetas (CINCO PESETAS) minted in Lima. There were only two coins in the peseta system ever minted in Lima, and with those minted in Ayacucho, the only ones in Peru.



Size
Reduced

Both the one and five pesetas coins had the following outstanding engraving characteristics:

Obverse: Ornamented head of Liberty. In the ribbon of the head there are incuse initials "B" and "F". The legend around is PROSPERIDAD Y PODER POR LA JUSTICIA (prosperity and power through justice).

Reverse: National arms in wreath. Legend: REPUBLICA PERUANA LIMA. 9 DECIMOS FINO. B.F. UNA PESETA (or CINCO PESETAS).

The Liberty Head on these two coins was influenced by the coins of the Second French Republic. Both issues, one and five pesetas, have the same engraving characteristics, the only difference being in size and denomination. The one peseta is 23.5 mm. and the five pesetas coin is 37 mm. Both are 90% silver. It is common to find rotated dies of as much as 45° in both the one and five pesetas coins from the Lima mint.

There are three varieties of the 5 Pesetas; on the reverse just above the "P" in "Pesetas" is the initial "B":

Type 1. Large "B" with no period following. The "B" is about 50% larger than the small B.

Type 2. Small "B" with no period following.

Type 3. Small "B" followed by a period (B.).

HALF REAL AND PESETAS FROM THE AYACUCHO MINT

During the Chilean occupation of Lima the machinery of the "Casa de Moneda" was moved to Ayacucho, a city in the Andes mountains, better known because it was there that the last battle for the Independence of South America took place. The half real and 5 Pesetas coins of Ayacucho have similar characteristics to the 5 Pesetas from Lima; the main differences are that the assayer's initials are different and the word LIMA was changed to AYACUCHO.



1/2 REAL AYACUCHO MINT 1882 L.M. A rare little coin, 15 millimeters in size and of the denomination of 1/2 Real, was struck in 1882. This was the only coin with value in reales minted in Peru after the adoption of the decimal system in 1863 until the present.

5 PESETAS AYACUCHO MINT 1880-1882. The scarce Ayacucho 5 Pesetas exists with the following dates and assayer's initials: 1880 L.M., 1881 B., and 1882 L.M.

On March 23, 1880, a decree established a new monetary unit for Peru, the Inca. The decree specified the characteristics that the gold and silver coins should have, but it was not followed, so there were no gold INCAs. However, the silver coins were minted, but only in small quantities; they are the one and five Pesetas and the one-half Real coins.

SOLES

In 1863 legislation was passed by which Peru adopted the SOL (the plural is SOLES, and not SOLS) as the monetary unit, which is still used. The Sol is based on the decimal system, and is divided into 100 centavos. The first Sol was minted in 1863 (flat top 3), although in a very limited number. From 1863 to 1875 the Sol was minted every year in Lima with the exception of the 1873 L.D. which was minted in Santiago de Chile with Peruvian dies, while the Lima Mint was undergoing repairs. After 1875 there were no more Soles minted until 1879, the year where our study begins. From 1879 to 1883, the period which we will cover, the Sol was minted yearly. Even during the Chilean occupation of Lima, when the mint was operating in Ayacucho, there were Soles minted which have the inscription LIMA.

Although we are going to cover only the period during the war and occupation years, April 1879 to October 1883 (5 years), there are seven distinct Soles, because of dates, design and assayer's initials. Also, there are several minor varieties which we will try to list.

THE SOLES OF PERU FROM 1879 TO 1883, 37 MILLIMETERS, 25 GRAMS, 90 PERCENT SILVER

1. 1879 Y.J. Obv: FIRME Y FELIZ POR LA UNION UN SOL and Liberty seated. The word LIBERTAD on column, incuse and without punctuation; top of column is plain (a wreath of leaves was added in 1888); B incuse on the base of the column; inclined shield.
Rev: REPUBLICA PERUANA LIMA 9 DECIMOS FINO Y.J. National arms in the center. 15 coins out of the cornucopia; 14 olives and 21 olive leaves; male llama; 15 palm leaves. Incuse triangle in the base of the tree. Initials R B incuse at the stems of the olive and palm.
2. 1880 Y.J. Obverse and reverse are the same as 1879 except for the date.
3. 1880/8 Y.J. Obverse and reverse same as 1879 except date. The overdate appears to be an error in the punching of the die.
4. 1880 Y.J. Obv: Same as 1879.
Rev: REPUBLICA PERUANA LIMA 9 DECIMOS FINO Y.J. 21 coins out of the cornucopia; 13 olives and 20 olive leaves; 15 palm leaves. Initials R B in relief on the ribbon emanating from the wreath.
5. 1881 B.F. Obv: FIRME Y FELIZ POR LA UNION UN SOL LIBER./-TAD* incuse. Top of column plain; vertical shield; R B incuse at the base of the column.
Rev: REPUBLICA PERUANA LIMA. 9 DECIMOS FINO B.F. 30 coins out of cornucopia; 8 olives and 22 olive leaves; 23 palm leaves of which two are bent downward.
6. 1881 B.F. Obv: Similar to No. 5 except: LIBER./-TAD incuse and initials R B below and left of the shield.
Rev: Same as No. 5.
7. 1882 B.F. Obv: Similar to No. 6, except LIBER./-TAD. incuse.
Rev: Same as No. 5.
8. 1882 F.N. Obv: Similar to No. 7, except initials F.D. in relief below and left of the shield, and LIBER-/TAD. in relief.
Rev: Similar to No. 7, except initials F.N.
9. 1882 F.N. Obv: Similar to No. 8, except initials F D. (no period after the F).
Rev: Same as No. 8.
10. 1883 F.N. Obv: Similar to No. 5, except LIBER-/TAD in relief and initials F.D. in relief below and left of the shield.
Rev: Same as No. 8.
11. 1883 F.N. Obv: Similar to #10, except initials F D in relief (not followed by periods).
Rev: Same as No. 8.

*Note the different treatment of the word LIBERTAD on the column on the obverse in the use of hyphens and periods on the 1881 and following pieces.