

Capítulo 19

DE LOS VARIOS MARISCOS, OSTRAS, OSTIONES Y OTROS QUE ACA PRODUCE EL MAR; Y DE LAS PERLAS VARIAS QUE EN ELLOS SE HALLAN

Contar todas las diferencias y la multitud de varios mariscos que se hallan en estos mares, fuera querer contar las arenas; porque, como son tantas las islas grandes y pequeñas, los bajos y arrecifes, las playas de arena sólida y las de lodo, que llaman acá *anang*¹, y tantos los ríos y arroyos que entran en el mar y en sus barras, que comúnmente son bajas, y en todas partes hay tan varios y diferentes mariscos, ya grandes ya pequeños, que se pudiera hacer largos tratados; y así sólo de los más principales y de más estima, ya que por lo regalado de su carne (que muchos son de estima y buscados con cuidado), ya que por lo precioso de las perlas que en ellas se hallan, haremos especial mención; y, aunque hablando en común, apenas se hallará especie o diferencia de mariscos, o conchas, que no críen sus perlas más, o menos finas, mayores o menores, con más o menos abundancia, dejando las más vulgares y de menos estima, trataremos de las más preciosas y que dan margaritas o perlas y aljófares, que tiene valor y precio considerable, no menos por lo fino y lucido que por lo medicinal.

A las que los españoles llamamos ostras llaman acá los bisayas *tipai*², y los tagalos *capis*³. Son de figura de ostras redondas, más o menos anchas, según el tiempo que los dejan en sus nativos

Chapter 19

CONCERNING THE VARIOUS KINDS OF SHELLFISH, OYSTERS, LARGE OYSTERS AND OTHERS THAT THE SEA PRODUCES HERE; ABOUT THE VARIOUS PEARLS THAT ARE FOUND IN THEM

To relate all the differences in the multitude of various shellfish that are found in these seas, would be like wishing to count [the grains] of sand. Just as there are so many islands, large and small, shoals and reefs, beaches of firm sand and those of mud, which they call here *anang*;¹ the very many rivers and streams which flow into the sea and over their sandbars which commonly are their beds, at one place large at another small, so one would be able to do extensive treatises on each. So, [we shall make mention] only of the more important and more prominent be it for their delight in its flesh (which is greatly esteemed and diligently sought for) or because of the preciousness of the pearls that are found in them, we shall make a special mention.

However, generally speaking, there can hardly be found a species or kind of shellfish or oyster which does not grow its pearls of greater or less fineness, bigger or smaller ones, with greater or lesser abundance, except for the very common ones of little worth. We shall treat the more precious ones which yield *margaritas* or pearls and *aljófares*, which have considerable value and price not less for their fine luster than for their medicinal properties.

Those which we Spaniards call oysters, the Bisayans here call *tipay*,² and the Tagalogs, *kapis*.³ They are the shape of round oysters, more or less wide, according to the time they are left in

suelos para que crezcan (que en algunas partes no las dejan crecer mucho porque las sacan para varios ministerios).

Son estas ostras, o *tipai*, de materia, aunque muy sólida, transparentes. No que las pasa el sol como en el vidrio, sí en que pasa la luz como el alabastro fino, y excede a éste en lo terso y delgado, por lo cual se hacen acá ventanas que sirven de vidrieras, con mucha curiosidad y no menos útil para defensa de los muchos y grandes vientos que por acá corren, y exceden al vidrio en duración y firmeza, pues por más que se sacuda o golpee en dichas ventanas o vidrieras, no se quiebran ni faltan las dichas conchas, que comúnmente las labran, y con harta facilidad, cuadradas, y encajando dichos cuadros (que serán como la palma de la mano, más o menos, según quieren) en varios listones de maderas, recias o blancas como el *molave*⁴, o coloradas como el *baraiong*⁵ o *naga*⁶, o negras como el ébano. Salen muy bien, hermosean una sala o galería (que por acá suelen rodear de este *capis*), y la dejan así en tiempos turbulentos y de lluvias con suficiente luz para todos los ministerios domésticos.

Hácese también faroles, linternas o lámparas, con ellas, donde se conserva la luz sin que el viento la apague, y con mucha claridad; y, aunque tal vez las ofusque el humo, con labarlas quedan como nuevas.

No ha llegado, que yo sepa, este uso a Europa. Trajérenlo de su tierra los chinas a estas islas, y cierto que es admirable e imitable.

No sólo es el uso dicho de estas conchas el que las hace estimables, sino más aún, el aljófár dejando su carne, de que gustan mucho no pocos, y entre estos naturales es apetecida y comida con gusto; aunque así esta, como todas las demás de los ostiones y mariscos, son recias y pesadas de calidad y necesitan de buenos estómagos; digo para los europeos, que los indios todo lo digieren y su mayor indigestión es carecer de semejantes viandas con que engañan comúnmente lo insulso de sus comidas.

their natural place in order to grow (in some places they do not permit them to grow very large because they take them out for various uses).

