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Don Bailey, Editor
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David Hughes, C15
Mike Ontko, R201

**NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

As only five members indicated that they would serve as members of the Association's Board of Directors they were elected by acclamation and will serve until June 2012. The new board is shown above with one new member, Cory Frampton.

The Executive Director handles the day to day operations, with the board serving as advisors on this and other matters.

VIVA LA REVOLUCION

By Joe Flores, C-2

I seldom comment on any auction sale, but I must mention the Millennia Collection Sale by Ira and Larry Goldberg in May of 2008. My interest was on the Mexican Revolution coins and their prices realized. I think most of these coins have reached their true value. Seeing these rarities and unique pieces selling brought this coin to mind.

This is about a OAXACA 2 peso silver corded edge, R-2 for rarity, unlisted in the G.B. book and listed as Oax. 109 in VENTANA, by Woodworth and Flores, 1988. (out of print). Photo #1.

This copper version of this 109, which I have labeled as 109a is struck on a off metal planchet and is very rare. The die is the same as the silver version as in photo #1.

Photo #2 is the copper coin, and both are of the same diameter. If you will notice the copper version has been marred. I have seen this marring on other off metal coins. Trial strike or pattern?

Joe Flores
P.O. Box 4484
Stockton, CA 95204

**Photo #1**



Photo #2

~~~~~

## JOURNAL ARTICLES WANTED!!!!

As always we are looking for articles for future Journals. Any members that would like to submit articles please do so. You the collectors have the knowledge and interest in the various collecting that can be found in Mexican numismatics. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us directly, or through any of the board members.

When you submit articles it would be deeply appreciated if:

- 1 It could be on a CD, Zip drive or diskette.
2. Any length is welcome.
3. Please have images in Jpeg.
4. Use Times New Roman, size 12 fonts in the articles.

If you are interested in helping with the Journal please let us know and lets see what we can work out.

## A Survey of the Four Reales of Mexico

By Mike Ontko R-201

### Scope.

Smaller sister of the familiar 8 *reales* or *peso*, the silver 4 *reales* or *toston* has often been neglected by collectors. Herewith we survey a type set of the silver 4 *reales* of Mexico issued 1732-1870, followed by a look at a mintmark set of cap-and-ray 4 *reales* of the Republic.

### The story.

The *peso* was an international trade coin in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, known with counterstamps from every inhabited continent. Today, there is a generous supply in every grade through Uncirculated. This is not the case with the 4 *reales* or *toston* (so called from an Italian coin). Their scarcity today suggests that issues were small.



**Fig. 1. hammered 4 reales of Carlos and Joanna.**

The design of the *toston* copied that on the *peso*, with the exception of the first issue from the period of Carlos and Johanna (c.1542-56, *Fig. 1*), for which the 4 *reales* was the largest coin in regular production. These early coins were struck by the hammer. The government in Madrid complained that production was too slow, so they were replaced by cobs. The early cobs (*Fig. 2*) were often reasonably round and legible, but later issues were frequently very crude (*Fig. 3*).



*Fig. 2. cob 4 reales of Philip II (1556-98).*



*Fig. 3. cob 4 reales of Philip V (c.1700-15).*

These became an embarrassment to the mint, which replaced them with pillar coinage in 1732 (*Fig. 4*). The MX mintmark was dropped after 1733 and the mint reverted to the traditional Mo (*Fig. 5*).



*Fig. 4. 1733MX-MF 4 reales.*



The introduction of pillar coinage was a major challenge for the Mexico City mint. Not only did the mint convert from striking coins with the hammer to the screw press, it had to punch round blanks from rolled sheet using dies, something never before attempted there (this method had been in use in France from the 1640's). While the mint technicians struggled with the new machinery, production had to continue. As an expedient, Mexico City issued "klippe" coinage during 1733-34 (*Fig. 5*).



*Fig. 5. 1733Mo "klippe" 4 reales.*

"Klippe" is a term borrowed from German numismatics, originally used to describe special issues struck on large, square blanks using regular dies. The Mexican "klippes" (no other colonial mint did this) were struck on rolled and cut (not punched) blanks using upgraded cob dies, not the pillar dies. The 8 reales "klippe" is scarce but the 4 reales "klippe" is rare. The specimen shown in Figure 5 is salvaged from the wreck of the *Rooswyjk*. After 1734, the bugs were ironed out of the punching machinery and production began in earnest (*Fig. 6*).



