

Capítulo 12

QUÉ NOTICIAS TUVIERON DE LA OTRA VIDA; SI CONOCIERON ESPÍRITUS BUENOS Y MALOS; QUÉ DE LAS ALMAS Y SU INMORTALIDAD

Materia es la de este capítulo tan difícil de averiguar cuanto aun entre personas más políticas y cultivadas con ciencias mayores fue difícil de alcanzar. Quién ignora de los fieles que fue motivo de risa y aun de mofa en Atenas, emporio entonces de mayores ciencias del orbe, el haber oído nuevas de otra vida y de la inmortalidad de las almas y resurrección de los cuerpos. Y los que menos mal pensaron lo quisieron oír otra vez. Pues, ¿qué harían estos pobres indios, cortos de caudal, faltos de enseñanza y nada deseosos de saber, sino vivir con una ceguedad torpísima y pensar, o imaginar, muy a lo bruto, pensando sólo y mirando a ésto que se ve, sin acordarse un paso más allá del vivir en lo que se pudiera o esperar o temer?

Diré, pues, lo que he averiguado, con no poco cuidado y diligencia, con repetidas preguntas e intentadas dudas, sacándoles lo que en esta parte sentían o sabían, que no ha sido fácil.

Y así que, en común, los más de los bisayas ni sabían, ni creían ni pensaban en otra vida, ni alcanzaban que hubiese más que vivir y morir, sin diferencia de las bestias, entendiendo que con la

Chapter 12

CONCERNING THE KNOWLEDGE THEY HAD ABOUT THE OTHER LIFE; WHETHER THEY HAD ANY VIEWS ABOUT GOOD AND EVIL SPIRITS, SOULS AND IMMORTALITY

The subject-matter of this chapter is as difficult to investigate as it would be even if it were about individuals more civilized, cultured and more informed. Who does not know about the believers who became a laughing stock and a source of mockery in Athens, then an emporium of some of the best sciences in the world, upon hearing the news that there was another life, about the immortality of the souls and the resurrection of the bodies? Those who have given it a second thought, wanted to hear about it again. So it was with these poor natives, so deficient in understanding, wanting in instruction and not desirous in knowing anything but to live in a shameful blindness and to think or imagine in a brute-like manner. [They were interested] only in having their thoughts fixed on and gazed upon that which can be seen, without considering anything more than to live according to what is either expected or feared.

I shall, therefore, report what I have found out with no little care and diligence through repeated questions and deliberate doubts, setting forth in this section what they felt or knew. This, certainly, has not been an easy task.

And so I say that, generally speaking, the majority of the Bisayans did not know or believe in, nor even thought about another life. Neither could they possibly conceive that there could

vida se acababa todo; pues aun hoy, después de más de sesenta años de enseñanza y sermones¹, en que incansablemente se les ha predicado y enseñado por tantos ministros como ha habido y hay, y tan celosos del bien de sus almas, no me atrevo a asegurar que los más, y lo más común, hayan llegado aun a hacer concepto, no digo pleno, que raro se hallará, pero aun dimidiado, de que haya otra vida, y en ella premio para los buenos y castigo para los malos, pues me ha sucedido a mí, no pocas veces, después de haberme cansado en esta materia, que procuro inculcarles, repetirles y declararles más que otra alguna, porque veo lo cortos que en ella están, responderme: “¿pues qué, después de muertos sienten, ni pueden sentir? eso fuera no haber muerto” – y quedarse sonriendo.

Otras personas más entendidas, y que hacen algún más concepto de lo que se les dice, y parece se adelantan más en entender, suelen decir, y a mí me han dicho no pocas: “Padre, verdad es sin duda lo que tú dices, que hay gloria y castigo, pues parece conforme a razón que los buenos sean premiados y castigados los malos; pero éso será para vosotros los españoles que sois gente entendida y sabéis todo eso; pero, para nosotros los bisayas, y así para los castilas, no dudamos que habrá cielo, pero para los bisayas parécenos que no, pues acá en el mundo nos crió Dios con tanta diferencia de vosotros; y, como vemos acá, ni aun en sus casas nos dejan asentar los españoles ni hacen caso de nosotros; ¿cuánto más allá, que, como vosotros decís, todo es grandeza, majestad y gloria sin fin?”

Estas y otras cosas a este talle he oído yo no pocas veces a estos pobres bisayas, y ésto a los más entendidos, así hombres como mujeres, y que se hacen más capaces de las cosas de la otra vida. Y éste es su sentir común cuando ellos hablan entre sí de estas cosas; y por esto en todas las ocasiones que puedo, *importune*, *opportune*², les trato de esta materia en general y particular, procurando hacerles capaces de que Dios a nadie excluye de su Reino,

be more to living and dying as is evident what happens to the beasts. They believed that with this life all is ended. Even today, after more than sixty years of instruction and preaching¹ – with so many past and present ministers, so untiringly concerned about the salvation of their souls – I do not hesitate to affirm that the majority of the common people still have a long way to go in coming to grips with this concept, at least to some degree. Such an individual who could fully understand such an idea about life hereafter, together with punishments and rewards is rare indeed; even those who could grasp this truth partially are hard to come by too. This has been my constant experience even to the point of exhaustion; namely, to impress them with this subject matter, to repeat and explain it all since I saw how little versed they were in matters such as these. Yet, they question: “How can we feel or even have any sensation after we have died? Then it is like not having died at all”. Thus, they bring this to an end smiling.

