

## **2 REALES – A. 1872 (ALAMOS)**

**by Erma C Stevens.**

Several years ago your editor acquired the above coin of Alamos. The purchase was made with some reservations and with return privileges from the dealer. A knowing collector had previously examined this coin and pronounced it as false. We were not so sure. But, the edge was milled like the decimal coinage rather than the herringbone design of the reales! This peculiarity intrigued me. Inquiries of other collectors only resulted in the knowledge that their specimens also bore the milled edge. Further research could cast little light on the reason for this anomaly.

One Azteca member, Edward Beals, equally intrigued, made the coin a subject for his talk on "My favorite Coin", and later did a fine paper on the subject. Unfortunately this paper was lost in the U.S. mails. From memory, our own notes and a bit of research we will try to recreate the Beals study. Perhaps this will also suffice as a reply to numerous requests for information about the coin.

The story of the Sonora mints appears to be one of political intrigue. Seemingly they were continuously out of step with the rest of the republic. The decimal coins of 5-10-25-50 centavos and the balance type peso were struck in other mints beginning in 1869, yet their first appearance from the mints of Sonora seems to be in 1874. Granted that these mints were out of the way and some delay could be expected in their receiving the new dies, still five years seems an unreasonable time for them to accept the government edict. Also they had completely ignored the decree of Oct. 26, 1863, whereby mints were to coin the 5 and 10 centavos with the rayed liberty cap design.

The contract to operate the mint was disavowed by the Imperial regime of 1864 -67 yet with the Imperial armed forces in the towns of Hermosillo and Alamos, the mints continued to strike the old style coins rather than those of Maximilian.

Our subject coin the 2 Reales of Alamos, as well as 8 Reales, were struck in both the mints of Alamos and Hermosillo, in the very years that the other mints had adopted the metric system. Recent sales show 8R, from Alamos in the years 1871, 1872, 1873 and from Hermosillo in 1869, 71, 72, 73.

What pressure was brought to bear that a government mint, albeit under private contract could thus flout the coinage regulations and deliberately coin an obsolete type? This would make an interesting story if all the facts were known.

We doubt that it was ignorance, even in 1872. Three years is a long time to get the word. Certainly they were in possession of the machinery to mill the edges, as witness this 2R 1872.....is it possible they received the machinery and not the dies to make the transition to the 25 centavos?

To digress a bit from Alamos, we have 2 specimens of the 2 real of Hermosillo dated 1867... on both coins the date appears to be 7/1...yet we have never seen a 2 real dated 1861. Have you? Does it exist? (H°)

These mysteries of the Sonora mint might be solved if each of us would contribute our findings. Certainly, your editor can give you no specific answers, only more questions. Can YOU answer any of them?

One thing we do believe..., the A, 1872 2R, exists ONLY with the milled edge of the decimal series. We would like to know of any specimens bearing the old style edge.

E. C. S.

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