*Fig. 6. 1735MoMF 4 reales of Philip V.*





*Fig. 7. 1757MoMM 4 reales of Ferdinand VI.*



*Fig. 8. 1766MoMF 4 reales of Charles III.*

The design was changed to the portrait type in 1772 to disguise a debasement from .917 to .903 fine silver. The king's bust was used for the rest of the colonial period under Carlos III (1772-88, *Fig. 9*), Carlos IV (1789-1808, *Figs. 10-11*) and Fernando VII (1808-21, *Figs. 12-14*). Figure 10 shows a transitional type, issued in the name of Carlos IV but using the old king's bust.



*Fig. 9. 1775MoFM 4 reales of Charles III.*



*Fig. 10. 1790MoFM 4 reales of Charles IV.*



*Fig. 11. 1799MoFM 4 reales of Charles IV.*



In 1808, Napoleon forced Charles IV to abdicate in favor of his son, who became Ferdinand VII. This prince was in turn tricked into abdicating in favor of Napoleon's brother Joseph. French armies enabled Joseph to hold Madrid but Spain as a whole never accepted his rule. Officials in the colonies were even more reluctant to acknowledge the upstart. They responded by recognizing the first abdication (Charles') but not the second (Ferdinand's). Accordingly, Ferdinand's bust appeared on colonial coinage instead of Joseph's. The Madrid mint was not available to send master dies to the colonies so locals were forced to use an "imaginary" bust 1809-12 (*Fig. 12*), which was replaced by the standard draped bust 1816-21 (*Fig. 14*).

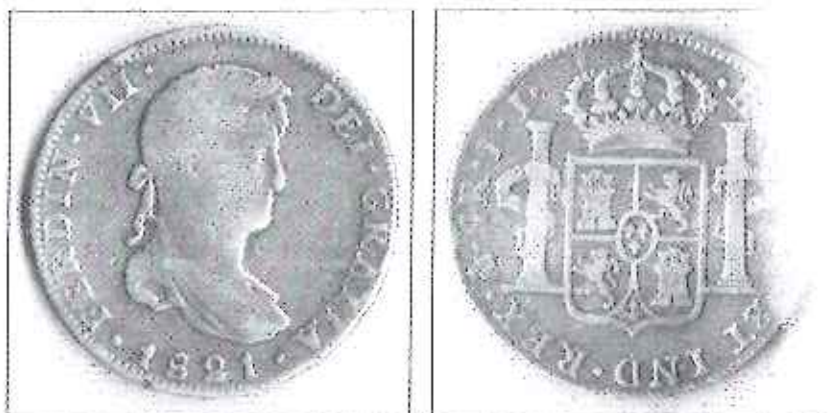


*Fig. 12. 1809MoHJ 4 reales of Ferdinand VII.*

The collapse of the regime in Spain unleashed the forces of independence in the colonies. Hidalgo led the way in Mexico, issuing the *Grito de Dolores* in 1810. The movement begun with high ideals degenerated into banditry and warlordism. The spreading anarchy forced authorities to open branch mints. During the war of independence, the branch mints Sombrerete and Guadalajara struck 4 reales (*Fig. 13*).