These oysters or *tipay* are of a material which, although solid, is transparent. Not that the sun passes through, as in glass, but the light passes as through fine alabaster. It surpasses the latter in its smoothness and thinness. As a result, they make windows out of it here, which are used for glass in a curious manner. They are no less useful for defense against the numerous great winds that run their course here. It is better than glass for durability and firmness, for no matter how these windows or panes are shaken or bumped, these shells neither break nor falter. Ordinarily, they fashion them with great skill into squares and set these squares (which are about the size of the palm of a hand, according to their desires) in various laths of tough woods; either in white like the *molave*,⁴ or red like the *barayong*⁵ or *naga*⁶ or black, like ebony. They come out very well and beautify a room or gallery (which they are accustomed to circle with this *kapis*). And thus, they leave the room in stormy and rainy weather with sufficient light for domestic tasks.

They also make lanterns, lamps or lights out of them wherein they protect the flame lest the wind blow it out; they are very bright and although perhaps the smoke may obscure them, with polishing they become like new.

As far as I know, this practice has never reached Europe. The Chinese brought it from their land to these Islands; certainly, it is admirable and worthy of imitation!

Not only is the use of these shells what makes them valuable, but even more so the *aljófara* from which comes its flesh which they like not a little and sought among the natives and eaten with relish. However this, like the rest of the oysters and shellfish, is harsh and heavy in quality and requires a good stomach. I am speaking for the Europeans; the native can digest everything; their major cause of their indigestibility is the lack of comparable viands with which to disguise the flatness of their meals.

Hállase dicho aljófár en algunos de ellos en tanta abundancia que a mí me ha sucedido (mandando abrir alguno para comer la gente de casa) hallar en uno solo (digo una ostia entera, que son dos conchas, con una carne que está en medio) diez y doce y más granos de aljófár, que en algunas se hallan más y en otras menos y en otras nada, porque no todas son igualmente fecundas.

Hállanse también sus perlecillas algo mayores (que los aljófáres ellos se dicen el tamaño), que llegan al tamaño de un grano de pimienta, que pocas veces excede éste las de estos *tipaies* u ostias; y, aunque son lúcidas y buenas, no lo son tanto como los que llaman perlas netas, de que diremos más abajo.

Sólo añadido un reparo que yo hice en varias ocasiones, así en estos *tipaies* como en otras conchas que crían perlas (y que dejo advertido para los demás) que, cuanto más aljófár o perlas tiene, tanto tienen menos de carne, que es más dura y menos sabrosa que las que no lo tienen, o que sea que la perla se lleve la substancia, o que, atenta la naturaleza, le quita de gusto para la boca lo que le añade de precio y estimación para la bolsa.

A las ostias podemos juntar los ostiones que llaman por acá los españoles, y los indios *talaba*⁷. No son redondos como ellas ni de conchas transparentes sino a largos, que es lo más común, o cuasi cuadradas o de otras figuras, y duros como piedras.

Su carne dicen es la más regalada y gustosa de este género de marisco. Los que la comen y usan de ella, aun la gente más regalada, aunque tal vez a su riesgo pues padecen, los que se demandan, muchos ahitos.

Yo, aunque los he probado pocas veces en tantos años, no puedo decir que los he comido, por no hallarme con estómago para ellos; pero es cierto que muchos gustan mucho y los hacen buscar con cuidado.

Hállanse en más abundancia en las barras de los rios, o dentro de la madre de ellos, o fuera en los bajos, no en la arena

This said *aljófar* is found in some oysters in very great abundance, and I have had the experience (upon ordering one to be opened so that the people of the household might eat) to find in a single one (I am speaking of one whole oyster which consists of two shells with the meat that is inside) ten, twelve and more grains of seed pearls. In some more are found; in others less, because not all are equally productive.

Their little pearls are also found, somewhat larger (and the *aljófares* control their size), which get to be the size of a grain of pepper. Seldom do the pearls of these *tipay* or oysters exceed this. Although they are lustrous and fine, they do not compare with the ones they call *perlas netas*, about which we shall speak more below.

I shall only add an investigation which I have made on various occasions, both with these *tipay* as with other shells which grow pearls (and which was not observed in the rest) which is that the more *aljófares* or pearls it has, the less flesh. The latter is tougher and less tasty than the one which does not have them; whether it be that the pearls absorb the substance of the oyster of that nature being confounded, it takes away in taste for the mouth what it adds in value and estimation for the purse.

To the *ostias* (oysters), we must add the *ostiones* (big oysters) as the Spaniards here call them and the natives, *talaba*.⁷ They are not round like the former or with transparent shells, but elongated which are most common or almost square or of other shapes. They are as hard as rocks.

Their flesh, it is said, is most delightful and tasty in this type of shellfish. Those who eat it and enjoy it, even persons of fine tastes, although it may be a risk, for those who overindulge suffer very severe indigestion.

