

## A STUDY OF THE MINOR SILVER REALES OF THE HERMOSILLO MINT

By Dave Busse C-58

Before starting, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Don Bailey for writing an updated book on State & Federal Copper and Brass Coinage of Mexico. This article has been adapted from a book I am writing that covers Republic of Mexico Silver *Real* Minors. It specifically addresses the issues from the Hermosillo Mint. In the book, every mint that produced silver *real* minors is being covered in a similar manner. In addition, a Checklist, which will be in a separate volume, is being written and several serious collectors and/or former collectors have contributed to it. Therefore, the checklist will contain quite a few more varieties than one sees in the popular catalogs such as Krause 2009, etc. If anyone has detailed photographs, either regular or digital, of better condition  $\frac{1}{4}$ R,  $\frac{1}{2}$ R, 1R, 2R or 4R from any mint and would be willing to share them, I would be most grateful and will credit you in the book if you so desire. If you don't have photographs but do have better condition coins and would be willing to loan them to me so that I could make high resolution scans/photos, I will pay postage both ways.

### HERMOSILLO

Hermosillo is the capital of the northwestern state of Sonora and has an unusual numismatic history, even for Mexico. Some coppers were struck there between 1832 and 1836. In addition, a few 8R were struck in 1835 and 1836, and again in 1839 when a  $\frac{1}{2}$ R was also struck. However, it seems those silver issues were not authorized by the Federal Government. As a result, they were ordered to cease production and remove from circulation coins that had already been struck. As one might expect, all Hermosillo silver coinage from the 1835-39 period is excessively rare, according to most records the known examples are either Unique or have at most two or three pieces in existence.

### $\frac{1}{4}$ R – HERMOSILLO

As far as we know, no  $\frac{1}{4}$ R were struck at this mint.

### Fig. A $\frac{1}{2}$ R - HERMOSILLO

The Hermosillo  $\frac{1}{2}$ R is an often overlooked coin – regardless of the date – that is missing from most collections. There are three reported: an 1839 assayer P. P. that if genuine is considered Unique, an 1862 F. M. and an 1867 PR, 6/ inverted 6, 7/2 and PR/FM. There were none in Premier-84. The Pradeau-Bothamley Sale II of March 30-April 3, 1971 Lot #1697, featured an 1867/1 H<sup>o</sup> P.R./F.M. (the photo is a little dark, but good enough to tell it is a gorgeous coin) graded “Toned mint luster, Probably Unc” which brought \$250. A study of the photo shows that it has a Mexico City Style Eagle & Cap. The 1971 Edition of Hubbard-Buttrey did not list the coin in anything above EF and gave it a value of \$55 in that condition. Thus, while we make think \$250 was a real bargain, and it probably was, the winner still paid nearly five times the listed value for an EF. In VF or better

either date is definitely a FIBI. Interestingly, the Hermosillo 4R and ½R used the Late Mexico City Style Dies while the 1R and 2R used the Sonora Style Dies.

Fig B



0  
★½R H . 1839 P (P)

Note the Retrograde N in MEXICANA

Attribution Number: .5R-Ho-1839-1101

Note I have not been able to examine the above coin “in the flesh” and therefore make no claim as to its being genuine.

Fig. C



0

½R H 1867 P R, 6/ inverted 6 & 7/2, no Star in Reverse Legend

The 6/inverted 6 is so poorly executed that it appears to be an Inverted 6/6!

Attribution Number - .5R-Ho-1867-1101

Fig. D



**Close up of the 7/2, note rounded area at the top of the 7 and the wide base of the 2 just above the bottom of the 7**

### **DIE STYLE**

#### **Early Hermosillo – 1839**

**Eagle Side** - Short Wide Eagle, retrograde M in MEXICANA.

**Cap Side** – Short and very rounded Cap. Broken Star

#### **Late Hermosillo – 1861 & 1867**

Mexico City Style 1856-1868

**RARITY** – Very Scarce-Rare (1867, possibly two varieties) to Extremely Rare (1862)

**CONDITION** – Usually found in Low Grade and Extra Fine is about as good as one can expect to acquire and that will in all likelihood be the 1867.

**COLLECTING TIPS** – This is one that you should buy if offered.

### **1R - HERMOSILLO**

This is a tough two-year-type or three-year-Type (assuming the 1862 exists and is can be acquired) coin. I have been told by one authority that an 1862 exists, but it is not listed in any reference and to date I have not actually seen it. Assuming it exists, Hermosillo has become even tougher for the Date collector. Very Fine or lower examples of the 1867 show up occasionally. Krause 2008 lists three varieties of the 1867 (a regular 7 and a small 7/1, and a Large 7/ a Small 7) as well as the 1868 as having a value of \$250 in UNC. However, my research shows there are at least three varieties of the 1867: an overdate 7/2, a Plain Date Regular Size 7 and a Plain Date Large 7. I believe what the catalogs call a 7/1 is actually a 7/2, which comes from a close examination of a high grade example (CH AU), see photos below. The 7 appears to be the same size (though somewhat lower on the coin) as the 1 & 8 while the 6 appears larger and higher than the

other three digits. Interestingly, none of the three Varieties of the 1867 have a horizontal bar in the H of the mintmark.