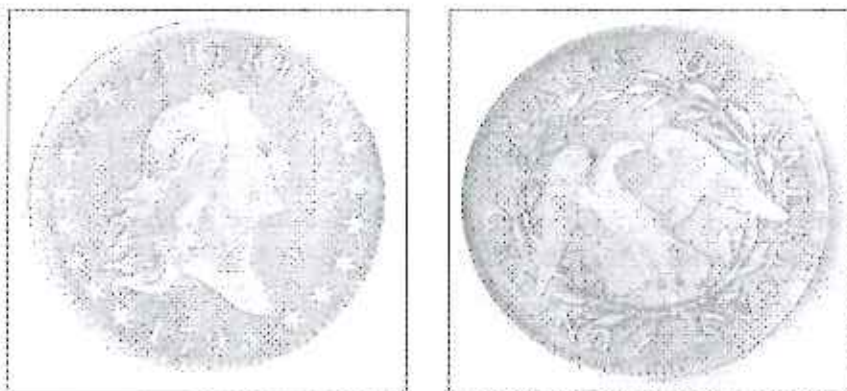


*Fig. 13. 1814Ga 4 reales of Ferdinand VII.*



**Fig. 14. 1821MoJJ 4 reales of Ferdinand VII.**

After independence in 1821, mint authorities were even more dependent on the export of pesos to raise revenue and the minting of *tostones* was sporadic. There are none from the Iturbide regime (1822-23) or the hookneck period (1823-24). Republican 4 *reales* used the same cap and rays on the obverse and eagle on the reverse as is found on the 8 *reales*. The Republic 4 *reales* began in 1827 and was superseded in 1870 by the decimal 50 centavos.



**Fig. 15. United States 1795 half dollar.**

When the United States mint began issuing half dollars in 1794 (Fig. 15), it made every effort to imitate the 4 *reales*. The bust half dollar of 1794-1836 is the same weight, fineness and diameter as its progenitor. Many Latin American countries which had issued 4 *reales* in colonial times continued to do so after independence, especially Peru and Bolivia.

#### **Specifications.**



All the 4 *reales* are silver, 13.54 g nominal weight. Fincness was .931 until 1732, then .917 until 1772, then .896-.903 until 1870. The 4 *reales* shown in this article range in diameter from 31.5 mm to 34.3 mm, with an average of 32.9 mm. The early United States half dollars were 13.48 g, .892 fine. When Congress was fixing the weights of our coinage, the subcommittee assayed actual Mexican coins, not their theoretical value.

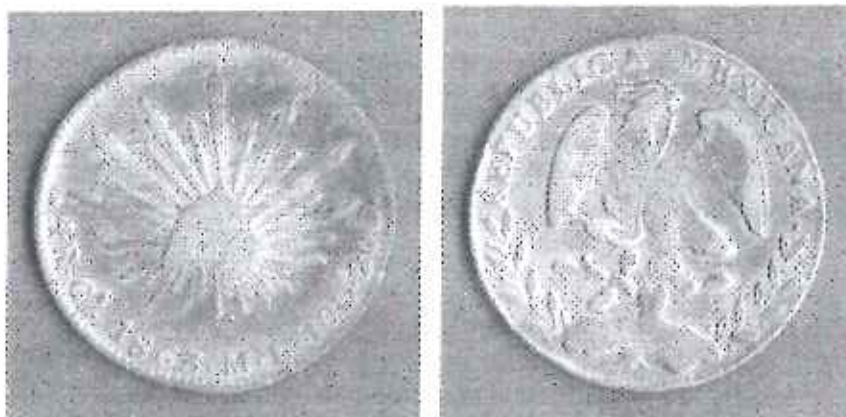
#### Collecting 4 reales.

In colonial times, the Mexico City mint issued 4 *reales* faithfully each year. Although some dates (especially 1732-33) are rare, a collector with deep pockets can assemble a date set of the colonial issues in a lifetime.



*Fig. 16. 1860C-PV 4 reales.*

In republican times, the Zacatecas ( $Z^S$ , 1830-70, *Fig. 26*) and Guanajuato ( $G^O$ , 1835-70, *Fig. 21*) mints issued a steady series and some issues of Mexico City ( $Mo$ , 1827, 1850-68, *Fig. 23*), Potosi ( $P^I$ , 1837-69, *Fig. 25*) and Guadalajara ( $G^A$ , 1843-63, *Fig. 18*) are available but the rest are scarce to rare. These include issues from Real de Catorce ( $C^E$ , 1863, *Fig. 17*), Hermosillo ( $H^O$ , 1861, 1867, *Fig. 22*), Oaxaca ( $O$ , 1861, *Fig. 24*), Guadalupe y Calvo ( $GC$ , 1844-50, *Fig. 19*) and Culiacan ( $C$ , 1846-60, *Fig. 16*). The mints of Durango, Alamos, Estado de Mexico and Chihuahua never struck this coin.



