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2009-D most dramatic doubled die in years

Posted on May 11, 2009 by Ken Potter

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A 2009-D District of Columbia quarter has turned out to be one of the most prominent of the centralized doubled dies seen in recent years. It boasts very strong doubling of ELL of Duke Ellington's last name, some doubling of the piano keys and panel below. All these elements were shifted diagonally to the southeast of the normal design with very wide separation.

Prominent hobbyists like what they see of it so far. It has the makings of a commercial winner if a sizable number can be found. Collectors are encouraged to help the national hunt by searching through their Denver District of Columbia quarters.

The hobby's first inkling of its existence came on April 1, when Lee Maples of Texas reported to the Collector's Universe Message Board's U.S. Coin Forum that he had found what he felt was a doubled-die reverse on a 2009-D District of Columbia quarter.

He has found three examples in five rolls of quarters from Houston's Bank of Texas. It is this small number found so far that could prevent wide hobby acceptance of the discovery.

I have assigned a listing number for the date, mint, denomination and type in the Variety Coin Register as VCR#1DDR#1.

The last doubled die exhibiting centralized doubling of a similar magnitude and eye appeal goes back to the 1984 doubled-die cent, which is often simply dubbed as the doubled-ear cent. Like the 2009-D D.C. quarter doubled die, the 1984 cent also shows doubling in other areas, which in this case includes the beard, bow tie and vest. However, the most spectacular area doubling of the D.C. quarter is actually far more pronounced than on the cent since it affects relatively large letters that are contrasted by surrounding fields rather than a doubled earlobe that blends in within an essentially busy design.

While several noteworthy, though distinctly less prominent, Philadelphia D.C. quarter doubled dies have also been reported, some observers feel that the prominence of this Denver variety indicates that it might catch on with collectors as being the first truly major doubled die for the States/Territories quarter series; one of a magnitude that might get dealers excited enough to promote them if sufficient supplies surface. Some also feel it is a candidate for inclusion in A



Guide Book To United States Coins by R.S Yeoman, while others suggests that at the very least, it's a shoo-in for the next edition of The Cherrypickers' Guide To Rare Die Varieties by Bill Fivaz and J.T. Stanton.

Noted doubled die specialist and author of many books on the subject, John Wexler, said: "The 2009-D Washington, D.C., quarter with a doubled-die reverse is an extremely exciting variety. While some of the Minnesota state quarter doubled-die reverses with totally separated "extra trees" show spreads just as strong, the fact that this D.C. quarter shows clear, strong doubling to some of the letters is going to make this variety all the more appealing to collectors. Personally, I would classify this as a major doubled die variety. Look for a run on sales of D-mint Washington, D.C., quarter rolls." He also noted that collectors should continue to look for additional doubled-die varieties on both the Denver and Philadelphia D.C. quarters.

Hobby stalwart Q. David Bowers, author of many of the Whitman Publishing titles in the Red Book series and countless other books, said, "Looks like a winner to me, and by six lengths!" In a later e-mail he indicated that he planned to include the variety into any second edition of his Washington quarter book that may be published.



J.T. Stanton weighed in saying, "Judging by the photos, I would have to say the D-mint coin is certainly worth looking for, and will likely become a significant variety. But I'd like to see a coin in person, so-to-speak. Ken, you know I don't get excited about the Minnesota doubled dies, or the others that I consider minor – but to each his own. However, this one does interest me. It has one big thing going for it; it's what I would consider a major doubled die on a statehood quarter. I'd consider it the only one of a major significance. In my opinion, it certainly deserves a place in the Cherrypickers' Guide."

Bill Fivaz said, "After viewing the doubled-die reverse D-mint D.C. quarter, I certainly feel it is worthy of a listing in the Red Book. The doubling is 'nekid-eye' visible, tantamount to the red light, bells and whistles that Ken Bressett must have to list such a variety. The decision, of course is his, but I'd endorse a listing in the next Red Book of this variety.

Dave Camire of Numismatic Guarantee Corporation said of the Denver Mint D.C. doubled die: "It certainly is the strongest outside of the Wisconsin varieties." His reference to the "Wisconsin varieties" was to the popular die dents nicknamed "High Leaf" and "Low Leaf" known on the Denver Minted Wisconsin quarters that have a superficial appearance of a leaf.

Mike Faraone of the Professional Coin Grading Service said, "The D-mint is definitely significant enough for PCGS to recognize."

Dennis Tucker, publisher for Whitman Publishing, LLC commented on the variety saying, "Definitely a fun addition for the Cherrypickers' Guide, Fifth Edition Volume 2 and possibly for the Red Book – though we definitely take a slower, long-view approach with the Red Book.

Noted doubled-die variety specialist and author, Billy Crawford said: "I certainly feel this D-mint District of Columbia doubled-die reverse is warranted major classification." He created an overlay of the U.S. Mint's image of the D.C. quarter to approximately simulate the rotation needed to obtain the doubling that is highly visible in the central area of the reverse and demonstrated that it was a whopping 14 degrees off.

According to Crawford, "this rotation far exceeds any known Class I rotated varieties as well as any of other classes of hub doubling. I believe this D-mint variety will generate widespread collector interest."