Although I have tried these a few times during many years, I cannot say that I have eaten them, because I do not have a stomach for it. But it is certain that many individuals like them very much and go diligently searching for them.

They are found in great abundance in the sandbars of the rivers or outside them in the pools; not in the hard sand (unless it

sólida (si ya no es que, estando fraguados, se las echa el mar encima), sino entre lo lodoso y blando, entre el mismo cieno que no le puede comunicar muy buenas calidades.

Fuera de la carne poco provecho se saca de ellos, aunque tal vez se hallan algunas perlas, y yo he visto algunas halladas en estos ostiones o *talabas*, tan lúcidas y finas que no las exeden las perlas que llaman netas, y de muy buen tamaño y casi como garbanzos, y las he visto también como piedrezuelas blancas aunque muy lúcidas, quizás porque no estaban aun suficientemente curadas y no habían llegado a su perfección.

De estas ostras, o conchas, se hace muy buena cal, y tan buena como la de las piedras que por acá, como después veremos, se sacan del mar para hacerla y para mezclarla con los *buhios*⁸, de que ya tratamos. Dicen que las de estos ostiones, u ostras, conchas es la mejor y más a propósito que la de piedra, y más si no es de la mar.

Las conchas más insignes por acá y las que crían las verdaderas perlas, que suelen llamar “netas,” son las que justamente crían el nácar, pues ellas son el fino nácar que suelen también llamar “madreperla,” y acá las llaman los bisayas *masabai*⁹, comúnmente, aunque en algunas partes tienen otros nombres. Son a modo de ostras, pero mayores, por la parte de fuera denegridas y feas, por la de dentro muy lúcidas y hermosas, pues son el nácar de que se hacen las cucharas que por tales tienen estima en Europa.

No son tan chatas como las ostias, ni tan combadas como las otras conchas o almejas, pero en un medio. Tiene de concha una punta agobiada por donde se juntan las dos extremidades, y lo demás está conjunto, de modo que se abren y cierran como todas las conchas vivas a sus tiempos.

La carne es de la calidad de las ostras, aunque suele ser mejor esta y más sabrosa. Está asida en medio de la concha solo en un lado y suele ser del que está abajo, arrimado a la tierra, o lodo, donde se crían, en aquella cercanía donde la carne tiene su

be that they are broken and the sea has cast them up thereabout in the muddy, soft places buried in the mire itself which cannot communicate very good qualities to them.

Aside from the flesh, very little good can come from them, although by chance a few pearls can be found. I have seen some found in these *ostiones* or *talabas*, so lustrous and fine that the pearls which they call *netas* do not surpass them. They are of very fine size and almost like chickpeas. I have also seen them like large white stone particles, but very lustrous, perhaps because they were not yet sufficiently hardened and had not reached their perfected state.

Out of these oysters and shells a very fine lime is made; as good as from the rock-like ones here which, as we shall see later, are taken from the sea to make it. And for mixing with the *buhios*⁸ which we have already treated. They say that the lime made from these *ostiones* or *ostras*, shells is better and more suitable for this purpose than that from stone; especially if the latter is not from the sea.

The most remarkable shells over here and those which grow the true pearls which are called *netas*, are those which likewise produce nacre, for they are the fine nacre which they likewise call mother-of-pearl. Here, the Bisayans commonly call them *masabay*,⁹ although in other regions they have other names. They are like oysters but larger; on the outside they are blackened and ugly and on the inside, very lustrous and beautiful. They are the nacre out of which the spoons are made which are so highly regarded in Europe.

They are not as flat as the oysters or as twisted as the other mussels or shells, but in the middle of the shell they have a point that is bent over by which the two sides are joined. The rest is contiguous so that they open and close, like all the live shells as occasion demands.

The flesh is of the quality of the oysters, although the latter is better and more tasty. It is attached in the middle of its shell only on one side, and it is usually the part that is below which is next to the earth or mud where it developed. In that area where

origen y está asida. Se hallan las perlas comúnmente en mitad de lo más sólido de ellas, una o dos o más, siendo siempre mayores las solas y menores las que se crían juntas muchas, aunque tal vez se hallarán en especial en conchas añejas dos y tres mayores que en las más modernas, aunque sea una.

No todas las conchas tienen perlas (que se hallarán infinitas, pues lo son las conchas en algunas partes donde se crían con abundancia) sino las menos, y hay algunos indios que, antes de abrir la concha, conocen si tendrá o no perlas. Y, a lo que yo advertí casi siempre que decían, al sacarla, que la tenían, hallábamos ser así. La experiencia los habrá ya mostrado, aun con solo el tacto exterior, el conocer y distinguir las que las crían y las que no.

No son pocas las partes en estas islas de Bisayas que crían mucha cantidad de conchas de perlas, y de estas del nácar; pero sácense pocas porque hay pocos que tratan de esto. Y los indios, si las buscan, más es por comer la carne que por codicia de juntar perlas, pues, aun cuando las hallan, y algunas de mucho valor, las venden a muy bajos precios por no estimar ni conocer sus calidades; con que con facilidad les engañan los *sangleyes*, y aun los españoles, que andan entre ellos, dándoles cuatro reales, o menos, por las que valían diez y veinte, y a veces muchos más escudos, como lo he sabido yo no pocas veces cuando no tenía ya remedio, y el que los engañó puso tierra o mar en medio.