*Fig. 17. 1863CeML 4 reales.*

Unlike the 8 *reales*, there is little variation in design between mints. Only the early issues of Guanajuato (1830-c.1854, *Fig. 24*) show a distinctive eagle. No mintage records survive of the 4 *reales*. Survivors are usually well worn, suggesting extensive circulation. No hoards have been discovered to supply collectors with high grade material.



*Fig. 18. 1844GaMC 4 reales.*

Collecting a complete date and mintmark set of four *reales* would probably be even more difficult than the equivalent set of eight *reales*. While there are fewer coins, there are more rarities. Even the ten coin mintmark set is about as difficult and costly as the same mintmark set of eight *reales*, which has fourteen coins. One cannot also be too picky as to condition; Fine to Very Fine is average, Extremely Fine scarce, About Uncirculated rare and true Uncirculated virtually unknown, even for common dates.

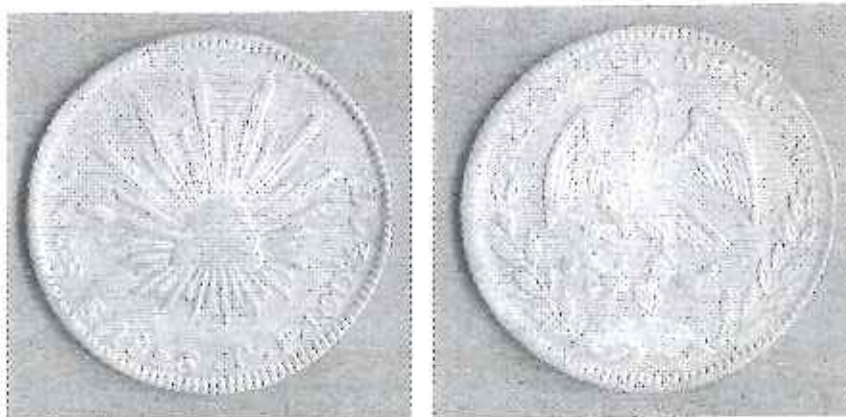




*Fig. 19. 1846GC-MP 4 reales.*



*Fig. 20. 1839GoPJ 4 reales.*



*Fig. 21. 1856GoPF 4 reales.*



*Fig. 22. 1867HoPR 4 reales.*



*Fig. 23. 1861MoCH 4 reales.*



*Fig. 24. 1861O-FR 4 reales.*





*Fig. 25. 1869PiPS 4 reales.*



*Fig. 26. 1837ZsOV 4 reales.*

#### Sources.

Chester L. Krause and Clifford Mishler, *Standard Catalog of World Coins: Spain, Portugal and the New World*, 1st Edition, Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 2002.

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Frank F. Gilboy, *The Milled Columnarios of Central and South America: Spanish American Pillar Coinage, 1732 to 1772*, Regina, Saskatchewan: Prairie Wind Pub., 1999.

Alberto F. Pradeau, *Numismatic History of Mexico, from the Pre-Columbian Epoch to 1823*, rev. ed., New York: Sanford J. Durst, 1978.

Michael C. Meyer and William L. Sherman, *The Course of Mexican History*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

#### Photo credits.

- Fig. 2. Heritage Long Beach sale, June 2001, lot 5216, realized \$138.  
 Fig. 3. Heritage Long Beach sale, February 2001, lot 5269, realized \$92.  
 Fig. 4. Heritage New York sale, January 2008, lot 51717, NGC-63, realized \$25,300.  
 Fig. 5. Ponterio sale 138.  
 Fig. 22. Heritage Long Beach sale, June 2006, lot 14258, VF-XF, realized \$2012.50.

The remainder is from the author's collection. They do not represent the gems used as plate coins in auction catalogs but rather the specimens typically found in the average collection. Photos are enlarged to approximately 150% of actual size.

This article is based on an exhibit presented at the Long Beach show (September 2004) and the San Francisco ANA (August 2005).

Mike Otkno, R-201

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### RESPONSE TO REPUBLIC 25C ARTICLE BY MIKE ONTKO

Mr. Dave Busse, C-58 had a few comments on Mike's article that appeared in the March 08 Journal. The comments are listed first and then Mike's response.