Other individuals, who are more knowledgeable and who readily grasp what is said because of a keener understanding, often-times said and even told me: “Father, what you say is undoubtedly true; there must be glory and punishment. It seems reasonable that the good be rewarded and that evildoers be punished. However, all this may be good for you Spaniards, who are knowledgeable people and know all that. But for us Bisayans and also for you Castilians, we do not doubt that there shall be a heaven. Yet, it seems to us that it is not so for the Bisayans, because here on earth God created us so different from you. For as we see it here, the Spaniards do not permit us even to sit down in their houses, nor do they even mind us. So much the less will it be the case for us there where you say everything is grandeur, majesty and glory without an end.”

These and other things of a similar nature I have heard not a few times from these poor Bisayans; this came from some of the most intelligent among them, both men and women, who are the most capable of understanding such matters as life hereafter. This is how they generally feel whenever they speak among themselves about these matters. And for this reason, on all the occasions possible, *importune* or *opportune*,² I discuss this matter with them in general and in particular, trying to make them understand that

y que ni hay castila, ni bisaya, ni negro para con Dios, y que todos somos unos, y que sólo al buen o mal vivir es el que mira Dios igualmente con todos para satisfacer a cada cual según sus obras; que aseguren con estas noticias su vocación a la salvación; que en lo demás no duden que hallarán entrada en el cielo, etc.

Materia es ésta de que se les debe tratar mucho, asegurar mucho y quitarles toda la duda, pues, como he dicho, viven la mayor parte con tanto engaño como de lo que acabamos de decir se colige. ¡Ojalá les abra Dios el entendimiento!

Digamos ahora lo que en esta parte tenían entendido y creído; aunque, sin luz de fe, todo eran mentiras. En general es cierto que nada, y que más eran ateistas que otra cosa. Lo que algunos de los más entendidos decían, y esto más por consejas que por tenerlo por cierto, era que el alma nacía y moría nueve veces; con que parece estaban untados de la transmigración pitagórica que tanto ha cundido en el mundo, aun entre muy entendidos, y que al cabo de las nueve veces venía a quedar tan chiquita que, cuando moría la última vez, cabía en un ataúd que ellos llaman *lungon*, del tamaño de un grano de arroz. ¡Tanto como esto se gastaba en el uso del repetido morir!

Del cuerpo nuestro decían que, después de enterrado, se convierte en agua, de noche, y que de día vive junto con el alma; y, si les preguntaren ¿con cuál de los nueve cuerpos pasados vivía, pues, habiendo mudado nueve, era fuerza o con todos o con uno? – no saben responder a propósito.

Decían que los casados se juntaban allá después de muertos, teniendo el marido allá las mismas mujeres que había tenido acá, viviendo maridablemente y comiendo y bebiendo como acá antes que murieron; pero que las mujeres no parían más después de muertas acá una vez, ni tenían más hijos de los que acá tuvieron.

God does not exclude anyone from the Kingdom. [Also], that before God there is no such thing as Bisayan nor Spaniard nor Negro; we are all one and the only thing that God takes into account is whether we live a good life or an evil one, since He judges each one accordingly. Now, with the help of this knowledge, they should assure their call to salvation. As for the rest, they need not doubt that they will find their way to heaven, etc.

This is a subject that must often be brought home to them, repeated frequently so as to remove all doubts. As I have said, the majority of them live under such misconceptions as I have just pointed out. Would to God that they would be able to understand [all this]!

Let us now relate what it is about this subject-matter that they had understood and believed, although without the light of faith, all of it was a deception. In general, it is a fact that [they grasped] nothing; more than anything else, they were simply atheists. What some of the more knowledgeable ones affirmed – and this more by way of myths than by something that they held as certain – was this, that the soul was born and died nine times. It seems, then, that they were imbued with the Pythagorean transmigration, which has become so widespread, even among very intelligent peoples. At the end of the ninth time of dying, the soul became so small that it could be accommodated in a casket, which they call *lungun*, as tiny as a single grain of rice. In such a fashion did the soul waste away through its repeated dying.

Concerning the body they said that after the burial it is changed into water, but joined the soul during the day. And when they were asked with which of the nine bodies did the soul live (because having passed through nine, it was imperative either [to have lived] with all or with one only), they were unable to give a suitable answer.

[Also], they stated that the married individuals were joined there after death; the husband having the same women there as he had here on earth. [And so] they lived there in marital bliss, eating and drinking as before death. The women, however, were no longer fertile after dying here once, nor did they have more children than those they had here [on earth].