Y, pues estamos entre manos con estas conchas y perlas, me ha parecido indagar algo de la causa eficiente de estas perlas porque no me asientan las que comúnmente oigo de su origen y principio.

Dicen algunos que las engendra la aurora con su rocío, dándoles nombre de lágrimas suyas, pero esto ya se ve que es dicho de poetas, a quienes, como dice Horacio, como a los pintores, “*Quilibet audendi, etc.*”¹⁰ se les da licencia para fingir.

the flesh has its beginning, and is attached, the pearls are usually found in the middle of the firmest portion of it; one or two or more. The single ones always being larger and the smaller ones, where many were developed together. However, possibly there may be found especially in old shells, two or three larger; in the youngest, however, there may be but one.

Not all the oysters have pearls (which are found in infinite numbers, for they are that numerous in some places where they grow with great abundance) but only a few. There are some natives who, before they open the shell, know whether or not it will have pearls; from what I have observed, almost every time they said, on taking one out, that it had a pearl, we found it to be so. Experience has already shown them, even with only the feel of the outside, the ability to distinguish those that have grown pearls and those which have not.

There are not a few regions in these islands of the Bisayas which grow a large number of pearl oysters, and these of nacre. But they take out only a few because there are few people who attempt this. If the natives seek them, it is rather because of the desire to eat the flesh than for the pride of amassing pearls. For even when they find them, and some of great value, they sell them at very low prices, because they do not value them and do not know their values. As a result, the *sangleyes*, even the Spaniards, deceive them who go among them giving them four *reales* or less for those that are worth ten and twenty, and at times many more *escudos*, as I have learned many times, when there was no longer any recourse, and the one who had deceived them had already put land or sea between them.

Since we are faced with these shells and pearls, it has occurred to me to look into the efficient cause of these pearls; for the reasons that I commonly hear about their origin and beginning do not satisfy me.

Some say that the dawn engenders them with its dew and they give them the name "morning tears". But this now can be seen to be the language of poets to whom, as well as to the painters, as Horace says *Quilibet audendi, etc.*,¹⁰ where license is given to pretend.

Del rocío más puro y limpio dice otro que nacen las perlas blancas y netas, y que las que nacen morenitas son del menos puro; pero no advirtió este autor que las conchas donde se crían las perlas están algunos estados sumergidas en el hondo del mar, aun cuando éste está muy menguante. ¿Por dónde, pues, entra allá abajo este rocío? Fuera de que las ostras, o conchas, donde están y nacen las perlas, están comúnmente muy cerradas, y tan apretadas que ni el agua del mar entra en ellas. Están fijas y sin menearse, y no pocas veces metidas en el cieno o lodo. ¿Por dónde, aunque pudiera entrar allá abajo, había de recibir este rocío?

Criarse como en los hígados y entrañas de los puercos se crían unas piedras blancas que llaman granizo, dijeron los que cita Plinio y lo aplauden otros.

Menos lejos de la verdad me parece que pensó el que dijo que, como en el cuerpo humano se crían piedras en los riñones y otras partes, pueden también estas conchas criar las perlas, aunque contra esto está que en el cuerpo humano se crían *contra naturam*¹¹ y para su mal las más veces, y en estas conchas parece cosa natural, como serían los huevos en el buche de una gallina.

Dicen algunos indios que se crían las perlas en las conchas y que las expelen; y, si es verdad que se halla esta expulsión o evacuación (que yo lo dudo), no era mal pensado el origen.

Diré lo que mi alucinación alcanza, después de haber mirado con atención y remirado las conchas, sus senos, la carne que en ellas se cría y el lugar donde se suelen hallar las perlas; y así juzgo que estas uniones, pues no son como los huevos en las gallinas, ni se crían como – los cálculos en los cuerpos humanos y de otros animales, se producen por virtud natural que tienen estas conchas como complemento de su ser, y como materia que su virtud nutritiva aparta y endurece con el influjo del sol y demás astros que en aquel lugar, como en la tierra dispuesta el oro y plata y algunas

There are others who say that the white, pure pearls are born from the purest and cleanest dew; those that are dark are from that which is less pure. But this author has not noticed that the shells in which the pearls grow are some distance, submerged in the depth of the sea even when this is at extreme ebb tide. By what means then, does this dew enter down there below? Besides the oysters or shells where the pearls are born and grow, are usually completely closed and so tightly that not even the water of the sea gets into them. They are fixed and without movement and very often thrust into the mud or muck. By what manner, even though it might get down there below, would there be a way of receiving this dew?

They are developed like various white stones grow in the entrails of hogs they call *hail*, say those that cite Pliny, and others applaud.