Busse's comments:

Hello Don,

Just received the latest issue of the USMexNA Journal. Volume 13, #1. Read the various articles with interest. If I may be so bold, would like to point out a couple things about Michael Ontko's article in Republic 25 Centavos. First, the article was quite good overall. However, there are a couple of things that should be addressed:

Michael stated that 2R were produced until 1873. Unless I am wrong, that is not correct. It is my understanding that the last 2R to be minted was the A 1872 A. M. In fact, there were only two 2 Rcales, the Zs 1870 Y.H. and the A 1872 A. M, struck in the 1870's.

Second, he said that that the Obverse had an Oak Branch and an Olive Branch. My study has led me to understand that the bottom half of the Obverse Perimeter is composed of an Oak Branch with leaves and acorns on the left and a Laurel Branch with Leaves and Berries on the right. I am not aware of an Olive Branch being used on Republic of Mexico Coins.



Third, he says "there are no subtypes" and, I guess that depending on what one considers to be a "subtype" he may be correct. However, though I don't use that term, from his implications I would consider the CH and Ca and the A and As Mintmarks to be subtypes. I prefer to call them Mintmark Varieties, but that would certainly fit the category of a subtype as he seems to be using the term.

Also, I think he would have added much to the numismatic knowledge of the Republic of Mexico 25 Centavos had he given the reader his findings, based on his research, as to which Mint/Date/Assayer combinations were Common, Scarce and Rare because, as we all know, the popular catalog are woefully inaccurate.

For example, while Culiacán appears to be a relatively common Mint for the 25 Centavos, in thirty plus years of collecting, research and exchanging information, I have never seen what I consider to be a true Mint State Specimen regardless of the date. I have had a Mint State Culiacán 25 Centavos on my Want Lists with Rick Ponterio, Jed Crump, Mike Dunigan and Richard Long (until he retired) and others since about 1990. Also am still looking for Mint State example of the As Mintmark. If anyone has one I have two of the A only Mintmark, either the A 1883 L or A 1886 L and I would be willing to trade either one of them for an As in Mint State regardless of the date.

Despite the above, I want to thank Michael for the article - I know how hard it is to put into words what one has learned over the years as I continue to struggle with the book I am writing about Republic Silver Real Minors - and encourage him and others to continue to contributing by adding their experiences to the world of Mexican Coins, be it Colonial, War Of Independence, Iturbide, Republic Real/Escudo, Maximiliano, Republic Decimal, Revolutionary or Modern Mexico.

Dave Busse, C-58

Mike Ontko's response:

Dear Sir—

Your note received. Mr. Busse's letter seems to be fair and his criticisms minor. If you wish to publish his comments, here are my rejoinders:

"Michael stated that 2R were produced until 1873. Unless I am wrong, that is not correct" --He is correct; the last 2 reales is the 1872A. The last non-decimal coin is an 1873 8 escudos, which is what I meant to say.

"the bottom half of the Obverse Perimeter is composed of an Oak Branch with leaves and acorns on the left and a Laurel Branch with Leaves and Berries on the right." --he may well be right; I can't tell the difference.

"He says 'there are no subtypes'"—by which I meant the various eagle varieties found on the 2 reales. Certainly there are mintmark varieties as he says but I wouldn't elevate them to subtypes the way a hookneck is a subtype of the cap-and-ray 8 reales. 'Tis a matter of definitions.

"I think he would have added much to the numismatic knowledge of the Republic of Mexico 25 Centavos had he given the reader his findings." Had I such knowledge, I would have included it. I'm not that good.

His comments about uncirculated Alamos and Culiacan fit with my notes in my article, where I state that Mexico City and Guanajuato are the only mints (more-or-less) available in uncirculated.

Mike Ontko



### **MAIL AND FLOOR AUCTION**

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## Numismatics in Mexico City

By Mitch Sanders R- 461

When people learned that I was planning a week of vacation in Mexico, most assumed that I would be spending my time lounging on a beach somewhere. But I've always preferred vacations of a more urban variety, immersing myself in culture and history rather than nature and relaxation. In that spirit, I visited one of the world's oldest and largest cities, the nexus of Mexico's sometimes turbulent history: México, D.F. known to most as Mexico City.

