



Philippine Numismatic  
**MONOGRAPHS**

Number 30  
November 2012

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*30* *End of Cycle*  
*Special Issue*



## MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH LLAVERAS

By Richard B. Lopez  
(Photos by Alfonso C. Villareal)

I have been a serious coin collector for almost 40 years now. My attraction and fascination and passion for silver and gold coins have been in my blood since my boyhood years and have never wavered.

One day in 1993 on one of my weekly coin hunting forays in Mabini, I chanced upon a beautiful silver object. It was lying in the middle of a display case and in an instant the attraction was fatal. It was love at first sight!

It was probably the Egyptians who fashioned the first mechanical locks on their doors. These consisted primarily of wooden bolts with wooden pegs (the forerunner of keys) that enabled the user to lift the bolt thus permitting the door to be opened. The Greeks introduced a more sophisticated version of the bolt and iron key on their temple doors although these really provided very little security.

It was in fact the Romans that introduced the first refined metal lock using keys and keyholes copied from the Greeks. Roman-era keys were very intricate with designs such as birds and flowers and were primarily status symbols for those who had property to protect. There was no stopping mankind in their pursuit of commerce and personal wealth. Over hundreds of years keys, keyholes and eventually keyholders became an absolute necessity, all for the purpose of providing security and protection for their lives and valuables.

The object that caught my immediate attention that fateful day 18 years ago, was a beautiful silver llavera or keyholder from the Spanish Colonial period. This keyholder, which I consider the most beautiful in my collection (it has not been surpassed since then) surely belonged to an important dignitary and was made by a master craftsman.





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s was a variation of an older amulet which had  
index finger; it was supposed to ward off evil  
(log). The local version had gold ornaments  
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Silver keyholders were probably crafted from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and remained popular up to the 1930's and came in all shapes and sizes. I will attempt to categorize the various designs into groupings for a better appreciation of these keyholders:

1. VICTORIAN HAND types;
2. EAGLES of all shapes and sizes;
3. SILVER & GOLD with mother-of-pearl;
4. ART NOUVEAU featuring women with long flowing hair, leaves and flowers;
5. BUTTERFLIES, BIRDS and FLOWERS;
6. GOLD INITIALS and NAMES;
7. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS mostly harps and xylophones;
8. AFFILIATIONS and PROFESSIONS such as balance scales for judges and lawyers and caduceus symbol for doctors;
9. MEDALS and COINS featured on keyholders,
10. ULTIMATE KEYHOLDERS in gold, diamonds and stones, bespoke and probably unique.

These keyholders are understandably very popular with domestic collectors and are equally sought after by foreign collectors as well.

However, you do not have to be a collector to appreciate these truly beautiful pieces as they are still being used for the very purpose of their existence. The very first silver craftsmen, probably Chinese, who first produced these objects, passed on their legacy to their Filipino apprentices, who eventually became masters in their own right.

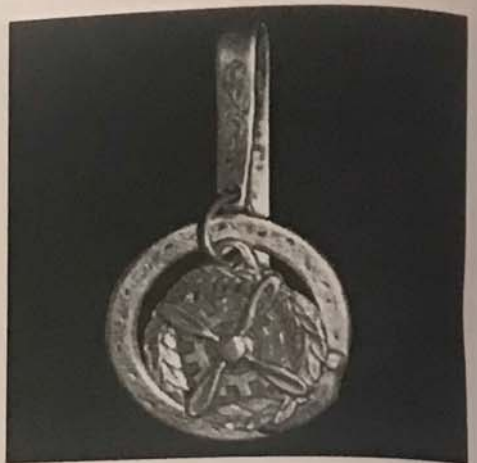
The likes of Pedrong Kuba of Lipa City, Crispulo Zamora, Pedro Cruz are but some famous names that perhaps put their creativeness, their talent, their ingenuity into these pieces. There are certainly keyholders that are still in the hands of little old ladies that are waiting to be discovered. All it takes is a great deal of patience and passion to come across these tidbits of Philippine art. How can you not fall in love with something so precious and beautiful?!

