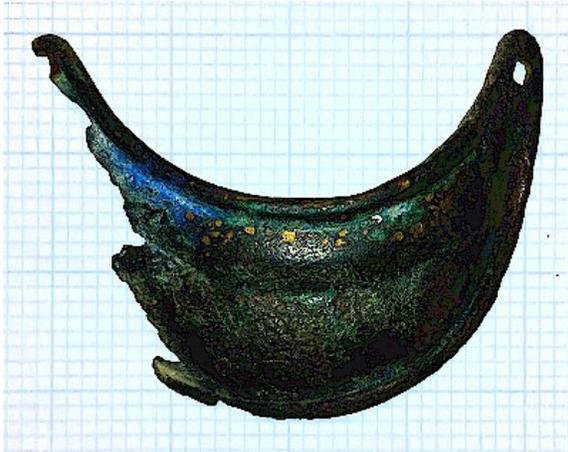


Research Paper Gorget No. JH-1

Research Report by Steve Cox, October 2016

Southwest American Historic Artifact Research Association SAHARA

18th Century Spanish Gorget



**Spanish Gorget JH-1
Obverse 4.3" X 3.25"**



**Spanish Gorget JH-1
Reverse .825" Convex**

Identification and age:

This gorget is an early example of an early military gorget, and it is determined to be Spanish in origin. Unlike French and British gorgets, accurate information on early Spanish gorgets is very scant, and difficult to find. Fortunately I was able to locate an example of this early Spanish style. It was found on an archeological site in Pensacola, Florida. It too was in almost identical condition. It was engraved with the Coat of Arms of the Spanish Hapsburg Dynasty, and this dynasty ended in



the year 1700.

This puts the earliest possible manufacture of JH-1 at least back to that date, and I find no further surviving examples of this same style found in the Americas after that date. I was not able to determine just how long this style gorget may have been used in Europe, but as with many early American contact period artifacts, they might be used for generations after they arrived in America.

Gorget Construction:

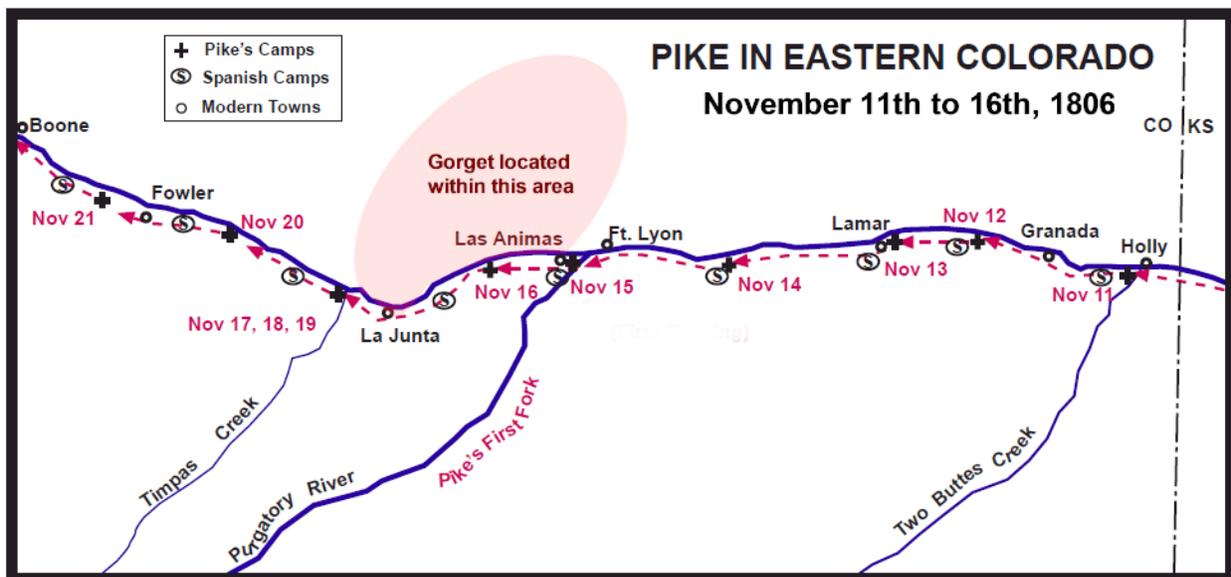
This is typical construction, existing of hammered copper, and the edges are wrapped around an iron wire. The face is a two tiered bulbous convex design. It is heavy in design, and displays a blue-green copper oxidation, with some of the dark blue patina occurring when copper is exposed to certain plant or animal material like bear grease, for years in the ground. The missing area appears to be from years of corrosion from running water, or possibly from galvanic reaction with other metal in close proximity, or both.

Location of discovery:

This piece was discovered under a bluff north and east of La Junta, Colorado. Based on watershed boundaries, no more than 20 miles north, and 10 miles east of La Junta.

Conclusion:

Without more information to go on, I have developed the most likely theory of how this gorget ended up where it was found. Based on the age of the piece, I first determined that the Spanish were active in this immediate area from 1706, on and off, through 1779. This activity included expeditions with as many as 800 soldiers. It also involved numerous skirmishes and contacts with the Native Americans, particularly the Comanche. The information I found most informative, was journal entries from the Zebulon Pike Expedition for the days of November 11th to the 16th, 1806. These 6 camps spanned a distance of 80 miles, from the present day Colorado Kansas border to La Junta, Colorado. They reported sighting numerous bluffs that showed previous occupation, and also recorded 6 separate abandoned Spanish camp sites within these 80 miles, see map below. They traded 6 gorgets to the Indians themselves, but these would have been of a much later British design. They did however report, in trading with the Indians it was clear that the Spanish had been there earlier, they reported seeing Indians wearing gorgets and other trade goods from the earlier Spanish contact.



Thanks to the detailed journals of the Zebulon Pike Expedition and the recorded locations of abandoned Spanish camps along their journey it is very likely the

gorget in question was either traded to the Indians by Spanish operating in that area, or lost during a battle with them. The largest action the Spanish had in that area was in 1779. On this military expedition Juan Bautista de Anza, the Governor of New Mexico, and 800 soldiers fought a battle about 90 miles west of the location where the gorget was found. Many Comanche, including Chief Cuerno Verde, were killed. This gorget is truly a rare example of Spanish contact in South East Colorado predating 1779.

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S.A.H.A.R.A.