The trip was filled with memorable experiences. I saw Mexican history in the Prehispanic artifacts at the Museo Antropológico, and in Diego Rivera's mural in the Palacio Nacional. There were spectacular views: the ancient pathways of Teotihuacan from the top of the Pyramid of the Sun, the Angel of Independence from Pasco de la Reforma, and the Alameda's jacaranda trees, purple flowers in full bloom, from the observation deck of the Torre Latinoamericana. I enjoyed strolling in Parque Mexico, shopping in the San Angel craft market, and dining in Condesa and Roma.

And for one action-packed day, I devoted myself entirely to numismatics.

[Note: in this article "\$" refers to the Mexican peso, worth about 9.5 U.S. cents.]

As a member of the United States Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee, I'm very interested in the process of designing coins, and thanks to Don Bailey I was able to get an appointment with Juan Cristobal Diaz Negrete and Juan Carlos Mota Solorzano of the Banco de Mexico. Cristobal is the head of the bank's numismatic collection, and Juan Carlos is a researcher in the same office. Their department also has responsibility for Mexico's circulating coinage.

I visited them in their office on Calz. Legaria, in the same compound as the banknote printing plant, and we spent a very enjoyable couple of hours discussing coin design in the United States and in Mexico. While there are differences between the two countries' processes for design development, both are oriented toward presenting numismatic images that are clear, meaningful, and artistic. Cristobal and Juan Carlos told me about the creation and marketing of Mexican circulating coins (you can find their products at <http://www.banxico.org.mx/sitioingles/billetesymonedas/servicios/salesNumismaticProducts/salesNumismaticProducts.html>), and about the Bank's Numismatic Collection (they have a great website at <http://snmex.org/>).

They also shared some news about a very exciting numismatic development: an extensive series of circulating \$5 coins – 38 over the next three years – commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mexican Independence and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. This program will be a wonderful way to present history through coins, and will undoubtedly stimulate interest in Mexican coins both within and outside Mexico. And on a personal level -- I'm very much looking forward to seeing the coins!

After saying goodbye to Cristobal and Juan Carlos, I headed to the Centro Historico to visit the Museo Interactivo de Economia commonly known as MIDE. Opened in 2007, and housed in an 18th-century monastery, it's a real treat. It truly is interactive, with lots of hands-on activities (including many in English). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor there is sizable numismatic collection, and several displays explaining the production of banknotes. You can even design and print your own fantasy banknote, with a webcam portrait of yourself!

The gift shop at MIDE will delight any numismatist. I left with a set of coasters featuring Mexican currency, a poster-sized photomosaic of Mexican banknotes, and a few other souvenirs. The shop also offers collector coins for sale, and other items that are literally made of money, such as picture frames and piggy banks adorned with shredded banknotes. Best of all, there are two outstanding books (in English): *Mexican Coinage* and *The Mexican Banknote*. Both are lavishly illustrated with great color photos, and contain excellent essays on the history of Mexican money. They're a bit expensive, around \$700 apiece, but they're well worth the expense (and the difficulty of lugging them home).

After leaving MIDE, I visited some coin shops in the Centro Historico. My first stop was one I had identified in advance: Duane Douglas's *El Mundo De La Moneda*, located at Motolina 31. I left with a handful of Mexican mint errors, a lightly worn \$100,000 banknote (pre-revaluation pesos, that is; the note is currently redeemable for 100 post-1993 pesos), and a proof 1983 Libertad to complete my 1982/1983 proof set. I also bought a copy of Duane's recent book *Repatriation of a Treasure*, which he was kind enough to sign for me.

In walking around the Centro Historico I found a few more coin shops, and I picked up nice AU-UNC examples of the 1919 \$1 and the 1921 \$2 (the "Victoria"). And I vowed that on my next trip I would search more actively for coin shops in the Centro. I have a feeling that my chance encounters were just the tip of the numismatic iceberg.

Even though my primary numismatic experiences were contained within a single day, throughout the trip I encountered sights that were familiar from Mexican coins and currency. The Aztec calendar stone (at the Museo Anthropologico) is truly impressive in person – it's no wonder that this one object serves as the basis for all current Mexican coin designs. The Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan is equally impressive; the pyramid's image on the bronze 20c of 1943-1974 is one of my favorite coin designs, but the scale of the pyramid can really only be appreciated in-person. I also visited Chapultepec Castle, with its museum of Mexican history, and the nearby monument to the Niños Heroes. And I spent a lot of time gazing at (and photographing) El Angel, symbol of Mexico City, and subject of one of Mexico's loveliest coins.