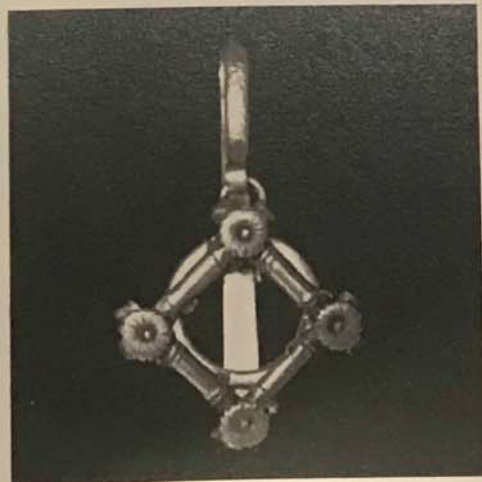
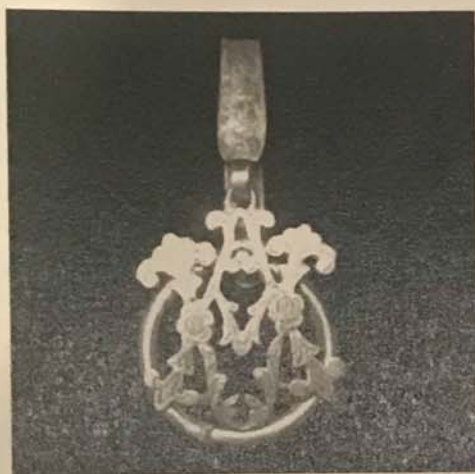


# OTHER FINE EXAMPLES OF LLAVERAS











## "RELICARIOS" AND VINTAGE "ESTAMPITAS" AS COLLECTIBLES

By Jorge Delos Santos

Collecting religious objects has always been a popular activity and a fascinating pastime among some of our more spiritually-inclined collectors. Keeping these objects gives them a sense of inner peace and spiritual kinship with their Creator.

Unlike vintage "estampitas", "relicarios" have a more distinguished origin and history. These devotional items are said to emerge from the Medieval European custom of treasuring relics and mementos of saints. Many of these objects of devotion were kept in religious lockets and caskets fashioned and decorated with enameled silver and other precious metals and jewelries. They are supposed to hold some pieces of relics connected with the person of a



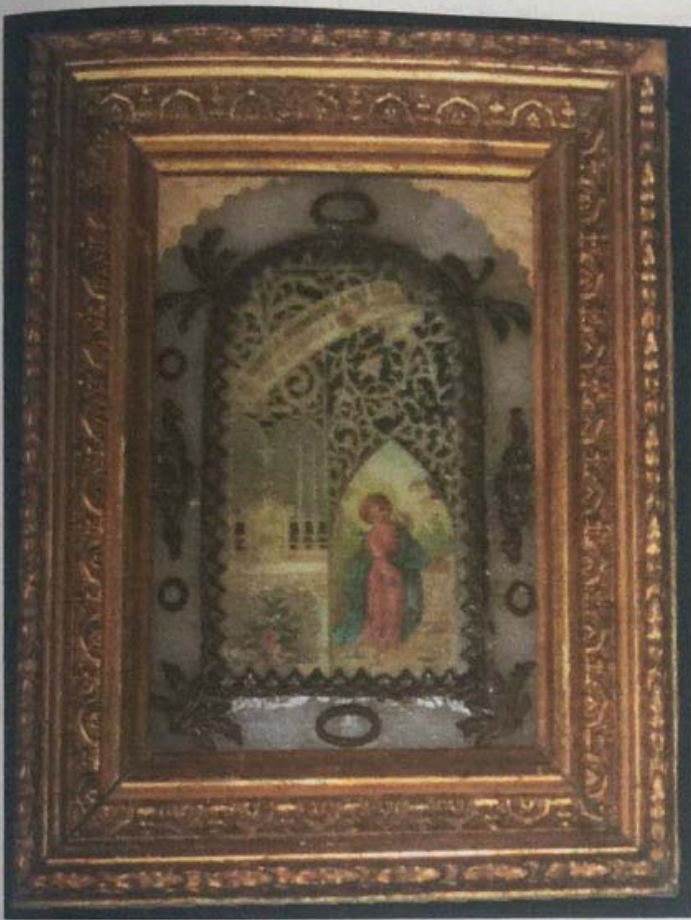
St. Francis of Assisi Relicario

departed saint, especially parts of the body, including the clothes and other belongings of the saint. Veneration of the relics of saints especially of martyrs was commonly practiced at an early date in the Eastern and Western churches. Indeed, in some instances, these objects were treasured by their owners not only as souvenirs of their pilgrimages to holy places, but also because of their belief that these could help and protect them in times of need and danger. The wearer is also believed to merit indulgences and other spiritual favors.