Después de muertos, decían que iban todos a un lugar que llamaban *saad*³, que pintaban al modo de los Elisios; y que *Badadum*, el *diwata*, que ya dijimos que es el que gobierna el mundo, y que sabe cuándo uno muere, llamaba todos los parientes, como padres, abuelos y antepasados del difunto, y les decía que fulano su hijo era muerto, y así que le saliesen todos a recibir. Entonces tomaban todos sus lanzas y *kalasag*, que son sus escudos y paveses, y, en compañía del dicho *Badadum*, iban a la boca del río, que era al modo de *lettheo* de Virgilio y allí le aguardaban con grande fiesta y algazara.

En llegando el difunto, destapan el ataúd o *lungon*, y el dicho *Badadum* preguntaba si era aquel fulano, y, en viéndole muy arreado con oro y otras preseas, que, como veremos cuando tratemos de sus entierros, les adornaban y enterraban con todo su oro, decía: “Verdad es, éste es fulano porque trae mucho oro,” desconociendo a los que traían; y esta era la causa de ponerles todo el oro que podían, y luego decía a sus parientes que le llevasen al pueblo de su padre del dicho *Badadum*, llamado *Ayaw*⁴, y al pueblo llamaban *Baraias*⁵; y que, llevado al dicho pueblo el difunto, se ocupaba en robos y *pangaiiao*, que es “cautivar”: el labrador en cultivar la tierra; las mujeres en sus tejidos y costuras como acá; y en esto se ocupaban siempre. Que parece copiaron esta mentira, como otras, de aquello de Virgilio: “... *quae gratia curruum armorumque fuit, quae cura nitentes pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos, etc.*”⁶ (Virgilio, *Aeneid*, Lib. VI, vv. 653-655)

De modo que este era su cielo o su infierno, sin discurrir en nada de esto; pero del cielo decían que, aunque cuál o cuál confiesan que conocieron siempre que lo hay, sólo vivía en él *Malaon*, que es el que dijimos arriba que reconocían los que sabían algo de esto, que eran los menos, y no muchos, al Dios verdadero, y como a tal le daban el cielo por su morada, que quizás se les quedó esto, como ya apuntamos, de algunas vislumbres que del verdadero

After death, they said that all went to a place called *saad*,³ which they described as some sort of Elysian Fields. *Badadum*, the *Diwata* who, as we have already stated, governs the world and knows when one dies, summoned all the relatives as parents, grandparents and ancestors of the deceased, and said to them that so and so, their son, had died. All were expected to come forth and welcome him. Then, all took up their spears and *kalasag* (which are their shields, larger and smaller ones) and together with *Badadum* they went to the mouth of the river which was as if that of Virgil's Lethe. There they awaited him with great feasting and merriment.

When the deceased arrived, they opened the casket or *lungun*, while the said *Badadum* inquired whether he was the one. And seeing him well adorned with gold and jewelry (for as we shall see, when we come to speak about their burials, how they laid them out and buried them with all their gold), he said: "Truly, it is so-and-so, because he brings along much gold!" Those who failed to do this, were not recognized. This was the reason for placing with them as much gold as they could possibly gather. Next, he said to his relatives to take him to the town of the father of *Badadum*, called *Ayaw*,⁴ and to a town called *Baraias*.⁵ When the deceased was carried to the said town, he kept himself busy with the same matters as he was accustomed to do here when he was alive. In the same way, the valiant and the warrior busied himself with plunder and *pangiyaw*, which means 'taking captives'. Meanwhile, if it was a laborer, he would cultivate the field; and if women, with their weaving and needlework, as here. This is how they were always occupied (in life hereafter). It seems that they copied this life, as others, from Virgil: "... quae gratia currum armorumque fuit quae cura nitentes pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos, etc"⁶ (Virgil, Aeneid, Lib. VI, vv. 653-655).

All in all, this was their heaven or their hell without elaborating upon any of it. But about heaven, even though only a few acknowledged it, they said that they always knew that it exists. The only one who lived there was *Malaon*. He is the one, as we have said before, who was acknowledged by those who knew something about the true God; such were, very few and not many. As such, they gave Him heaven as his abode. Perhaps, this was the

Dios tuvieron, heredadas, a mí ver, de algunos de los primitivos, que serían descendientes de hebreos y habrían oído algo a sus mayores de lo que dice David: "*Caelum caeli Domino... etc.*"⁷, pero todo esto ni lo creían, ni entendían, ni se hacían capaces de ello, sino que repetían como otros muchos cuentos y consejas y fábulas que oían a sus viejos y viejas, que no eran pocos. Y en otra parte diremos algo de ellas; de modo que, en lo tocante a la inmortalidad del alma y otra vida no tenían cosa cierta ni sabían; y aun lo que es más, a mi ver, ni pensaban en eso, sino sólo en vivir acá y pasar, conformándose con aquel: "*comedamus et vivamus, cras enim moriemur*,"⁸ que decían los otros de quien trata el Sabio en la Sagrada Escritura, etc.