It seems to me he was less far from the truth in his thinking who said that just as in the human body stones grow in the kidneys and other parts, so these shells can grow pearls. However, against this view is the fact that in the human body they grow *contra naturam*¹¹ and most of the time for its detriment; in these shells it seems to be a natural matter, as if they were eggs in the stomach of a hen.

Some natives say that the pearls are grown in the shells and that they expel them. If it is the truth, and this expulsion or evacuation is discovered (which I doubt) of their origin was not badly conceived.

I shall describe what my imagination comes up with, after having examined and re-examined with attention the shells, their cavities, the flesh that grows in them and the place where the pearls are found. So I believe that these occurrences, as they are not like the eggs in hens, nor do they grow like the stones in the human bodies and other animals, are produced by the natural properties which these shells possess as a compliment of their being; as a material which nutritive property imparts. It hardens with the influence of the sun and other stars which in that location (as gold and silver and some crude stones are distributed in the ground

piedras bastas que con su influjo llegan a ser preciosas, cría las perlas de sus particulares calidades conaturales a este – efecto que halla en ellas que, avivadas con su color e influencia, llegan a la perfección de las uniones, como las vemos, tan sólidas, tan resplandecientes y tan lindas como se hallan dentro de la matriz (digámoslo así) de las conchas, pues en medio comúnmente de la carne se hallan las perlas, y como en las entrañas de aquel viviente, siendo oficio suyo el darle la figura, o rotunda, u ovada, o larga, o como pera, que de todas estas maneras se ven.

Con esto se convence que el ser las perlas más o menos netas o finas, depende del influjo del sol y de la nutrición y aumentación que reciben de la concha, ayudando la materia del pasto con que se sustenta, – a darle el color, o más terso y blanco, o menos lúcido y moreno, pues con evidencia se ve. Y yo tengo en mi poder perlas del tamaño de garbanzos, algunas sacadas delante de mí de las conchas, con varios colores: unas blanquísimas, lustrosas y netas, que no hay más que desear en su tez; otras morenas, y, aunque con lustre, no con tanto; rubias y casi coloradas otras, y alguna medio morada.

Y, preguntando a los indios que traían las conchas, la causa de aquella variedad de colores, dijeron que era del suelo, o lodo, donde se hallaban las conchas. y aun añadieron que en las que se hallan en las barras de los ríos, como sucede no pocas veces, donde las avenidas de agua turbia, la comixtió del agua dulce y otros accidentes, son más que en la mar, lejos de tierra, aunque sean de una misma especie las conchas, se halla mucha diferencia en las perlas por el lugar donde sus madres nacieron y crecieron y las engendraron.

Esto es lo que alcanza mi filosofía. Quien hallare otra más bien fundada o más cierta, añada aquí para que se sepa.

No solo en las conchas dichas, que llamamos *tipai*, se hallan perlas o aljófár, y en el *masabai*, las más finas, netas y de mejor ley, sino en otras muchas, y aun en casi todas, aun en las muy grandes,

and with other influence they come to be precious) and develops the pearls from its special innate qualities for this purpose which is found in them. Enlivened by their heat and power they come to the perfection of their union, as we see them, as hard, as shimmering, as beautiful as they are found within the womb (we may say it this way) of the shells. For ordinarily the pearls are found in the middle of the flesh as though in the entrails of that living thing; its purpose being to give the pearl, the shape, either round or oval or elongated or like a pear. They are seen in all of these forms.

As a result, I am convinced that the pearls are more or less pure or fine depending on the effects of the sun and the nutrition and augmentation which they receive from the shell; aided by the material of the nutrient with which it sustains itself to give them the color, either glossy and white or less shiny and darker. Evidence clearly shows this. I have in my possession pearls of the size of chickpeas, some taken out of the shells before me, with various colors. Some are very white, lustrous and clear which leave nothing to be desired in their surface. Others are dark and although lustrous, not so much; so others are reddish and almost red and a kind of mulberry color.

I asked the natives who brought the shells the cause of this variety of colors; they said that it was from the soil or mud where the shells were found. They even added that those found in the sand bars of the rivers, as happens frequently, where the currents of water are turbulent, the mixture with fresh water and other circumstances, are darker than those taken from the sea, distant from the shore. Even though the shells may be of one and the same species, there is found a great difference in the pearls by reason of the place where their mothers were born, grew and engendered them.

This is what my reasoning brings out. Anyone who may discover another, better supported or more certain, add it here so that it may be known.

Not only in these shells which we call *tipay* are found pearls or *aljófar*, and in the *masabay* the finest, most pure and of best quality but in many others, and even in almost all including the

que llaman *tilang*¹² (de que ya tratamos arriba hallarse en la tierra, aunque su propia y más connatural habitación y donde más comúnmente mayores y con más abundancia se hallan es la mar).

