

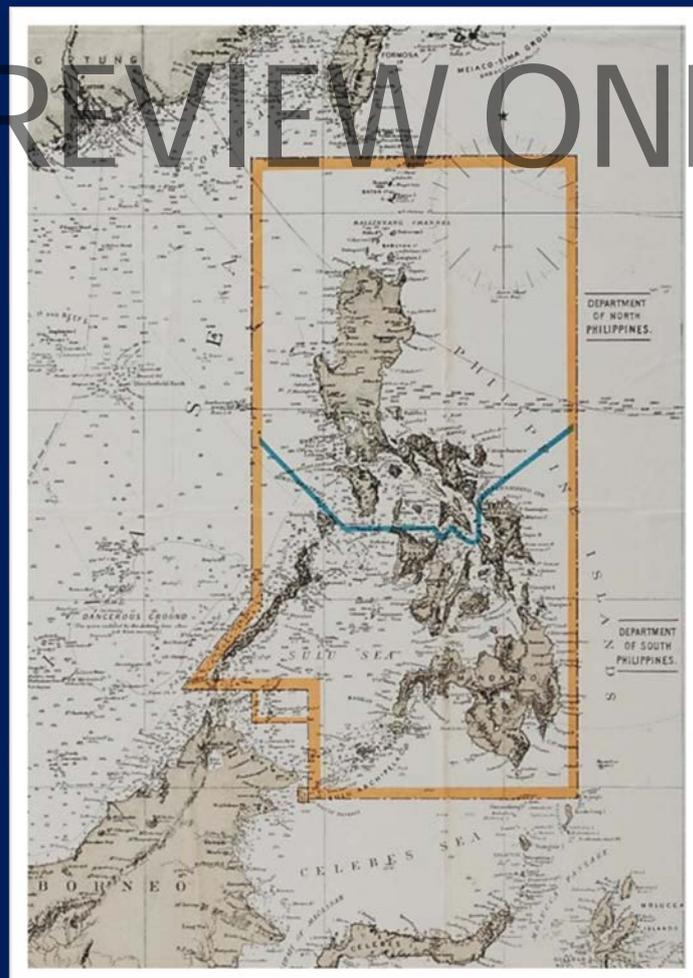
# *The Murillo Bulletin*

Journal of PHIMCOS

*The Philippine Map Collectors Society*

Issue No. 1

February 2016



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The Philippine Map Collectors Society (PHIMCOS) was initiated in 2007 by a group of five enthusiasts in Manila who conceived the formation of the first club for map collectors in the Philippines. Membership of the Society, which has now grown to a current total of 25 active members, is open to anyone interested in collecting maps, historical prints, paintings, and old photographs of the Philippines. At the Society's general meetings, held quarterly, members discuss club business, exchange cartographic news, and show each other items of interest. After dinner a member or invited guest (or sometimes both) will give a presentation. The Society also sponsors exhibitions, lectures and other educational events.

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## *A Message from the President*

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IT IS with great pleasure that we start the new year by publishing this inaugural issue of *The Murillo Bulletin*, the journal of the Philippine Map Collectors Society (PHIMCOS). Through this journal we hope to share with you, the readers, details on the activities of the Society as well as the wealth of information that we generate through our various events.

Although our Society is relatively young, we have had five successful exhibitions to date featuring European Impressions of the Philippines in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries; First Impressions: Early Views of the Philippines; Three Hundred Years of Philippine Maps 1598–1898 (covering the period of Spanish colonial rule); the brief British Occupation of Manila and Cavite in 1762-64; and in 2015 The First Philippine Republic & the United States 1898–1907.

Well-researched, fully illustrated catalogues were published for the latter three exhibitions to give the attendees and other interested parties not only a useful guide but also a unique memento of the event. All of the maps and images shown during the exhibitions were laboriously gathered from private collections, making it virtually impossible to again view all of the items in one setting.

During the recent exhibitions, lectures were held on carefully selected topics given by well-known experts and scholars. These sessions provided the participants not only valuable information relating to the history and culture of the period covered, but also the opportunity to discuss matters relevant to the topic being presented.

At our quarterly membership meetings, we schedule two or three presentations primarily by members on selected matters of interest to the Society. We continue to be amazed by the breadth and depth of the knowledge and expertise of our members.

Another activity about which we are particularly proud is our Roving Exhibition Program where we organize events in different schools around the country to show their students and faculty copies of selected maps accompanied by important related historical information. The events also often feature a lecture by a well-known expert to provide the students and their professors a historical overview of the subject matter.

I would like to thank the Communications Committee of PHIMCOS and Peter Geldart, the committee chairman and editor of the journal, for the outstanding work done on this first issue of *The Murillo Bulletin*.