Acerca de los espíritus malos y buenos hallo aun más fundamento para creer y entender que tuvieron más noticias de ellos que de las otras cosas de la otra vida, y a éstos llamaban *humalagar*⁹, palabra que en su lengua quiere decir "cosa que sigue y acompaña." Y, a mi ver, eran estos los que los antiguos llamaron genios; pues, en su modo de hablar y explicarse, dicen lo mismo casi que decían los antiguos de ellos; y en no poco concuerdan con los que llamamos nosotros tutelares y ángeles buenos y malos, pues en estas dos diferencias reconocían a los dichos *humalagares*, diciendo que eran dos que acompañaban siempre al hombre, uno bueno y que le hacía bien, y otro malo que le buscaba mal y desdichas; y así a éste era a quien más temían y procuraban tener propicio con algunos sacrificios a su modo, come después veremos.

Y porque en esta materia, aun entre los ministros y que saben la lengua de estos naturales, hallo alguna diferencia en entender esta palabra *humalagar*, ocasionada de que aun los mismos bisayas no la usan como debieran, y la confunden en su modo de hablar, para mayores noticias e inteligencia diré lo que he hallado entre

result, as we have already noted, of some vague ideas that they had about the true God, inherited, as I see it, from some of the primitive people who might be descendants of the Hebrews. They might have heard something too from their ancestors; something of what David uttered: *Caelum, caeli Domino, etc.*⁷ But they did not believe all this nor did they understand it, nor were they capable of it. But they repeated it as if it were one of the many stories, myths and legends which they heard from the old men and women and which were not only a few. Elsewhere, we shall say something about them. Similarly, what concerns the immortality of the soul and the life hereafter, they had nothing definite about it, nor did they know anything. What more, in my opinion, they did not even think about this except to live here only and to go about conforming to the maxim: *Comedamus et vivamus, cras enim moriemur*,⁸ as it is said of those about whom the wise man speaks in the Sacred Scriptures, etc.

Regarding the evil and good spirits, I find an even more solid basis to believe and to understand that they had a greater knowledge of these than other things about the life hereafter. These they called *humalagad*,⁹ a word which in their language means 'something that follows or goes along together'. In my way of looking at it, these were what the ancients called genie [i.e. fairies]; because in their manner of speaking and explaining them, they almost say the same thing as the ancients said about them. All this agrees, in no small way, with those Whom we call guardians and angels, good ones and evil ones. They regarded these *humalagad* as belonging to two different classes: some who were good, and accompanied a person and did good, while the others were bad and sought out evil and misfortunes for the person. Hence, it was the latter that they feared most and whom they tried to appease by means of various sacrifices, in their particular way, as we shall see afterwards.

As far as this matter is concerned, even among the ministers and those who know the language of the natives, there is some diversity in understanding this word *humalagad*. [This difficulty is even compounded] by the fact that the Bisayans themselves whom they call *humalagad*, are the souls of their deceased ancestors. These, they say, were able to help the living, and for this reason

ellos tocante al *humalagar* y el modo de entenderlo de los más entendidos en su lengua y costumbres, que no todos lo son ni saben de eso.

Hallo, pues, a muchos que dicen que estos, que llaman *humalagar*, son las almas de los difuntos sus antepasados, de las cuales decían que podían ayudar a los vivos, y per esta causa las llamaban en su ayuda y les pedían favor en sus necesidades; y como decían *cun bu-ot sa diwata*, que quiere decir, “si Dios quiere”; decían también *bu-ot san humalagar*, “si así lo quisieren las almas de mis difuntos,” etc., y, como sus sacerdotisas les solían decir cuando estaban enfermos: *Mangaraba ca sa diwata* o “pide favor a Dios”, les decían también: *Mangaraba ca sa humalagar* o “pide favor a las almas de tus difuntos”. Y a todo género de difuntos, o recién muertos o muy antiguos, siendo de sus antepasados, pedían favor; de modo que cada cual pedía, no en común a los difuntos, sino a los suyos, a sus padres, abuelos y antepasados.

Este modo de rogar a los difuntos, aunque no dudo lo usaron y usan muchos, y lo entendían así, y aun hoy, cuando están enfermos, les oímos decir muchas veces: *Pagcamataya an imo iroy*, que quiere decir: “¡Ay, madre, matadme!” que es como pedir a sus muertos que se le lleven allá consigo; y este modo de deprecación vemos que lo usan aun hoy muchos españoles que en sus dolencias piden a sus padres difuntos que les maten, etc. Con todo, me persuado que esto de aplicar a los difuntos el nombre de *humalagar* ha sido y es corruptela y confundir estos con los genios o tutelares que decíamos, pues hoy entre los más entendidos vemos que hacen diferencia, y, cuando se confiesan, que lo he reparado y no pocas veces, distinguen el pedir ayuda a los *humalagares* del pedirla a las almas de sus antepasados, haciendo diferencia de uno y otro, y entendiendo que, cuando lo piden al *humalagar*, lo piden al genio bueno o malo, y, cuando a las almas de sus difuntos, solo a sus antepasados.

they do not use it as they should and confuse it when speaking about it. For better clarity and understanding of the subject-matter, I shall relate what I have found out among them concerning this, and the manner of understanding it, as it came to me from the most learned ones who understand their language and customs. Not all of them are such, nor do they understand this.