Tengo yo en mi poder una como perla, hallada en una de estas conchas grandes, que es tan larga como el dedo, de figura piramidal (en ella es la parte inferior donde se ve la señal por donde estaba asida a la carne) como la yema del dedo pulgar, y la superior como la punta del dedo meñique, tan bien sacada como si se hubiera torneado.

Otra tengo también, o dos como dos avellanes sacadas de otras conchas menores que estas, llamadas *buca*¹³ (aunque en algunas partes truecan estos nombres), que si fueran netas y tan finas como las del *marabay* valieran muchos ducados.

Son de poca estima y sirven más para curiosidad que para otra cosa, porque son blancas como el mármol blanco, aunque más sólidas, más lisas y algo transparentes, y les atribuyen varias virtudes.

En otras conchas, que llaman *baliar*¹⁴, se hallan también perlas de gran tamaño, aunque menos finas. Y de esta manera pudiéramos discurrir en casi todas las diferencias de conchas que se hallan por acá, que son casi infinitas, como dicen.

Del tamaño de las perlas y su grandor no se puede dar regla porque, según mi sentir, con los años crecen y se aumentan, añadiendo nuevas telas, como las piedras bezoares, porque en alguna de las perlas que tal vez estos indios sin mirar lo que tienen dentro las conchas (y es lo más común, cuando están en la mar pescando) las asan como las sacan del mar, y suelen topar algunas perlas algo grandes y, aunque quemadas, (si vino a ser la parte donde estaba la perla la más inmediata al fuego). Y que se deshace con facilidad, de las cuales se colige que están formadas como cascos de cebolla, y, cuanto más años estuvieron en su natural lugar, y con el mismo nutrimento, tanto crecerán más y serán mayores.

very large ones which they call *tilang*,¹² (about which we have already treated above as being found on the land, although their proper and more natural dwelling place and where they are commonly, are found larger and greater abundance in the sea).

I have in my possession a kind of pearl found in one of these large shells which is as long as a finger, pyramidal in shape. The lower part of this, is seen the indication of where it was attached to the flesh, like the fleshy part of the thumb; the upper end is like the point of the little finger also extended as if it had been twisted.

I also have another or two like hazel nuts taken from other shells, smaller than these called *buka*.¹³ However, in some places they change these names. If they were as clear and fine as those of the *marabay*, they would be worth many ducats.

They are of little value and serve more as curiosities than for anything else, because they are as white as marble, although harder, smoother and somewhat transparent. The natives attribute various healing properties to them.

In other shells, which are called *baliar*,¹⁴ there are also found pearls of large size, however less fine. And in this manner we are able to discuss nearly about all the differences of shells which are found over here, which are as if infinite, as they say.

About the size of the pearls and its largeness, a rule cannot be given, because according to my opinion they grow with the years and increase in size adding new layers like the bezoar stones. For in the case of some of the pearls these natives, perhaps without looking for what they have inside the shells (and it is very common when they are fishing at sea) they roast them as they take them from the ocean. So they come across some rather large pearls even though burned (if the part where the pearl was nearest to the fire). From this it can be seen that they are formed like the layers of an onion; the more years they remained in their natural place and with the usual nutriment, the more they grow and become large.

Hallarse como huevos de ansares he leído en algún autor, que lo cuenta de vista, y añade que, hallándose en Sevilla en cierta ocasión en un convite, sirvieron en él al Señor duque de Medinasionia en un plato una perla para que la comprase (que con menos caudal mal se pudiera) que pesaba cien onzas. Muy grande era si era fina y neta.

En el Borneo¹⁵, isla circunvecina a estas, es fama hallarse muy grandes, redondas y finas. En la isla de Joló¹⁶, que es una de estas, como dijimos, hay testigos de vista hallarse como huevos de palomas, y mayores, y una dicen que sirve de puño a un *criz* (ya dijimos lo que es) al reyezuelo de aquella isla.

Por acá, en estas islas de Bisayas, no se que se hallen tan grandes. Hallarse como avellanas, dicen muchos que las han visto. Yo no las he visto mayores que avellanas de las más pequeñas; pero no dudo se hallarían más grandes si se pescaran con cuidado donde las hay con abundancia; que no es sola una parte sino en muchas de estas Islas.

Dicen algunos que crecen estas perlas aun fuera de la concha y seno natural. He oído a un testigo verídico (y ha pocos días me lo contó, tratando de esta materia) que sabe de una persona que tiene una guardada entre algodones en parte donde no le da viento ni otros accidentes, que, desde que se sacó de la concha, la guarda para hacer la prueba; y que verdaderamente dice ha crecido considerablemente después que la tiene, y prosigue en guardarla con el mismo cuidado.

También he oído decir a otros que, sacada la perla de la concha y puesta en una escudilleja con aceite de coco, de modo que se cubra, que crecen las perlas. He hecho yo la experiencia y tenído las tiempo en dicho aceite. Es verdad que crían un género de corteza alrededor, muy blanca y blanda, pero, lavadas después, no hallo diferencia en el tamaño. Puede ser que, por haber estado poco tiempo, no se cuajase aquella materia, o tez, que criaba.

