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**Philippine Numismatics:
Escarceos Numismatico-Historicos Sobre La Moneda
Hispano-Filipina**

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The monograph, however, does not stop at a purely scientific level. Invariably the minute observation of fishing activity brings into focus the people who engage in it, along with their customs and habits. In a way this sociological viewpoint explores a more important aspect than the biological. For fishing is hardly mere genus and species; it is, especially for the people of Siaton, a way of life encompassing all the heterogenous elements of a culture greatly Christianized but still exhibiting wisps of superstition. It is commendable that the author has deliberately given considerable space to describe these elements—for instance, the felling of logs for boats “when the moon is a thin slice,” or the restriction of clam-gathering to women, children, and old men because “they are old already.” In this way the author has added human interest to what could have been a mere amassing of technical data.

TOMAS T. DAVID

PHILIPPINE NUMISMATICS

ESCARCEOS NUMISMATICO-HISTÓRICOS SOBRE LA MONEDA HISPANO-FILIPINA. By José P. Bantug. With a preface by Luis Auguet y Durán. Madrid. Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre. 1955. 90 pp. illustrated.

THIS book, which despite its publication date has only reached the Philippines recently, is a collection of essays on Philippine numismatics by Dr. Jose P. Bantug, the noted Philippine physician, collector, historian and numismatist. Much of the material contained has appeared separately in specialized numismatic publications. Now collected and revised into a thin book, it has an excellent claim to being the most important work on Philippine numismatics. In his preface, Don Luis Auguet y Durán, director of the Spanish mint, also points out the significance of this work for the Spanish historian and numismatist.

I translate the chapter headings to give an idea of the contents:

1. Etimologico-numismatic essay.
2. The “piloncito”: gold coinage of the ancient Philippines.
3. The rounding of the “barrilla”.

4. Philippine countermarks.
5. Countermarked gold coins.
6. The Spanish "duro".
7. The Philippine peso.
8. The American dollar.
9. Establishment of the Manila mint (1861). Uniformity of coinage in the Spanish empire.
10. Don Alfonso XIII in Philippine numismatics.

A short list of works consulted is attached. I regretted the lack of a bibliography or index. A short critical bibliography of Philippine numismatics is very much needed in that most of the literature on the subject is scattered throughout a variety of learned periodicals. In his etymological essay (Ch. 1) Dr. Bantug argues from Tagalog nomenclature the existence of a pre-Spanish standard of monetary value based remotely on an Indian concept as evidenced by the corruption of the Sanskrit *rupya* into the Tagalog word *salapi*.

The essay on the gold coinage of the ancient Philippines (Ch. 2) revolves around the mysterious "piloncito", tiny gold coins with characters incuse or in relief which have been excavated since the XIXth century in various parts of the archipelago. From their inscriptions, constant weight, consistent purity and proportionate subdivision, Dr. Bantug argues convincingly their identity as a true coinage and further argues their Philippine provenance from evidence that gold was worked in the pre-Spanish Philippines and from the fact that similar objects have never been found outside this country. Basing himself on Dr. Pablo I. de Jesus' thesis that these coins were produced under the authority of neighboring Indo-Malayan empires, Dr. Bantug concludes his article by advancing the hypothesis that the "piloncitos" were made and used in the Philippines under the pre-Mohammedan rule of the Madjapahit empire during the XIIIth and XIVth centuries.

The third chapter discusses in general terms the copper coinage of the colonial period with particular attention to the emergency issues minted in Cavite in the year 1766.

After the newly-independent republics of Latin America began minting their own coinage, the Spanish government in the Philippines adopted the practice of countermarking such silver pieces as reached the Philippines with the dual purpose of defacing them while authorizing their use. These countermarks were

employed from 1828 to 1837, at which date Spain recognized the independence of the issuing countries. These counterstamps are discussed in considerable detail (Ch. 4) and a fascinating series of documents referring to their use are transcribed. Dr. Bantug also refers to the private counterstamps of Chinese bankers on silver coinage in general, transcribing a document of 1845 which authorizes the use in the Philippines of Spanish coinage so marked on condition that the coins be neither defaced nor adulterated.

The fifth chapter, despite its title, deals with Philippine gold coinage in general, and comments on the rarity of counterstamped gold coins, only five of which are known to exist. Dr. Bantug explains this scarcity (a) by pointing out that the regulations for counterstamping did not mention gold coins, which leads one to assume that many escaped and (b) by their use, after melting, by the Manila mint after its founding in 1861. A very interesting chart of denominations and quantities of gold coins issued by the Manila mint during 1861-1877 is included.

A very short essay on the Spanish "duro" or "pillar dollar" follows (Ch. 6), its brevity fully justified by the number of detailed studies that already exist on this most popular of coins.

The etymology of the Philippine peso is traced to the local usage of using given weights of metal in trade in lieu of coinage. Dr. Bantug also traces the familiar dollar (\$) sign back to the Spanish "duro". Finally he discusses the creation of a specifically Philippine peso by Congressman Conant in 1903 and the design of this coin by the Philippine engraver, Melecio Figueroa. The subsequent history of the Philippine mint is lightly traced (Ch. 7.) A very brief history of the American dollar and its use in the Philippines before 1898 follows (Ch. 8).

An entire chapter (Ch. 9) is devoted to a detailed study of the approval (1857) and creation (1861) of the Manila mint, including transcripts of documents, denominations, designs, lists of personnel, etc.

The book ends (Ch. 10) with a review of the numismatic history of the reign of Alfonso XIII particularly in relation to the Philippines. Medals are discussed as well as coins, especially medals related to Philippine military campaigns, and attention is drawn to Filipino recipients of Spanish civil and military honors during the last years of the Spanish regime.

For the first time the Philippine scholar has, within the covers of a single book, an authoritative, pleasantly written, well illustrated, brief introduction to the field of Philippine numismatics. Dr. Bantug has succeeded in touching every aspect of the field with the exception of such highly specialized subjects as paper money, Moro coinage, medals before Alfonso XIII, and privately issued medallic art. None of these would be expected in a general work like the one discussed and it is a measure of Dr. Bantug's range that their absence is even noticeable. It is a pity that not every coin mentioned in the text is reproduced, especially the copper coins and the medals, both of which are relatively unfamiliar; full illustration is increasingly becoming the indispensable adjunct of numismatic work. Nevertheless, as I mentioned before, the work is generously illustrated and my desire for perfection should not belittle the excellent results accomplished. Some may object that the use of Spanish in writing the text deprives many Philippine scholars of the opportunity to read the book. I can only reply that the fault is not Dr. Bantug's, whose Spanish is a delight to read, but of those scholars who, by not learning the Spanish tongue, wilfully deprive themselves of the principal tool for Philippine historical research.

FERNANDO ZOBEL DE AYALA