Now then, I come across many who say that the reason they called upon them was for their assistance and sought favors from them when in need. Just as they said: *Kun buut san diwata*, which means 'If god so wills'; so too they also said: *Buut san humalagad*, which is to say, "If the souls of my deceased [ancestors] so wish it", etc. And, as their priestesses were accustomed to tell them when they were sick, *Mangaraba ka sa diwata*, that is, "Ask a favor from god"; so too they also said: *Mangaraba sa humalagad* or "Ask a favor from the souls of your deceased." They begged for favors from all sorts of dead, either recently deceased, or even dead for a long time, just as long as they were their ancestors. All this is in such a manner, that each one asked, not from the deceased in general but from his own [deceased] parents, grandparents and other forebears.

There is no doubt that they practiced this way of praying to their deceased; understood it in this manner and still do so today rather extensively. When they are ill, we often hear them repeat thus: *Pagkamataya an imu iruy*, which means to say "Oh, mother, kill me". All this is the same as if they were asking their dead to carry them off where they are. Today, even many Spaniards use this mode of imploring their deceased parents, to kill them when plagued with pain and suffering, etc. Yet, notwithstanding all this, I am convinced that this practice of applying to the deceased the word *humalagad* has been, and is, a corruption. They confuse this with the genie or the protectors, as we have already stated. Nowadays, among the more intelligent, we see that they make a distinction [i.e. between the spirits of the ancestors and the *humalagad*]. When they make their confession – I have observed it not a few times – they distinguish between asking help from the *humalagad* and requesting it from the souls of their ancestors. They understand that when they pray to *humalagad*, they are imprecating the good or evil spirits; when they seek help from the souls of the dead, it is understood that they are seeking help from their ancestors.

Y así, si miramos a la fuerza de la palabra bisaya, es cierto que no se deben entender por *humalagar* a los difuntos, de los cuales ni decían ellos ni creían que seguían a los vivos, sino que estaban, como decíamos, en el *Saad*, que eran sus Elíseos; pero que podían ayudarles desde allí, o por sí, que ni esto saben decir, o per medio de *Badadum*, que, como decíamos de sus mentiras, decían era el que gobernaba lo sublunar, y a éste pedían los difuntos ayudase a sus hijos.

Pero la palabra *humalagar* sale de otra que quiere decir “seguir a otro” que es *agar*¹⁰; y de aquí *alagar*¹¹, que es palabra y significación griega-hebrea.

Lllaman al criado porque sigue a su amo: *agarun*; al amo a quien sigue, y de aquí *umalagar*, “el que va siguiendo a otro”; y de este *umalagar* decían lo que nosotros de los Custodios, que seguían siempre al hombre desde que nació; y así dicen en su lengua que era *Dun gan sa pagcatauo*, o “que nacía junto con el hombre”, porque de hecho decían de algunos de ellos que nacían de un parto con el niño; de otros, que se lo señalaban al nacer.

Y por esto llamaban *umalagar* a unas culebras que nacían con el niño de un parto y le acompañaban todo su vida. De los muy valientes en su antigüedad solían decir que tenían *umalagar* que les ayudaba; y porque no se entienda que esto era ficción, solamente diré lo que he oído de sus antigüedades, y oído y visto en estos tiempos.

Es cosa constante entre estas naturales por su tradición de padres a hijos, y lo oímos en sus cantares antiguos, que estos son sus historias y anales, que antiguamente nacía con algunos de los hijos varones (de hombres no se dice), una culebra que se criaba siempre mansa y no lejos de la casa de los padres, y que seguía al niño cuando salía de su casa y le acompañaba dondequiera que

So, if we reflect on the force of the Bisayan word *humalagad*, it is clear that by it is not meant their deceased. About the latter, they never say or even believe that these followed the living, but that they dwelled, as we have said, in the *saad*; these were their Elysian Fields, (as we have already stated). Now, how could they [i.e. the souls] help them from there, either by themselves or through *Badadum*, they could not explain. As we have already said about their deceptions, he [i.e. *Badadum*] is the one who governed everything that was found beneath the moon; it was from him that the deceased begged assistance for their children.