I have read in some author that there were found some like goose eggs; that once when he was in Seville on a certain occasion at a banquet, they served a pearl on a plate to the Duke of Medina-sidonia, so that he may buy it (one with less resources could hardly do it) and it weighed a hundred ounces. It was very large, fine and pure.

In Borneo,¹⁵ an island neighboring these, there is a report that very large, round and fine quality pearls are found. On the Island of Jolo¹⁶ which is one of these islands, as we have said, there are eye witnesses that pearls are found as large as dove eggs and larger. They tell of one which is used as the handle of a *cris* (we have described what this is) belonging to the kinglet of that island.

Over here, in these Bisayan islands, I do not know what they are found as large. Many who have seen them say that they are found like hazel nuts. I have never seen them larger than the very smallest hazel nut, but I do not doubt that they may be found very large, if they were fished for carefully where there is an abundance of them, and this is not simply one place, but many of these islands.

Some say that these pearls grow even outside of their shell and normal place. I have heard from a reliable witness (he related this to me a few days ago, in discussing this matter) that he knows a person who has a pearl, kept very carefully in a place where the wind does not strike it or other accidents befall it. He has guarded it since it was taken from the shell in order to make the test. He says truthfully that it has grown considerably after he had it and continues to keep it with the same care.

Also, I have heard others say that a pearl grows when taken out of the shell and placed in a crock with coconut oil so that it is covered. I have made the experiment and kept them for a time in this oil. It is true that they grew a kind of very white soft shell around them, but on washing them afterwards, I did not find any difference in the size. Possibly because they were there too short a time, the matter or skin which grew was not solidified.

De las poco netas dicen que, dadas a comer a una gallina o paloma y sacándolas presto del buche, con aquel calor se purifican. No lo he experimentado; puede ser que sea así. También dicen que se deshacen las perlas, puestas en remojo, con zumo de limón ceuti¹⁷ y puesto al sol, que en cinco o seis días las deshace y vuelve líquidas. Bien puede ser, que cosas más recias deshace el zumo de dicho limón. Y con esto pasemos a otras cosas particulares y dignas de saberse.

About the small *netas* they say, if given to a hen or dove to eat and then taken quickly out of the craw, are purified with that warmth. I have not tried the experiment; possibly it may be so. They also say that pearls placed so as to steep in juice of lemon *ceuti*¹⁷ and placed in the sun, in five or six days disintegrate and becomes liquid. It is possible, harder things are dissolved by this lemon juice. With this we shall pass on to other special matters worthy of knowing about.

Chapter 19

ANNOTATIONS

[1] *Anang*. More appropriately *hanang* or *hagna*: a marsh or a marshy place; under *anang*, as Alcina presents the word, it could not be found and yet that is truly the Bisayan spelling. The 'h' is a hispanicization, it seems. One must attempt the word with an 'h' *hanang* and Sánchez has the entry and even gives another word which means the same thing. Obviously, the shellfish took its name after the marsh or muddiness. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.* Tramp gives the entry thus: *hanang*; *marsh*; *mud*; *residue* or *sediment* in a river. *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

"*Hanang*: A rivine, mire, puddle; muddy land, silt, bottom of a river, etc." De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 138.

[2] *Tipay*. Mother-of-pearl oyster shells which are used in lanterns; they are called *tipáy* because they are made from them. *Matipay an humay*.

Tramp identifies it as 'window oyster or window-pane shell: *placuna placenta*: a small mollusk related to other-of-pearl. *Ibid.*, p. 444.

"*Tipay*: An oyster or a bivalve shell; a shell-oyster that contains one or several pearls. A shell that is used for windows or *capices*." De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 358.

[3] *Kapis*. Also a Bisayan word for window oyster, *placuna placenta*; window panels made of such. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

Kapis: panes made from these fine shells or of crystal, in the shape of squares. – v. To make such windows or panes. – To place the same." De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 85.

[4] *Molave*. A Spanish word for the Bisayan hardwood *hamorawon*: "A *molave*, a very hard timber and good for posts or *harigi*. *Hamorawon as pangalap sa balay sa horon, hamak; bukbukon an pinanagalap san sa bungton*. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.* A lengthy description can be found in the earlier chapter annotations above.

Book One, of *Part One* in Alcina's *Historia...* 1668, Chapter 20, deals with these valuable hardwoods in detail.

Tramp give it thus: *hamurawon* – *molave*, *vitex geniculata*, the tree has hard yellow wood for construction; it is first-class lumber. *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

[5] *Binahan*. A large tree whose hard wood is used in cabinet making; *Pterocarpus indicus*, [Wild]. Tramp, *Ibid.*, p. 40. Sánchez states that it is a tree which is a hard wood and reddish in color. [1711], *op. cit.*

"*Barayong*: A large and a tall tree with small leaves. There are two varieties of this tree: one has red heads and the wood is also red; the other has white heads and the wood is whitish. The one that has the red *cogollitos* is much harder, because its wood is read, hard and tough and releases a pleasant fragrance. It is excellent for posts in buildings, for tables, chairs, etc. This wood does not last long in water since worms get into it. The pounded seeds serve as glue, mixed with water. Its fruit is black with a red spot on it; Father Sánchez, stated that he had planted many of these and they grew well. The bark and the trunk are used to fumigate some wounds." De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 393.