Much later, however, native artisans of these foreign countries added their own brand of artistry to create simpler but likewise exquisite versions of the original. But, as expected, the designation became largely symbolical, since







even during the late colonial days, relicarios were no longer expected to contain actual relics of saints and other religious personalities. Indeed, most of these relics were by this time already deposited in cathedrals and ancient churches usually visited by pilgrims and devotees. However, lay persons of distinction continued to wear tiny bejeweled but "relic-less" relicarios to display their supposed piety and influence.

Locally, much simpler but likewise artistic versions of relicarios have been designed by Pinoy artisans. It is believed that the concept of these devotional items were brought by the Spanish "conquistadores" to the Philippines. Home-made relicarios of varying shapes and sizes were fashioned from simple frames of wood, brass, tin, thick cardboards, etc., some with added loop at the top to provide suspension from a cord. Various religious imagery, including estampitas and religious prints, contained in relicarios, usually covered or topped by thick glass or hard plastic, were often made of silk embroideries, hand-painted and colored lithographs, embellished art works and, rarely, of ivory. Mostly hand-made, the finished product bespeaks the special skill, artistry and imagination of its creator. Indeed, a foreign

art form transformed into a folk-art creation by our native artisans. Most of what I have in my collection were sourced from the flea-markets in Ermita, Manila, while the rest, the bigger ones, came from Baguio City.

Some native nuns with artistic inclinations are likewise credited with having crafted some of the more intricately-designed and colorful relicarios woven in fine gold or silver threads. Some of these are believed to be in the possession of the particular Orders to which they belong.





# REVISITING MURILLO VELARDE

By F. William L. Villareal

The Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day exhibit of "Three Hundred Years of Philippine Maps (1598-1898)" at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, which ran from June 26 to July 11 this year, sponsored and curated by the Philippine Map Collectors Society (PHIMCOS), was a spectacular presentation of more than 135 major Philippine maps and charts which had

never been exhibited together in a single venue before. Aside from the well known and famous, the show featured rare pieces that had been virtually unknown to the public up to that time. Most important of these was a newly recorded 1734 Murillo Velarde Map of the Philippines, the latest find of the first detailed map of the Philippines by P. Pedro Murillo Velarde, a renowned Jesuit cartographer, magnificently drawn by Francisco Suarez and engraved by the most famous engraver at the time, Nicolas dela Cruz Bugay, both native Filipinos.

Murillo Velarde, it seems, will never leave our cultural consciousness. We can't seem to have enough of him. We have at least twice before (MONGARAPHS No. 27, November 2009 and No. 28, November 2010) devoted considerable time and attention to the famous maps of 1734, 1744 and 1788 and the equally famous persons behind them. And yet there is always something new and significant that presents itself to us at every turn.

The exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum was important as it served as the venue for the exhibition of this yet one other previously unrecorded example of that superb masterpiece, the 1734 "Carta Hydrographia y Chorographia de las Islas de Filipinas", considered the King of Philippine Maps,



The 1850 Murillo Velarde Map



*editor's  
note*

## THE LAST MONOGRAPHS?

As the Mayan cosmic calendar ticks down and the planets nervously align with the Great Galactic Navel, will this be the last issue of the PNAS Monographs before we all get inexorably pulled into the throat of the Big Wormhole on December 21, 2012? What a shame, as it was only last December that scientists announced, against the background of brooding apocalyptic earthquakes, monster storms and tsunamis, that they had finally discovered the "God Particle" (Higgs Boson) in their pioneering experiments at the large hadron collider in Geneva, Switzerland, finally giving the world a fleeting glimpse of what it might have been just before the Big Bang. Or is it that the great swirling cosmic mash is merely coming together, as it should, only to unfold again in all its glory as our perceived world prepares to seamlessly exit its cocoon -- as if from the eye of the cosmic storm, and not even realizing it -- in the Next Bang?



*Note: STELLA #10 says there are bigger and bigger cycles beyond 2012.*

Whatever happens, fill your bugout bag with your collections, grit your earthly teeth, and hope that we all come out of this with all our coins, stamps, "stuff" and our humanity intact.