However, the word *humalagad* is derived from another which means 'to follow another'; this, in turn, is *agar*.¹⁰

Then again, the latter comes from the term *alagar*,¹¹ which is a word of Graeco-Hebrew origin. A servant is so called because he follows his master; *agarun* is the master whom the servant is called to follow. Once again, from the latter is derived the term *humalagad* which means 'he who follows another'. About this *humalagad*, they said what we say about the guardians, who always follow one from the moment of one's birth. Therefore, they say in their language: *Dungan sa pagkatawu*, which means 'that he was born together with the person'. As a matter of fact, they said about some of them that they were born in a single delivery with the child; about others, that these were appointed or assigned to them at birth.

Hence, this is the reason why they gave the name *humalagad* to some snakes which were born with a child during a delivery; these [snakes] kept close company with such a one throughout the lifetime. About the very brave [individuals] in their antiquity they were wont to say that these had such an *humalagad* to help them. So that this may not be understood as mere fiction, I shall only relate what I have heard about their ancient times and heard and seen in these times.

It is a well-established fact among these natives, as a result of tradition which is passed on from father to son, and which we have also heard in their ancient songs – for these, are their histories and annals – that in times past there was born with some of their male children (nothing is said about the females) a serpent.

iba, y mucho más en siendo grandes y valientes, que todos los que nacían con culebra decían lo eran, acompañándoles siempre en sus *pangaiao*, que eran sus guerras y robos; y era de modo que, cuando iban embarcados, como solían y veremos después, se embarcaba con ellos y era como paje de armas, pues embestía cuando peleaba su hermano de vientre y le ayudaba a pelear, causando no poco miedo en los embestidos o enemigos, y debiendo a la ayuda de dichas culebras muchas de sus hazañas y victorias y la cantidad de esclavos qua cogían en otras partes y traían a sus pueblecillos y *gamoros*, que así les llamaban.

Y no cuentan de uno solo y en una parte casos semejantes sino de varios en diferentes pueblos, islas y tiempos; y en esto no tienen ellos duda alguna, sino que dicen era realmente así, y que sucedió no pocas veces en su antigüedad (así lo he oído yo en varios cantares suyos antiguos, y que enseñan las padres a sus hijos con más cuidado que el rezo o las oraciones, que por ser difíciles de entender, como dije, los entienden pocos de los europeos, y así de los ministros, pues es menester estudio particular para entenderlos y flema aun para oírlos, porque son prolijos).

Añadiré lo que he visto y oído, y me ha quitado mucha de la duda que en este particular tenía antes, y dejé para este lugar de industria el contarlo, y fue que, estando yo en el pueblo de Borongan¹², de que ya hemos hecho mención, y haremos más, me dijeron cómo habían venido a vivir a dicho pueblo de Calbiga¹³, que está en la contra-costa de la isla de Ibabao y en la parte que llaman Samar, dos o tres casados parientes, y que la mujer del uno de ellos había parido, junto con el hijuelo, una culebra de las que vamos diciendo.

No fue necesario enviarlos a buscar, como yo quise, porque vinieron a verme el padre y madre, marido y mujer, de quien se decía el parto. Informéme despacio y vi al niño, que, cuando me

It grew up tame, crept about near the house of the parents and followed wherever the child went. This was even all the more so when such children grew up and became brave – for they said that all who were born with a serpent were so – for these always accompanied them on their *pangiyaw*, that is their wars and depredations. It happened that when these were on board a vessel, as they were accustomed to, and as we shall see later, [the serpent] too went along with them and acted as if their armor-bearer, joining them in combat when its uterine brother fought and helped him in the struggle, causing no little fear to the ones being attacked or the enemy. The assistance of these snakes was responsible for many of their feats of prowess, victories and increased the numbers of slaves whom they captured in various places and brought to their little towns and *gamurus*, as they called them.

They relate not only about one such occurrence which has happened in one particular place, but about several in different *pueblos*, islands and times. About these matters they have no doubts whatsoever; for they say that it was really so, that it happened not a few times in the ancient past. In like manner, I have heard it in several of their ancient songs, which the parents teach to their children with greater diligence than prayers and supplications. [These songs] are difficult to understand, as I said, and only a few Europeans and ministers understand them, because a specialized study is demanded in order to grasp them and even a lot of patience to listen to them, since they are so lengthy.

I shall add what I have seen and heard, since this had moved me to put away many of my doubts which I entertained about this matter. Intentionally, I decided to relate it here at this particular point. This happened when I was in the town of *Borongan*,¹² of which we have already made mention and will do so again; there they told me how two or three couples, who were relatives, had come to live in *Calbiga*,¹³ which is the opposite coast of the island of Ibabaw and in the region which they call Samar. The wife of one of them had given birth, along with an infant son, to a snake of the kind we are speaking about.

It was not necessary to send for them, as I have intended, since the father and mother, husband and wife, about whom the delivery was reported, came to see me. They related the episode to me in

lo trajeron, tendría un año, poco más a menos, y andaba ya; que por acá a los nueve meses suelen comenzar a hacerlo, y era, para indio, muy bonito.