In a column in *Numismatist* in 2004, I wrote that "visiting places with numismatic significance is a great way to enhance your collecting interests." My trip to Mexico

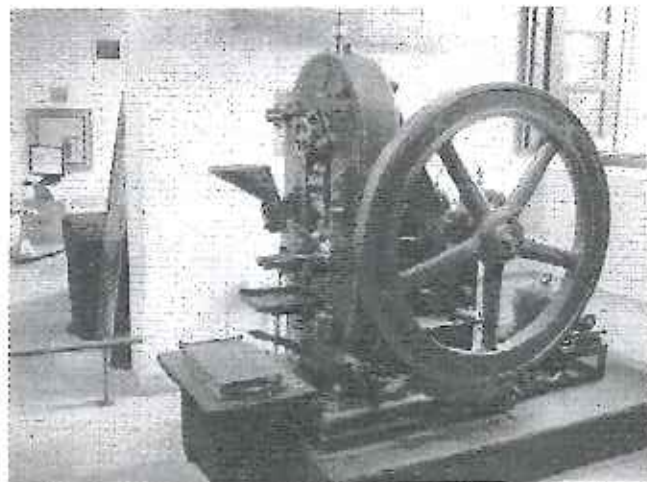


illustrated that principle splendidly, and left me grateful for the opportunity to get to know Mexico through its money.

Mitch Sanders



**Aztec Calendar Stone**



**Apartado Museum**

### **"The computer ate my homework"**

In the conflict between the Old Revolutionary [collector] and the Modern Computer, the Modern Computer has gained a temporary advantage. The Revolutionary Forces are consolidating their positions and will soon retake the field, Victory Is Ours, Reforma, Libertad, Justicia y Ley! What this means, though, EVERY Member Ad that has been submitted has been lost, evaporated into the cyberspace, gone without a trace.

\*\*\*\*\*

Here is what appeared in the March 08 issue. Any corrections or new listings contact David Hughes, at [geogen20088@att.net](mailto:geogen20088@att.net)

Every USMEXNA member can submit a free ad for inclusion in the Journal of Mexican Numismatics, published 4 times a year. Categories include, but are not limited to, Wanted, Available, and Information Wanted. USMEXNA members who have submitted ads, please resubmit them for future publication. The Journal reserves the right to edit and format ad submittals. Ads will cycle as new ads are submitted. Submit ads via EMAIL (please note NEW Email address) to David Hughes at [geogen2008@att.net](mailto:geogen2008@att.net), and please include on the Subject line some identifier like "USMEXNA ad".

\*\*\*\*\*

Want to buy or trade: Patterns (coins), proofs (bank notes), trials, vignettes, production materials, dies, and other oddities from all eras, Colonial through Modern. Please write Stephen Searle, PO Box 68, Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922-0068 or [ssearle@yahoo.com](mailto:ssearle@yahoo.com).

\*\*\*\*\*

Want to Buy: High grade Republic gold by date, and Colonial gold by type. Also interested in high grade copper and silver type coins from Colonial through Republic. Max Keech [mkeech@keechproperties.com](mailto:mkeech@keechproperties.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Information Wanted:** Four people have responded to my request for information on the Sevilla-Villa medal, as described by Joe Flores. Very limited results suggest the number of copper strikes and plain edge silver strikes have doubled (two of each). Results will be presented in a future article in the Journal. Information that can be connected to you will remain confidential. David Hughes  
[geogen20088@att.net](mailto:geogen20088@att.net)

\*\*\*\*\*

**INFORMATION WANTED:** Any information on the 1915 1 Peso from Concepcion del Oro, Zacatecas, is requested by Joe Flores at [pepef44@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pepef44@sbcglobal.net). Very little is



known about this rather mysterious issue, but it is believed to be a legitimate, although x-rare, Revolutionary coin. Information gathered for Joe by David Hughes reveals that Eulalio Gutierrez, the rather powerless President by the Convention in Aguascalientes (1914), installed (and under the thumb) in Mexico City by the forces of Villa and Zapata in late 1914-early 1915, grew up in and was a miner and blaster in Concepcion del Oro. He commanded a small force, not more than 200 members, that became known for its work in explosives, especially in blowing up trains. This suggests a possible connection between the Convencionalist President and the coinage.