On the premise that this may be our last pre-Bang transmission, we have prepared several articles in this issue, which deal with our earthly preoccupations, relics, medals, charms, amulets and fetishes, which shall hopefully serve to protect and entertain us, as we travel, heavily annotated maps and charts in hand, through whatever infinity there is left. The spiritual and religious among us would do well by going through George Delos Santos' RELICARIOS and ESTAMPITAS, and for the more philosophical and secular, Richard B. Lopez's more earthbound LLAVERAS. We recommend that you hold on tightly to this special issue, as your passport, as you go through or exit from time as we know it, as material or otherwise though they may be, our toys, relics, charms and amulets are really the intense reflections and manifestations of our most fervent hopes and wishes for existence. So with your treasure chest of collections, books, maps, medals and talismans, get ready to blast off come December. And don't forget to roll down the windows in case you get nauseous along the way. Happy landings.

The EDITORS



**COUNT/ VERIFICATION OF KNOWN/  
REPORTED COPIES OF THE MURILLO  
VELARDE MAP OF THE PHILIPPINES  
1734/ 1744/ 1788/ 1850**

1734 US LIBRARY OF CONGRESS  
BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE IN PARIS (2?)  
BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL DE MADRID  
GBR FOUNDATION  
CARLOS QUIRINO  
PRIVATE COLLECTION (3?)

1762 (1734 LONDON EDITION)  
BRITISH ADMIRALTY

1744 GBR FOUNDATION  
LOPEZ MEMORIAL MUSEUM  
ATENEO RIZAL LIBRARY (?)  
PRIVATE COLLECTION (4?)

1788 LOPEZ MEMORIAL MUSEUM  
PRIVATE COLLECTION (1)

1850 BUZETA Y BRAVO 1850  
T. H. PARDO DE TAVERA (reported)  
PRIVATE COLLECTION (2)  
CARTAS TOMO VI 1887  
ATENEO RIZAL LIBRARY  
(American Historical Collection)  
PRIVATE COLLECTION (2)  
DELGADO 1892  
ORTIGAS FOUNDATION LIBRARY  
PRIVATE COLLECTION (1)

**WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY**

The MAYAN COSMIC CALENDAR and  
NUMEROLOGY see TIME coming to an END.

*122112 = 9*  
NINE = ZERO

but

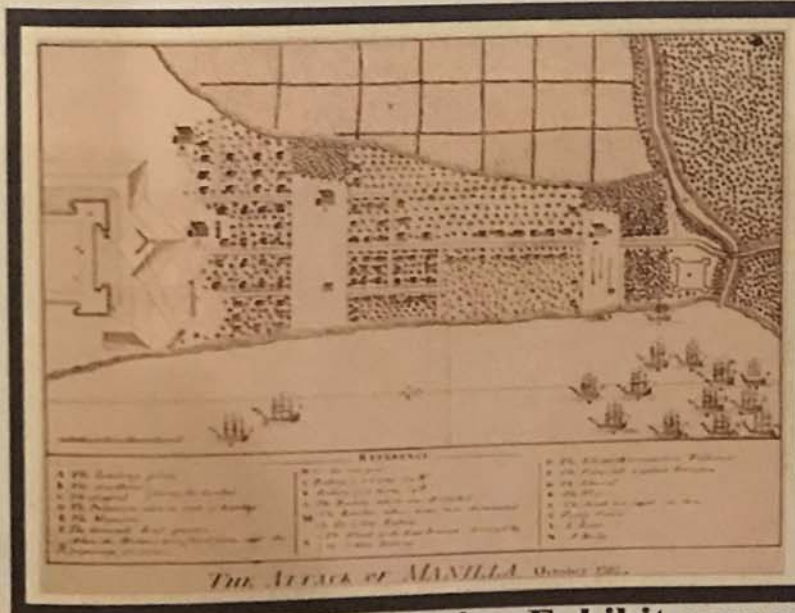
Dec-12						
Mo n	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

This year, December has 5 Saturdays, 5 Sundays and 5 Mondays. This only happens once every 824 years. The Chinese call it the Money Bag.

COPPERNICUS and a Pope named GREGORY predict a (MERRY) CHRISTMAS & a FULL YEAR coming through.



The Universe/De la Sphere  
Alain Mallet, Paris 1683



18 October 2012 Thursday 5:00pm

**British Occupation of  
Manila 250 Years Ago  
1762 - 1764**

On the 250th Anniversary of the  
British Occupation of Manila

YUCHENGGCO MUSEUM  
RCBC Plaza, cor. Ayala and Sen. Gil J. Puyat  
Avenues, Makati City, Philippines

RSVP (02) 889.1234  
info@yuchengcomuseum.org



**British Occupation Exhibit runs until December 1, 2012**



★ 122112 ★



*Bon Voyage!*