Preguntéles si era verdad que con aquel niño había nacido una culebra, el tamaño de ella y lo demás que me pareció, a que me respondió la misma madre, delante de otros muchos (que unos habían oído el caso y otros no), lo siguiente: “Sabrás dijo, Padre, que habiendo yo parido en el pueblo de Calbiga a este niño, nacido él, sentí que tenía aun cosa viva en la barriga, pues se meneaba; díjeselo a la partera que me asistía y a mi madre que estaba presente, y, haciendo ellas su oficio, eché una culebra del tamaño del dedo índice y de más de palmo y medio de larga, desde la cabeza hasta el medio cuerpo colorada, de medio abajo negra, pero relucientes todas las escamas.

“Así como la vi, tuve miedo y di un grito, y aun me aparté del lugar donde estaba. Nadie se atrevió a echarle mano, y así se caló por entre las rendijas del suelo (que ya hemos dicho son de cañas o *bahe*, partidos y amarrados; y en estas ocasiones, por las inmundicias que acompañan a los partos, no les ponen las esteras que suelen en sus camas), y todos comenzaron a decir que era *omalagar*, y que mi hijo sería valiente y bien afortunado.

“No vi en aquel día ni el siguiente a la culebra, que luego se escondió en la espesura y malezas de cerca la casa; pero, yendo al tercer día a dar de mamar a este niño, hallé la dicha culebra a su lado y tendida en el *baha* (así llaman a un género de cunas que suelen hacer o de cañas o de bejuco, a que suelen llamar también *duian*, cuando es mayor). Tuve miedo y sacudila, con que se cayó abajo, y de esta manera la topé no pocas veces, y algunas, cuando yo me quedaba dormida con mi hijuelo en el regazo, hallaba en él a mi culebra enroscada, y siempre al lado del niño, hasta que viéndome perseguida de ella, temerosa porque nunca me he

great detail and I saw the child who, when they brought to me, was about a year old, more or less and already walking about. Here they ordinarily begin to walk at nine months. He was very comely taking into account that he was a native.

I made an inquiry whether it was true that together with the child a snake had also been born; I also asked about its size and some other matters that occurred to me. To this, the mother herself answered me in the presence of many people (for some had heard of the case while others did not) in the following manner: "*Padre*, you must know," she said, "that after I had delivered this child in the town of Calbiga, I felt that I still had something living in the womb, since something was moving about. I called the attention of the midwife assisting me and of my mother who was then present. With their help I was able to expel a snake which was about the size of an index finger and more than a *palmo* and a half in length. It was reddish in color from the head to the middle of its body, and from its middle down, it was black and with very shiny scales.

"As soon as I caught sight of it, I screamed out loud; terribly afraid I ran away from the place where I was. Since no one dared to get hold of it, it got away between the slats of the flooring; (for as we have already said, these are made of split and bound bamboo called *bahi*). On such occasions by reason of the impurities [i.e. afterbirth] which accompany the birth, it was not customary to lay out their mats in their houses the usual way. Everyone about began to say that it was a *humalagad* and that my son would be valiant and extremely fortunate.

"I did not see the serpent for the rest of the day nor even on the following day; it must have hid itself in the thicket and underbrush near the house. On the third day, however, while going to breast-feed the child, I found the snake at his side lying on the *baha* (for this is what they call a kind of a cradle which they are accustomed to make either of rattan or bamboo. When it is larger, they call it *duyan*). Frightened again, I shook it out and it fell below somewhere. I came upon it like this several times. Sometimes when I happened to fall asleep with my child at my bosom, I found the snake curled up at the side of the child. Finally, seeing that I was so plagued by it everywhere, and fearful because I could never

podido vencer el tocarla, aunque ella da ocasiones para ello, nos hemos mudado acá por huir dicha culebra. Veamos si nos sigue acá lejos.”

Esto me contó la dicha mujer, que confirmó su marido y madre, que ambos y el niño estaban juntos allí, sin otra mucha gente que oyeron lo referido.

Preguntéles si habían visto rastros en el camino, después de haber llegado, de dicha culebra, y me respondieron que no; pero que otros que después de ellos habían salido de su casa, que estaba en lo más lejos del río de Calbiga, que llaman *iraya*, la habían visto en su dicha casa dos o tres días después que ellos habían salido de ella, y que parece buscaba al niño que echaba de menos.

Esto me contaron los dichos, que concuerda con lo que ellos cuentan de sus antigüedades; y es cosa muy sin duda entre ellos, y yo la tuve menos después que vi al dicho niño y oí a su madre todo lo referido.

Qué género de culebras sea éste, cuál la causa eficiente que las produce en las entrañas, de qué y cómo se conservan dentro del vientre y fuera de él, del instinto de buscar a su hermano de vientre, llamémosle así, de seguirle y acompañarle, como ellos cuentan, en sus guerras, y todas las demás circunstancias, discurren los filósofos las causas, que yo no me atreveré a dar razón natural de algunas de ellas; y si hubo o no algo en que concurra el demonio para engañarles por este camino, ni ellos la saben decir, ni es fácil conjeturar. Lo cierto es, como vimos, que en esta mujer no hubo voluntad ni cooperación a ello; y, pues huyó, señal es que no consintió en pacto o beneplácito.