We appreciate your interest in our Society's activities and we welcome your feedback on the matters covered by our journal.

*Jaime C. González*  
*President*

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## News and Events in 2015

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THE Philippine Map Collectors Society (PHIMCOS) was enthusiastically supported in 2015. Membership of the Society continues to grow, and we were very pleased to welcome six newcomers during the year (see page 19). Our four meetings were all very well attended, and we enjoyed a record number of stimulating presentations. 2015 was also the year in which we sponsored another highly successful exhibition.

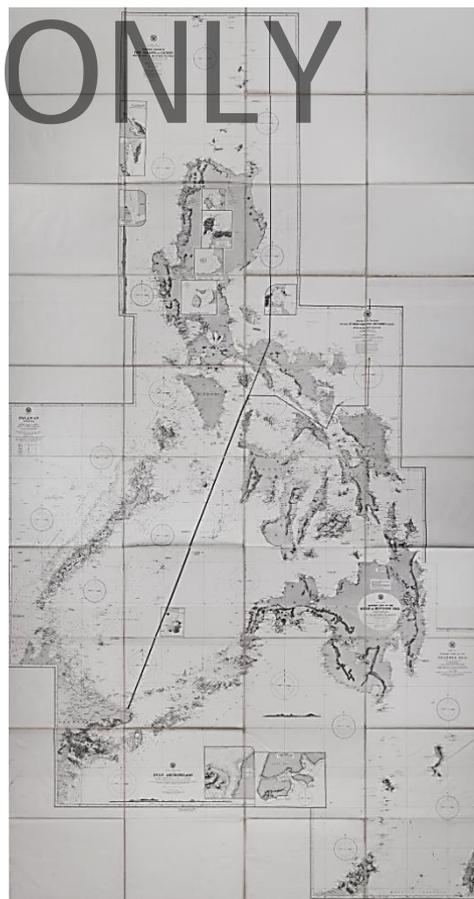
At our first meeting of the year, held at the Manila Polo Club on March 9, the annual election of new board members and officers was confirmed. Having undertaken the role since he formed the Society, Nito Cacho announced that he was stepping down as President, and Jimmie González was formally welcomed as the new PHIMCOS President. We are delighted that, notwithstanding his busy travel schedule, Nito remains actively involved with PHIMCOS as Chairman Emeritus.

We also welcomed Yvette Montilla as the new PHIMCOS Assistant. Yvette has replaced her sister, Mariros Ripoll, whose tireless contributions as Assistant since the inception of PHIMCOS are remembered with great thanks.

After dinner Rolf Lietz showed the meeting a copy of the “Treaty of Paris Map” published by the U.S. Government as an attachment to the *Treaty of Peace between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain of 1898*. The map, published in 1899, comprises a montage of six seacharts by the U.S. Hydrographic Office that are themselves based on six British Admiralty charts first published between 1856 and 1867. The map is enormous (107.5” x 56.6”) and includes 11 inset charts of important ports, bays and islands.

*The Treaty of Paris map (see also page 8) >*

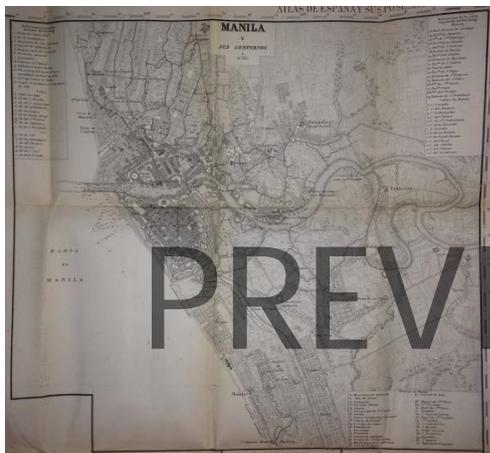
On April 29 we held the official opening of the PHIMCOS-sponsored exhibition *The First Philippine Republic & the United States: 1898–1907*, which was open to the public until July 9 and was very well attended. In conjunction with the exhibition, PHIMCOS arranged for a series of talks given by eminent academics on related topics; the lectures were popular, and some were attended by over 80 members of the Society, students and members of the public.



An account of the exhibition is given on page 7, followed by summaries of four of the lectures.

The Society's second meeting of 2015 was held at the Tower Club on May 13, and maiden presentations were given by two members. First, Carlos Madrid spoke on *Hidden Treasures in the Maps of Francisco Coello*. From 1849 to 1852 Francisco Coello de Portugal y Quesada, a Spanish cartographer and lieutenant colonel in the Spanish Army Corps of Engineers, published three maps of the Philippines as part of his monumental *Atlas de España y sus posesiones de Ultramar*. To quote Carlos Quirino: "Each sheet measured about 30 by 42 inches, and together form the largest map ever published of the archipelago. Its preparation is credited to Antonio Morata and the historical information written on its face to Pascual Madoz."