Fig. E



★ 1R 11 1867 P R. (Horizontal Bar in MM missing, appears to be 7/2 rather than 7/1, Large 6 in Date, No Dots in Legend until after the assayer initial R, Un-Listed as such)

Grade: Choice Extra Fine, Well Struck

Attribution Number: 1R-Ho-1867-1101

Fig F



Note the slight curve at the top of the 7 and the extension to the right near the bottom of the 7. Note that there is no base or serif in the 1 of 1867

Fig. G



- ★ 1R 11 1867 P R . (Horizontal Bar in MM missing, 7 only no over-date, Large 6 in  
 A. Date, No Dots in Legend until after the assayer initial R, Un-Listed as such)  
 Grade: Extra Fine, Soft Eagle's Breast  
 Attribution Number: 1R-Ho-1867-1103

B.



Close Up of Legend – No Horizontal Bar in MM, Large 6, 7 is same size as the 1 and 8 not an over-date.

- ★ 1R . 11 . 1867 P R .  
 Horizontal bar in MM missing, Large 7, not an over-date





Attribution Number: 1R-Ho-1867-1102

From a private collection reproduction furnished by the owner

I have seen one UNC (1868) and it was purchased at an auction in Mexico City for \$1,000. My guess is that it is off the market for at least twenty years unless the owner finds a better one.

#### **DIE STYLE – Sonora Style Dies**

**Eagle Side** – has a more symmetrical Eagle than seen in any of the other Styles. Both Wings are sharply pointed. The body is long and narrow. Beak is open.

**Cap Side** – Large fold at the upper right of the Cap and a pronounced opening at the bottom.

**RARITY** – Very Scarce for the 1867 issues (all varieties) and Rare for the 1868. The 1862 would be considered Excessively Rare, possibly Unique.

**CONDITION** – Usually found in Low Grade and Extra Fine is about as good as one can expect to obtain.

**COLLECTING TIPS** – This is one that you should buy if offered.

#### **2R - HERMOSILLO**

Possibly – Guadalupe y Calvo is also a candidate – the hardest to find after the E<sup>O</sup> M<sup>O</sup> and the C<sup>E</sup>. I have personally seen two Uncirculated examples of an Hermosillo 2R, both dated 1867. One was owned by another Type/Variety Collector at the time. I found one that sold for \$500 in the 1975 ANA Auction (Lot 1977 and there was a photo). It was graded Choice UNC, Toned. The dealer who bought the coin for the collector confirmed that the coin I saw was the same piece that was in the ANA Auction. The second was featured in Ponterio & Associates Sale 143 Lot 1242 (photo below). Be aware that an 1862 – possibly Unique - has been reported. Currently I list it as RNC.

Fig. K



★ 2R. H. 1867. P. R. (7/1, PR/FM)

Attribution Number: 2R-1867-1101

Note the Sonora Eagle & Cap Ponterio & Associates Sale 143 Lot 1242

Grade: "Weakly Struck on Eagle's Breast as usual, Lightly Toned, BRILLIANT UNCIRCULATED" by the cataloger. Price realized was \$1,380 (including the Buyer's Fee) which was a surprise to most there.

Fig. L



#### Style.

**Eagle Side** – has a more symmetrical Eagle than seen in any of the other Styles. Both Wings are sharply pointed. The body is long and narrow. Head is no larger than the neck. Beak is open.

**Cap Side** – Large fold at the upper right of the Cap and a pronounced opening at the bottom.

**RARITY** – Very Scarce to Rare depending on the grade Rare (1867). Extremely Rare (1861) Excessively Rare (1862 assuming it exists)

**CONDITION** – Usually found in Low Grade, and Extra Fine – with the exception of the one pictured above – is about as good as one can expect to find. I believe that less than 10 and perhaps less than 5 examples of the 1867 exist in Mint State. Moreover, I would

be surprised if not shocked were a private collector to have an 1861 in that state of preservation.

**COLLECTING TIPS** – Buy the 1861 (note PR of the 1861 in the Premier 84 Sale) or 1862 if you find either; grade conscious collectors can look for the 1867 in VF, anything better will command well above catalog estimates.

