

WHICH CAME FIRST? THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG? - by Verne R. Walrafen

The subject of this commentary is the large two centavo specimens that were struck in the State of Puebla in the District called Tetela Del Oro Y Ocampo. You will note several illustrations on the back of this page.

In 1928 Howland Wood knew of only one denomination of coinage from this district and he described it as follows:

73 Two Centavos. Obv. Mexican eagle on cactus within dotted circle; around, REPUBLICA MEXICANA; below, 1915; outside, circle of dots.  
Rev. In centre, 2 CENTAVOS within circle of dots; around, TET. LA DEL ORO Y OCAMPO E. DE PU (Tetela del Oro y Ocampo, Estado de Puebla).  
Size 20 mm. Copper. Hill Coll. Plate VI.  
Extremely rare.

He was obviously describing a specimen of my type "B" (PU).

In 1932 J. Sanchez Garza noted other denominations of coinage from this district and among them was a two centavo specimen described as follows:

73a.--Two centavos. Copper. Same as No. 73, but reads Pue.

instead of Pu. See illustration. Rare.

He was obviously describing a specimen of my type "A" (PUE). It was at this point that, through the simple ordering of observation sequence, the seeds for an erroneous conclusion were sown.

In 1965 Neil Utberg catalogued both specimens maintaining the ordering imposed by the Wood/Garza observation sequence. He never made any sort of an actual statement indicating that the "E" had been added to the "PU" to create the "PUE" but the conclusion was easily drawn as I remember clearly making this inference myself before I took time to study the specimens.

In 1970 Carlos Gaytan catalogued both specimens and he too maintained the ordering that was clearly established in previous catalogues.

In 1976 Hugh Guthrie catalogued both specimens and for the first time that I am aware of a statement was made stating what everybody already knew intuitively to be correct..."Both of these coins were struck with the same pair of dies. The reverse legend has been altered by the addition of the E in PUE. and by...". After all one clearly always punches new design or legend into a die, one never would remove a segment.

Figure "1" shows what is either an original state working die or a re-engraved working die as everything is nice and clear. Figures "2" and "3" show an deteriorated state working die since you can see the original E behind the period in TET.LA (it used to be TETELA quite obviously).

Figure "4" shows what is either an original state working die or a re-engraved working die as everything is nice and clear. Figures "5" and "6" show clearly a retooled working die where the E has been removed from the PUE and replaced with a period (the original period has been removed also).....very interesting! You can see the raised area that resulted from this effort on any type "B" (PU) specimen with the naked eye alone.

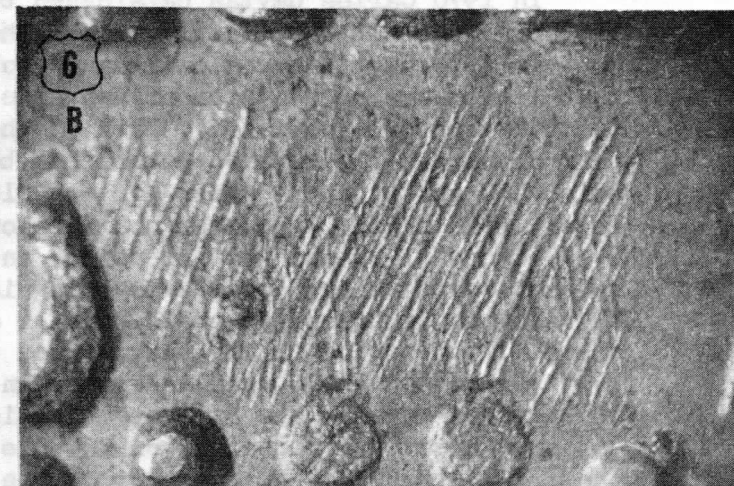
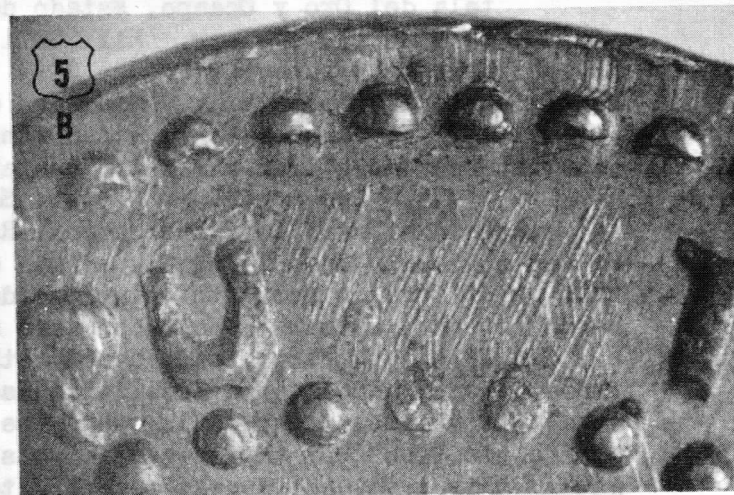
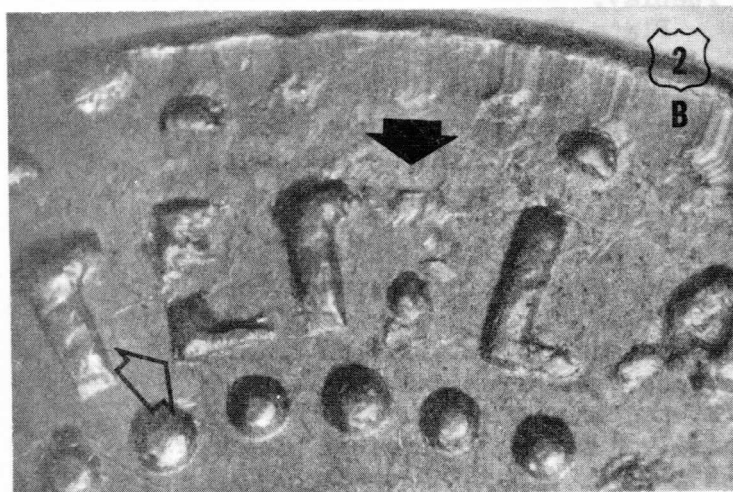
The deteriorated state working die was reworked to remove the E from PUE and this clearly demonstrates that the type "A" (PUE) state of the die came before the type "B" (PU) state of the die.

If anyone can find fault with my logic I would be very interested and I will be happy to print your comments for the benefit of our membership.

PU

Can anyone think  
of any reason to  
remove the "E" ?

PUE



Funds required to print this article were donated by Earl R. Ericsson.



20.40mm  
2.530g

A

PUE

73A



20.73mm  
3.715g

copper

B

PU

73

20.80mm  
3.725g



copper