[6] *Naga*. Or called *narra*; *Pterocarpus indicus*, *Lingoum indicum* – The Philippine national tree: a fabaceous timber tree of hard wood colored yellow or dark red used for furniture and cabinet work. Tramp, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

"*Naga*: *Pterocarpus pálido*. *Narra*. A thick and a tall tree with small, oval-like, pointed leaves. Its wood is of a cinnamon-like colored and fine for construction, tables, chairs and other furniture. The water in which this wood was soaked in, is used to expel the seeming grains of sand in the bladder. There is another variety of this wood which is red which releases a very pleasant fragrance; its gums is medicinal also and maybe used in healing sores or ulcers in the mouth. The infusion makes the water blue and this water is also given as medicine against the ills of the gall bladder." De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 410. There is also a tree with an almost similar name – *Naga*, but very different from the latter. *Ibid.*, p. 411.

[7] *Talaba*. Or *pantiun*: a generic name of any kind of shellfish; *Mamanti* to gather shellfish; this entry is found in Sánchez under *panti* (a word which is no longer in use) *Pantium sa dagat, tagimtim an gudti, an digyutan, sisi, liwat. Tagimtiman na iton buaya, tagiptipun inin saging kun gurang na*. Sánchez. [1711], *op. cit.*

"*Talaba*: an oyster so-called; a bivalve shellfish found amidst rocks and stones and is of a highest, delicious order. – *Hatalaba*. v. To get wounded with the tip of the shell or stone on which the *talaba* is united." De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 333.

Tramp makes this entry for *talaba*: [Tag.] oysters or oyster family; seashell variety. *Op. cit.*, p. 421. Sánchez describes this word and hence, it is truly a Bisayan term borrowed by the Tagalogs.

[8] *Buhios*. Or *buyo* or *mamun*. *Buyo* is an aromatic leaf which is used together with lime and the *bonga* nut; where all rolled up together it is called *buyu* or *buhius*.

Also called *mama*, *mamaon* or *mamon*: to chew the *buyo*, *magma*. *Mamun*: refers to *buyo* already prepared; *maramun*, the thing of which it is made, like the *buyo* leaves or *bonga*; *maramun man inin ihalas nga buyo o la bonga*; *maramun man inin hilas nga bungo*; *maraman*, vel, *maramanan* is a little basket or some

other container in which the buyos are carried. *An bubutangan sin mamun, aton papagmamun inin tawo ta kay manga layo pa.* Let us give them buyo while waiting for the meal. *Ikuha mo ako sin bonga, akon pagmamamua ig mamama mo inin diut nga apug.* Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*

“*Buyo: Betel*, a climbing plant, sunk in its base, sharp and with open nerves; it tastes like mint, it is used by the natives to prepare the *mamon*. There are various types and those utilized most are the following: *gibuyhoy, tikom, kani-ngagon, kagaang, kagsakas, saguiawan, labilad, kagupkop, kulang sa baybayon*. De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 70. Note: this is only one example indicative of the richness of the Samarnon language.

[9] *Masabay*. An edible barnacle variety; *masabaybahong*: oyster (fig.); barnacle-clam (lit.). Tramp, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

[10] *Quilibet audendi*, etc. A Latin phrase: “Whatever must be heard...”

[11] *Contra naturam*. A Latin phrase which means ‘against nature’.

[12] *Tilang*. Or *taklubo* or *taklob*, a kind of shell. *Taklob* means to cover as with a lid; *magtatakoub*. *Hintakloban*, what was taken or trapped. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, under *tilang* and under *taklob*. Tramp, gives the same meaning and more.

“*Tilang*: A marine creature; a large bivalve. – The shell of this said marine creature.” De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 354.

[13] *Buka*. Perhaps, the word is derived from *buka* which means ‘to open’. *Namuka*, to discover something that was hidden.

“Or *pamuka*: A crustacean with a shell, it has the form of a fan. – To discover what was occult or hidden. – *Himuka*.” De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[14] *Baliar*. A certain oyster or shellfish like the *tipay*. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*, Tramp has the entry under *baliad*: oyster.

[15] *Borneo*. An Indonesian island: 296,696 square miles in area, lying between Sulu and Java seas of Western Pacific Ocean. Divided into Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo), the Malaysian States of Sarawak and Sabah and the Sultanate of Brunei.

[16] *Jolo. Sulu*. The Sulu Archipelago: a group of islands 1,086 square miles in area, in Western Pacific Ocean. Constituting the extreme southern Province of the Republic of the Philippines; its capital is Jolo.

[17] *Zeuti*. Vide, *ceuti*.