Coello's maps were the finest and most detailed of the Philippines published in the 19th century. Dr. Madrid explained how the accuracy of the topographic and hydrographic information in the maps, especially in the highly-detailed insets of important areas such as the city of Manila, can be shown by comparison with modern satellite imagery.



These comparisons can be used to track changes in topography and climate, and to rediscover monuments and buildings that have since been modified or destroyed. For example, superimposing sections of Coello's plan of Manila in the 1840s on today's Google map shows the changes that have occurred over the past 165 years in such districts as Intramuros, Malacañan, the Isla de Convalecencia and Binondo (notably in Jaboneros and Sevilla streets), and to the circular municipal cemetery built by the Dominicans in the 1820s which is now known as Paco Park.

*Inset plan of Manila from Francisco Coello's Islas Filipinas Primera Hoja Central, 1852*  
(Photograph courtesy of Gallery of Prints)

Hans Sicat then gave a presentation on a map of the East Indies by Nicolas de Fer which he and his wife Gi (both of whom grew up with a strong interest in history and geography) were thrilled to find when on holiday in Maui, Hawaii in the early 1990s.

The map, "a charming hand-coloured miniature map of the East Indies, including the Philippines", was published in Paris in 1702 when France was the dominant European power. Nicolas de Fer was a cartographer, geographer, engraver and prolific publisher, and although "his works focused more on quantity than quality, [and] were more artistic than accurate", he became the official geographer for both Louis XIV of France and Philip V of Spain.

*Nicolas de Fer*  
*Les Isles Philippines, Molucques et de La Sonde, 1702*



Our third meeting was also held at the Tower Club, on August 12, 2015, and after dinner Alberto Montilla showed members present a book published in 1933 together with the printing plate for a reduced copy of the Murillo Velarde map included therein. This was followed by a talk by Christian Perez and Peter Geldart on *The Naming and Mapping of the Batanes Islands*, with the subtitle “Mapmakers have a Problem with Batanes”. The presenters explained how the cartographic names, shapes and deemed locations of the islands have changed repeatedly from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. The presentation is available on the PHIMCOS website and will be published as an expanded article in the next issue of *The Murillo Bulletin*.

For the last meeting of the year, on November 11, members enjoyed a new venue (the Arya Residences in Bonifacio Global City) and no less than three presentations. The first was *The Restoration of a 1788 Murillo Velarde Map* by Alberto Montilla & Christian Perez. Mr. Perez explained how he had acquired a very rare map, the small 1788 edition of Murillo Velarde’s *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica delas Yslas Filipinas* which had been published in the first volume of the scarce *Historia General de Philipinas* by Fray Juan de la Concepción.

The map, printed on extremely fragile paper, was torn, folded, glued to acidic blue paper, and covered with flaking brown varnish. Although he did not think it could be restored, Christian bought the map because so few copies of the 1788 state of the Murillo Velarde map have survived.

However, Alberto Montilla suggested that there would be little to lose if restoration of the map was attempted by a team of three restorers mentored by Alberto who now work for the Ortigas Foundation. The process of restoration, which took the team a total of 159 hours over a period of several months, was photographed at each stage, and the audience was able to see how the map was repeatedly washed in pH-balanced water, the varnish painstakingly removed, the backing paper peeled off and replaced with new acid-free Japanese paper, tears repaired and lost paper replaced. At the end of the presentation, the restored map was made available for all to admire.



< 1788 Murillo Velarde map before restoration



The same map after restoration >

Raphael Lotilla then gave a talk entitled *A Blast from the Philippine Past: Maps and Territorial Title* in which he set out the details of the Island of Palmas Case. As the case involved claims of sovereignty over the island, and was decided against the United States and in favour of the Netherlands (now Indonesia) largely on the grounds of that country’s ability to prove continuous and peaceful state authority over the island, there are lessons to be learned that are relevant to the current territorial disputes in the West Philippine Sea. Of particular note, the arbitrator stated that “a map affords only an indication – and that a very indirect one – involving recognition or abandonment of [sovereign] rights.” A full summary of the case can be read in the article on page 17.

To conclude the meeting, our invited guest Mel Velasco Velarde recounted how he was able to buy, at auction, a previously unknown original copy of the most famous map of the Philippines, the *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica delas Yslas Filipinas*, published by Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde in 1734. Mr. Velarde’s account of his purchase can be read on page 15, and PHIMCOS thanks him for his decision to donate the map to the National Museum of the Philippines as a bequest to the nation.



*Members and guests  
at the PHIMCOS meeting  
of November 11, 2015*



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