Noted specialist Tom DeLorey, indicated about the Denver issue, "I would vote for inclusion of the D-mint doubled die in the Red Book. It certainly belongs in the CPG."

Well-known error dealer Fred Weinberg of Encino, Calif., said in regard to the coin, "The 2009-D DDR #1 immediately

caught my attention when I saw the original scans on the Collectors Universe Chat room posting. It certainly looked like a major Tilted Center Hub Doubled Die to me, and I called a few dealers in the Houston area to see if they could source some bricks or even rolls to buy and look through. I had no luck, as most of the 2009 coinage is not being released like in previous years, apparently. I did manage to buy \$4,000 face value of the D quarter bricks, but since I've been on the road for the past three weeks, I haven't had time to go through them as yet (they came from another dealer in the South).

"I think this will be a very significant doubled die, no matter how many or how few are discovered – but agree with you that if many thousands are found, that will enable collectors to acquire them, dealers to market them, and also be a strong contender for inclusion in the next Red Book. Personally, I like it much more than the 1984 DD Cent, as it is a quarter, on a 'personality' issue (Duke Ellington), and the lettering spread is easily seen, and dramatic."

Undoubtedly, the number of specimens found often predicts the popularity and acceptance of a variety. If only a few surface, there may be too few for dealers to promote. If it fails to be promoted, it may be largely forgotten by mainstream collectors and simply become a diamond in the rough to the most die-hard specialists of the series.

On the other hand, if at least a few thousand examples are found and promoted the variety could become a key to the series. Only time will tell what happens. I welcome reader's reports on their finds.

Maples says he still has 10 rolls obtained at a different bank to look through.

The cause of the doubling on these quarters is thought to be the result of Tilted Hub Doubling. In earlier reports that I made on the Minnesota, Oregon and other recent quarters that bore similar doubling I described the effect as follows:

Tilted Hub Doubling restricted to such a small area of design within the center region of the die is possible due to the result of either of two related scenarios.

1.) The hub is backed off after the initial kiss of the hub into a tilted die blank and is then reset properly and hubbed again.

2.) The hub and die blank are tilted in relation to each other and are then forced to seat into proper position by hubbing pressure within a split second after the initial kiss of the hub into the tip of the die blank.

The face of a die blank (referred to as a "die block" in Mint jargon) is machined with a slightly conical configuration to aid in the flow of metal during hubbing. This would indicate that the initial kiss of a hub into a die blank would be restricted to this centralized area before continuing on to fill out the rest of the design. During this process the tip of a tilted die blank would be positioned slightly off location away from the center of the hub into a different area of design than intended and thus the misplaced area of doubling on the affected die.

With these and other doubled-die quarters reported in recent years, we are well into the single-squeeze hubbing era so researchers feel that the doubling would have most likely occurred via the second scenario described above, when a tilted hub/die seated into proper position within the single squeeze of the hub. As the name implies, the single-squeeze hubbing procedure, impresses a complete design into a die with just one impact of the hub into the die blank.

Ken Potter is the official attributer and lister of world doubled dies for the Combined Organizations of Numismatic Error Collectors of America and for the National Collector's Association of Die Doubling. He privately lists U.S. doubled dies and other collectible variety types on both U.S. and world coins in the Variety Coin Register. For more information on either of these clubs, or to learn how to get a variety listed in the Variety Coin Register, send a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope and 63 cents to Ken Potter, P.O. Box 760232, Lathrup Village, MI 48076-0232. Contact Ken via e-mail at Kpotter256@aol.com, or visit his Educational Image Gallery located at

Washington Quarters RDV Availability (Up to 1972) *

Date	RDV-001	RDV-002	RDV-003	RDV-004	RDV-005	RDV-006	RDV-007	RDV-008	RDV-010	RDV-010
	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D	Type E	Type F	Type M (or G)	Type H		Details Coming Soon
1932-1964	Common	IIa	IIlo	IIla1	IIla2	IIlb	IIIm	IIb		
1936 Proof	Common									
1937-1964 Proofs		Common								
1956	Common	Scarce								
1957	Common	Uncommon								
1958	Common	Uncommon								
1959	Common	Uncommon								
1960	Common	Uncommon								
1961	Common	Uncommon								
1962	Common	Uncommon								
1963	Common	Uncommon								
1964	Common	Uncommon								
1964-D	Common		Very Scarce							
1965	Common		Scarce	Common	Common					
1965 SMS			Unconfirmed	Common	Common					
1966			Unconfirmed	Common	Common					
1966 SMS			Unconfirmed	Common	Common					
1967			Rare	Common	Common	Rare				
1967 SMS			Unconfirmed	Common	Common	Unconfirmed				
1968				Common	Common	Common				
1968-D				Common	Common	Common				
1968-S Proof					Rare	Scarce*	Common	Common		
1969						Common				
1969-D				Very Scarce	Common	Rare	Scarce	Rare		
1969-S Proof						Common		Common		
1970						Common	Rare	Rare		
1970-D						Common	Common	Common		
1970-S Proof						Common				
1971						Common				
1971-D						Common				
1971-S Proof						Common		Rare		
1972						Common		Common		
1972-D						Common		Rare		
1972-S Proof						Common		Common		