

# Numismatics International Bulletin

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## From the Editor's Desk

I hope you find this edition of the Bulletin interesting; we have some well-researched articles and some new information for you. A short article from first time contributor Volker Ertel showcases some beautiful large European coins. NI member Alan Luedeking's article on a "unique" Latin American gold coin enlightens us on research methodology as well as numismatics. Dr. Restrepo writes with some news on colonial Spanish American coins from Colombia which collectors of cobs and pillar dollars should find **most informative**. My thanks to the Bank of Japan, to NI members Howard Ford, Bob Forrest and James Martin whose contributions round out the issue.

I also want to thank Alan Luedeking for his valuable assistance to me and the NI Bulletin for his excellent translation of an upcoming article on Roman Republican coins. I have an ongoing need for translation assistance; if you have the time to do so and are willing to do so, please advise what languages you can help with. Currently I need Russian and German translation.

Herman Blanton

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**Colombian 8 Reales 1687**  
**Santa Fe (de Bogotá) Mint, Assayer José Martí**  
**Jorge Emilio Restrepo**



**Charles II Eight Reales 1687 NRI<sup>E</sup>M<sup>I</sup>**

This is the only known coin with assayer initials JE MI. This cob was offered by its undisclosed owner to the Numismatic Museum of the Banco de la República in Bogotá, about two years ago; no details of its previous whereabouts are known. José Martí replaced assayer Pedro García de Villanueva (1678-92) from 30 December 1686 to 19 June 1687. There is no report of any other coin, of any denomination, from this assayer. This piece has been on exhibit at the museum, but its picture was published for the first time in the recently released catalogue *Monedas de Colombia 1619-2006* by Jorge Emilio Restrepo. The catalog reference number for the coin is M62-13, 1687.

Mint treasurer Ricaurte issued an order on 30 December 1686 making José Martí the main assayer of the Santa Fe mint, a position he held until 19 June 1687. On 8 February 1687 he issued instructions to rework the coin dies to remove the mark of Pedro García de Villanueva, the previous assayer and engrave new marks for Martí. Here is a section of the February eighth document (Barriga Villalba, A.M., *Historia de la Casa de Moneda*, Vol. 1 (of 3), pp. 124-5, Bogotá, 1969), with a loose English translation following.

*Mandava y Mando que Dn. Anto. de la Serda Guarda Mayor entregue al Tallador todas las pilas y truxeles que paran en su poder, para que con su asistencia los limpie y los rompa y abra de Nuevo, y en los que abriere ponga el nombre de dho Don Joseph Martí y se tome razón de las dichas pilas y truxeles, que en la conformidad referida se abrieren de nuevo y porque según Ordenanza de esta dha Casa tiene obligación el Guarda Mayor de tener libro en donde asiente todas la pilas y truxeles que paran en su poder y de los que borrarren y volvieren a abrir se haga cargo el dho libro según se las entregare el tallador y lo observe con toda puntualidad siempre quese ofreciere borrarlos y abrirlos; y así lo proveío y firmo. Joseph de Ricaurte. Antemy. Juan Lombana.*

I pronounce and command, that Chief Guard Don Antonio de la Serda, should deliver to the engraver all of the dies (*pilas are the lower dies in fixed position, troqueles [truxeles] are the upper hand held dies—Ed.*) that he has, which, with your help, he should clean, cut and clear anew so he can engrave the name of the already mentioned Don José Martí. He should make a note of the newly reworked

dies since, according to the regulations of this mint, the Chief Guard has the obligation to keep a book where all the dies under his care are noted. Also those delivered to the engraver to be reworked should be noted in said book as well as the ones he receives from the engraver. This should be done very carefully every time that it is necessary to rework them.

I resolve and sign. Joseph de Ricaurte. In my presence. Juan Lombana.

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**Colombian 8 Reales 1770**  
**Santa Fe (de Bogotá) Mint, Assayers VJ**  
**Jorge Emilio Restrepo**



**Charles III Eight Reales 1770 NRVJ**  
**39.5×40mm, 27g, 12-6 o'clock axis**

This was an unknown date for Colombian eight reales until early May of 2006, when during the excavation for a building foundation in the center of old Bogotá, a construction worker uncovered a large stone. When the stone was moved by the crane, one worker noticed that it opened up a little and released a coin. Nobody else noticed anything. He recovered about 93 coins and put them in his pockets. At lunchtime he visited a nearby pawnshop, where he received a few pesos for a large silver coin (he had recovered silver and gold coins). He went to several places to sell the coins. The owner of a silverware shop after consulting with a well known numismatist considered the coins fantasies since that date "did not exist." The worker went to another numismatist himself who told him that what he had was a very valuable coin and that he would pay very well for the whole hoard. From there on there was turmoil and competition in Bogotá to buy the coins. The cache was formed mainly of Mexican and Potosí silver coins but there were also some very valuable, uncirculated gold and silver Colombian coins. The most outstanding find was 12 to 14 of these eight reales coins, most of them in perfect condition. The news reached Spain and a well known numismatic dealer came to Colombia to buy all that he could. He could not get any of the new owners, of whom there were only a few, to sell him anything. A Colombian friend of his could later get, at generous prices, a few coins that were sent to Spain.

This coin was published for the first time in my recently released catalogue *Monedas de Colombia 1619-2006* as number 44-2, 1770.

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