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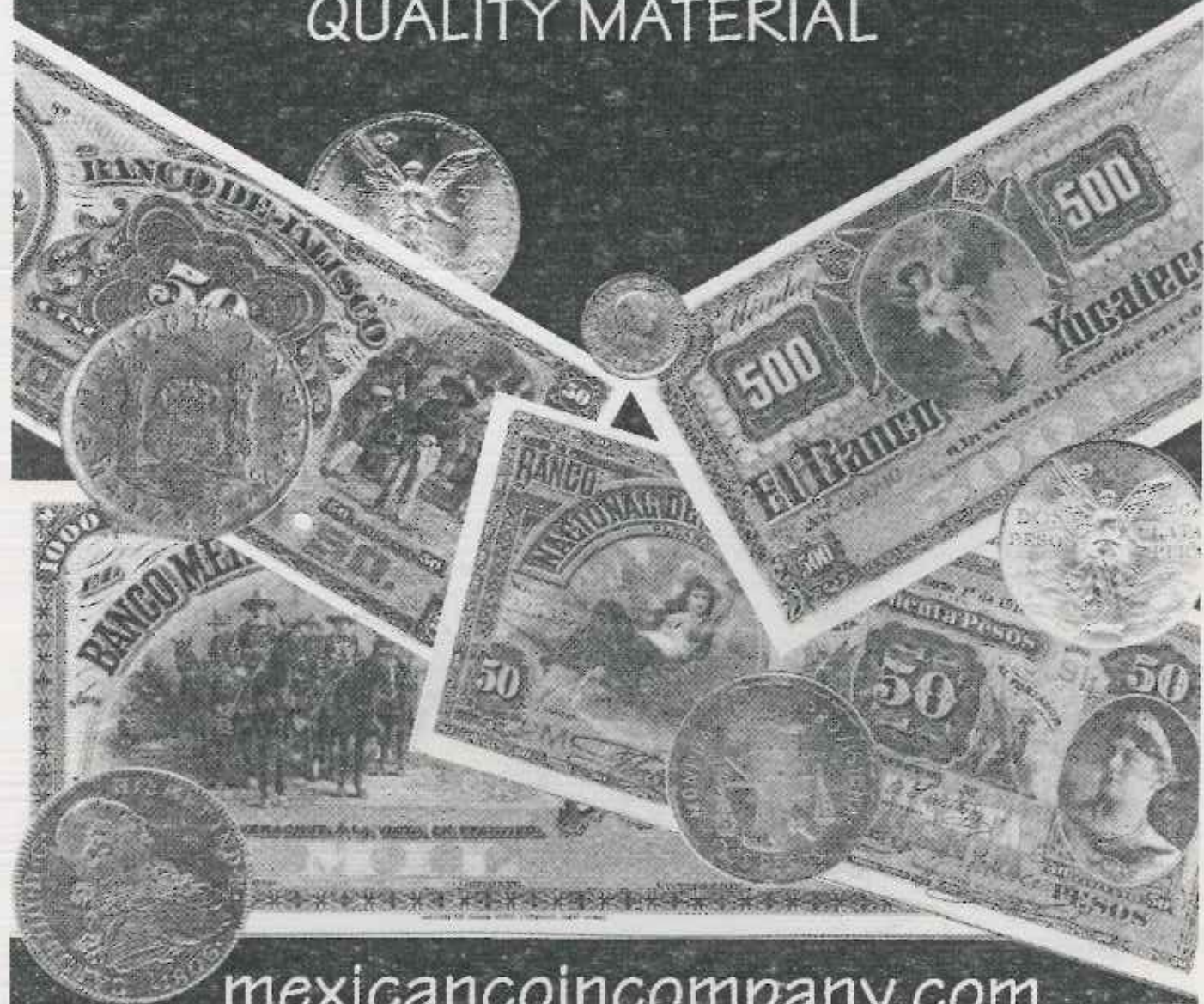
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