En qué paró no lo he podido averiguar después, porque no apunté entonces los nombres de los padres y del hijo, que sin ellos no se pudo hacer diligencia competente. Y esto baste en cuanto al dicho *omalagar*, que de los sacrificios que les hacían trataremos en los capítulos siguientes.

get myself to touch it, even though I had many opportunities to do so, we moved here to get away from this serpent. Let us see if it follows us here, at such a distance (I said to myself)."

This is what the woman related to me, and her husband and mother confirmed it, since they were there together along with many other people who heard what has been related.

I had asked if they had seen any traces of the snake on the road after they had arrived [from Borongan]; they answered that they did not. Others, however, who had left their dwellings after them, which was located in the most remote part of the Calbiga River, which they call *irayas* – had seen it in their said house two or three days after they had left it. It seems that it must have been searching for the child, whose absence it noticed.

This is what was told to me by these [individuals] and it agrees with what they relate in their ancient traditions. About all this they have not the slightest doubt; I too, after having seen the said child and having listened to all that the mother reported, began to doubt a little less.

What species of snakes could these be, what is the efficient cause which produced them in the womb, in what way and by what means were these preserved within and then outside of the womb; this instinct for seeking its uterine brother – let us call it so – of following him [as they relate], and accompanying him in his wars and of all those other circumstances, let the philosophers discuss its causes. I shall not dare to forward a natural explanation about these matters. Also, I do not know whether or not there was any diabolic intervention to deceive them in this manner. They themselves do not know how to explain it, nor is it easy to find out. It is certain, as we have seen that in this woman there was no will or cooperation with him. And since she fled, it seems to be a sign that she did not consent to any pact of agreement [with Satan].

I have not been able to determine the final outcome, because at that time I failed to jot down the names of the parents and the child; without them, no fitting investigation could have been made. Let this suffice as far as this *humalagad* is concerned, because about the sacrifices that they made to them, we shall treat in the succeeding chapters.

Chapter 12

ANNOTATIONS

[1] It seems that this segment of Alcina's *Historia* was being penned ca. 1635-1640 which makes it some sixty years or bit more. His project began with a preliminary draft as early as 1634 when Alcina was assigned to Borongan, Samar after his ordination in Cebu. The Jesuit missions were opened in Leyte in 1595 and in Samar a year later.

[2] *Importune* or *opportune*. A Latin phrase: "...be it in times opportune or inopportune."

[3] *Saad*. The word *saad* basically means: a promise; it also refers how to come to terms with a price or payment or a day of delay; e.g. on a suitable day we shall see each other. *Pagsaad* or *takga*: to forsee, to prophesay. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.*

[4] *Ayaw* is a more proper spelling and means: that which is full, complete and perfect. *Ginayaw* would mean 'that which was made complete'. *Ibid.*

[5] *Baraias*. Perhaps, this Bisayan word is misspelled or just truly a name of a place in the subterranean regions. The closest term to it is *balios* or *barios*: where two or more walking on different roads go searching for one another. *Ibid.*

[6] A Latin citation.

[...] *quae gratia currum armorumque fuit quae cura nitentes pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos, etc.*" (Virgilio, *Aeneidos*, Lib. VI, vv. 653-655)

[7] *Caelum, caeli Domino, etc.* Latin Scripture words cited, perhaps, from I Kings, 8:27: "Can it indeed be that God dwells among people on earth? If the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain you how much less this temple which I have built!"

[8] *Comedamus et vivamus, cras enim moriemur*. Seemingly a Latin Scripture citation from, perhaps, I Corinthians 15:32 – "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die!"

[9] *Humalagar. Humalagad*. The term has its basis in the words *agad* and *alagad* (*alaragad*): to follow another. *Humalagad*: is to follow a person as the servant the master; *lagdun mo an Padre. Alagdun ta si Jesus an Dios, etc.* This *agad* has some seven different meanings in the entry; that last of which refers to *umalagad*: it is said of the relative/s of the witches, from they know something. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.*

[10] *Agar*. Same as *agad* in the annotation [9] above.

[11] *Alagar*. The same as *alagad*, cited above and *alaragad*.

[12] *Borongan*. Borongan is an ancient town situated on the eastern coast of Samar called in olden times Ibabaw. The name of the *pueblo* is derived from the Bisayan term *burong*: which means a mist, fog or vapor which rises from its two rivers. *Ibid*. Today Borongan is the capital of the province of Eastern Samar.

[13] *Calbiga*. This *pueblo* of Calbiga is situated on the western coast of Samar, on Maqueda Bay with Catbalogan to the north and Villareal, in ancient times known as Umauas, to the south. Situated then in the Western Samar. Catbalogan is the provincial capital. The diocese is in Calbayog City.