#### 4R - HERMOSILLO

This is a three-year type coin. The 1861 is rare, one graded GOOD (Lot #2859, photographed) brought \$125 against an estimate of \$200-300 in Premier 84. The 1862 is a recent discovery and to date only two have been identified and authenticated. The 1867/1 is difficult but not nearly as difficult as the '61 or '62. An 1867/1 in Very Fine (Lot #2860) fetched \$270 against an estimate of \$150-200 in the same sale.

Fig. M



★ 4R · H · 1861.F M ·

Grade: Extra Fine, Toning

Attribution Number: 4R-Ho-1861-1101



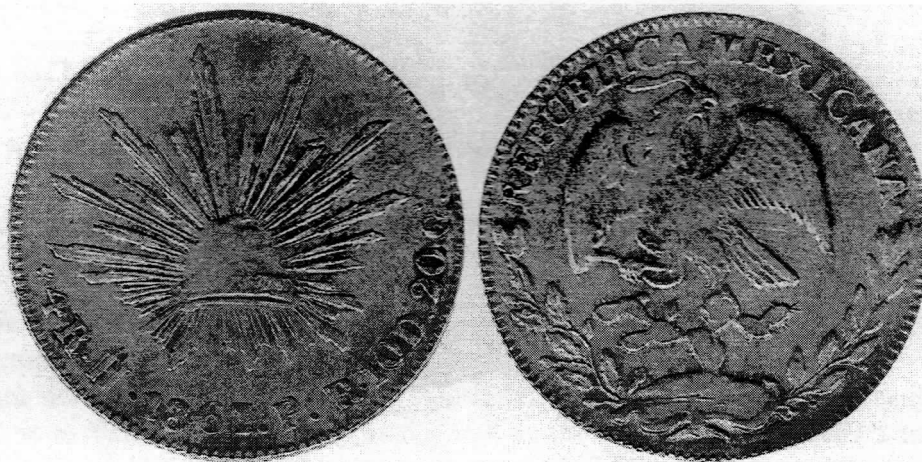
Fig. N



Close up of MM, Date and Assayer Initials, note how much larger 61 is than 18, note also that the last 1 has been repunched at least 3 times, compare the last 1 here to the 7 in the Date on the coin below.

I have examined in detail an 1867 (see below) that does not appear to be an over-date; at the very least it requires a vivid imagination to claim a 7/1. If it is truly a 7/1 then it is from a different dies pairing than the 1861 pictured above that would mean that at least two sets of die were used in 1861 even though it is much scarcer than the 1867. What is readily apparent is that almost the entire reverse legend has been re-punched. The star was re-punched to the point that it appears to be six pointed. The two uprights of the MM have been re-punched but not the superscript <sup>o</sup>. The dot between the R of 4R and the MM has been re-punched so that it appears to be two dots. All four digits of the date show evidence of re-punching but the last digit seems to be a 7/7 rather than a 7/1. The assayer initial P is a re-punched P rather than over an F. The R does appear to be over an M. The Obverse legend has the ANA of MEXICANA and the following dot re-punched. The coin exhibits a clashed die effect with rays extending above and below the wings as well as below the eagle's tail and feet. I grade and describe the coin as CH EF, Lustrous with a hint of russet toning, (Others whom I consider to be accurate, consistent graders claim it is AU. What makes it an important coin is the condition because it allows one to better determine the over-date status as well as other minting characteristics.

Fig. O



O

★ 4R.H. 1867. P. R. (P/P &amp; R/M)

Attribution Number: 4R-Ho-1867-1102

Note the Clashed Dies effect on the Eagle Side

Grade: Choice Extra Fine, Light Toning

Attribution Number: 4R-Ho-1867-1102



C. Close Up of MM, Date &amp; Assayer Initials

Compare the first digit of the date to the last digit. As I said above, it requires a good imagination to say that the 7 is over a 1. Another consideration is that we know that Hermosillo struck four reales in 1862, but none after that until 1867. That fact suggests that there would be an 1862/1 or an 1867/2 before there would be an 1867/1. Note also how much higher the 67 is than the 18. Compare to the 1861 which has a large 61 with the second 1 in the date entirely different from the first 1 in the date.

**DIE STYLE** – Mexico City Style of 1854 – 1868

**RARITY** – Scarce to very rare depending on grade of the 1867, any variety. The 1861 would be considered rare to very rare depending on the grade. The 1862 has to be considered excessively rare, with only two reported at present.

**CONDITION** – Usually found in the lower grades; extra fine or slightly better is about as good as one can expect to acquire.

**COLLECTING TIPS** – Type Collectors should search for a nice 1867. Date Collectors will have to work to find a decent 1861, and the likelihood of finding an 1862 is almost non-existent.

I also solicit your comments regarding the information provided below and welcome any and all constructive criticism.

Thanks,

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