

GUANAJUATO CUARTILAS OFFICIALLY "VOID"

By Claudio Verrey C-112



Some twenty years ago I bought a Guanajuato 1857 fourth real with a cut in the middle because it was struck in copper, and I needed one in this metal for my collection.

Ten years later, I bought another one with the same characteristics but this time I noticed that both coins had flan problems. Perhaps, I thought, that was the explanation of the slash, and it was made at the mint with the purpose of demonetizing them. Finally a year ago I purchased a third one, like the others. Now I can state that the cut was official

I am confident that all these coins were set apart with the idea of melting them to make new flans but, fortunately for us collectors, an error was made and they escaped the mint.

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COMMENTS TO THE CUARTILLAS OF GUANAJUATO ARTICLE**By Clyde Hubbard, C- 127**

In his September 2002 Journal article about copper Cuartillas of Guanajuato 1857, Claudio Verrey, C-12 expresses the belief that the cancellation slashes are official. My opinion is that they are unofficial. All mints of Mexico maintained a quality control, which involved separation of defective strikes. In spite of this a few sub-standard pieces found their way into circulation. Normally, the bad pieces were sorted out and returned to the melting pot. Defacing represents unnecessary effort if coins are going to be melted. Why waste labor and time with an extra process?

“Casa de Cambio” (Exchange Houses) such as the former Casa Baron on Calle Venustiano Carranza #50 in Mexico City had stone counters where coins were received. Suspect coins were bounced on the stone to test the “ring”. Almost all of the exchange involved silver coinage. In years past, the owners of exchange houses removed counterfeit pieces and defaced them with a machete to prevent further circulation. I have seen many silver coins of this category. Defaced coppers are unusual.

Shown are two examples of the 1857 copper Cuartillas that were struck off-center, a good enough reason to remove them from circulation. Today, any abnormally struck coins are snapped up by error collectors.

In my many years of exposure to Mexican coins I have seen only one gold coin of the Republic of Mexico that found its way into circulation in spite of a defective strike. The coin is an 8 Escudo of the Hermosillo mint 1863 .FM. illustrated here.

During a visit to the Mexico City Mint at Calle Apartado 13 in the late 1950's I observed a most unusual practice of testing newly minted coins. Each of four men seated on chairs in front of bins would grab a handful of 50 Centavos bronze Cuauhtemoc pieces and toss them one at a time against a slanted metal surface to test for a proper “ring”. Any coin with a discordant tone was caught in midair and tossed into the reject bin. The reason for this: the Mexican public was accustomed to “sounding” coins to verify authenticity. The 50-Centavos to which I refer were struck in the years 1955-1957 and 1959.

Clyde Hubbard



EXAMPLE # 1

Obverse

Reverse

1857 Guanajuato Copper "Cuartilla" (1/4Real) with slash mark on off center strike.



EXAMPLE #2

Obverse

Reverse

1857 Guanajuato Copper "Cuartilla" (1/4Real) with slash mark to deface off center strike.



EXAMPLE #3

Obverse

Reverse

1863 .FM. Hermosillo 8 Escudo off center strike.