

Capítulo 10

DE LAS DIFERENCIAS Y TAMAÑOS DE EMBARCACIONES QUE TENÍAN Y SU LIGEREZA; DE SUS REMOS Y MODOS DE NAVEGAR, ETC.

Comenzando, pues, por las menores embarcaciones de que usaron antiguamente, y usan hoy, y que son las más ordinarias entre ellos, más necesarias y más acomodadas a su modo de vivir, son las que llaman acá *baloto*, y en las Indias Occidentales, *canoas*.

Estas son de un palo entero, socabadas por lo interior, labradas por lo exterior al modo competente para navegar con ellas, y de tantos y tan varios tamaños y aun nombres, que cada cual tiene el suyo propio, que son casi sin número.

Háylas tan pequeñas que, como dijimos, se las lleva el indio a su casa cargadas al hombro, y, con ser tales, navegan con ellas aun los mares de *Ibabao* que, como dijimos, son las mayores olas y de mayor tumbo de estas Islas; que cierto es cosa maravillosa y casi increíble ver andar uno de estos barotillos, con uno o dos hombres, como una pelota saltando sobre las holas del mar; y, aunque no pocas veces se las llena de agua, con los mismos remos que llaman *bugsay*, de que después trataremos, las alijan y sacan el agua con notable facilidad; y, si es necesario, se echan al agua y nadan hasta que le sacan toda el agua y, se vuelven a embarcar; cosa que a mi me ha sucedido en dichos mares de *Ibabao* algunas veces, yendo por la prisa de algunas partes a otras con algunos

Chapter 10

CONCERNING THE DIFFERENCES AND THE DIMENSIONS OF THE SHIPS THEY HAD; THEIR SWIFTNESS, THEIR OARS AND MANNER OF NAVIGATION

We shall begin, then, with the smallest vessels that they used in ancient times and still do so today. The most common among them, the most necessary, the most appropriate for their mode of living are those which they call here *balutu* and in Occidental India, [West Indies] *canoas*.

These are of a single log hollowed out on the inside and shaped on the outside in a manner suitable for sailing with them. There are so many types and varied sizes, and even names. Each one has its own and they are almost innumerable.

There are some so small that the native, as we have said, carried them to his house upon his shoulders. In spite of this, they sail them even in the seas of Ibabao, which as we have said have the greatest waves and the largest breakers in these islands. It is certainly a remarkable and almost unbelievable thing to see one of these little *balutu*, with one or two men moving along like a ball bouncing over the waves of the sea. Although they fill with water frequently, with the very oars, which they call *bugsay*, and which we shall treat later, they lighten the cargo and bail out the water with remarkable ease. If it is necessary, they jump into the water and swim until they get all the water out and then they embark again. This thing has happened to me on occasions in these seas of Ibabao while traveling in haste from one place to another with

de estos *balotos*, aunque mayores, y que llevan doce o más indios de boga, que ellos llaman *bariga* que, viniendo un golpe de mar, se llena de agua y hunde, aunque por el contrapeso de los *cates* que dijimos, no se van a pique; y, echándose toda la gente a la mar, quedándole yo dentro solo, y tal vez con el agua hasta la garganta, muy bien mojado y sumergido, le sacaban toda el agua en mitad de la mar y se volvían a embarcar, y luego proseguíamos nuestro viaje que, a no ser los indios tan grandes nadadores que igualan a los peces en ésto, fuera mucho más arriesgado, aunque no lo es poco este modo con que por acá navegamos con embarcaciones tales.

Ya dijimos hacerse también de este género de embarcaciones o *balotos*, algunas muy capaces, aunque de solo un palo o tronco, socabado al modo dicho, tales que son capaces de muchos remeros por banda; y, aunque comúnmente son de poca carga por ser bajas de bordo, son muy ligeras, porque verdaderamente hay algunos oficiales, *pandaies* los llaman acá (y es nombre generico para todos los oficios) que las sacan tan bien dispuestas y de tan lindo gálibo que ellas mismas están diciendo que son como saetas. Mas abajo diremos de su ligereza en general y particular.

También es género de *balotos* los que ya dijimos llamarse *tilimbao*, y que llevan, además del dicho *baloto* grande, añadidas una, o dos, o tres tablas, añadidas en cada bordo, con que se fabrican estos *tilimbaos* de más porte y más a propósito para carga.

Este género de embarcaciones es más ordinario en la isla de Bohol¹, en que no pocos, en lugar de tablas echan cortezas de árboles que llaman *upac*² o *dagpac*, que hay muchas al propósito; y, desollando todo un tronco de su corteza, estando aún fresca y recién sacada, la arrollan, sacando lo de dentro para afuera y atan, así, arrollada, bien hasta que se seca, y entonces la extienden y viene a quedar como una tabla de dos y tres y a veces más palmos de ancho, y largo lo que tiene el *baloto*, en cuyo bordo la clavan con clavillos de cama, poniéndole un bejuco partido por medio por ribete, y sirve juntamente para fortaleza dicha corteza, apretándola al bordo, y para asegurar los clavos que se hincan en mitad de dicho bejuco, con lo cual puede un balotillo bien

one of these *balutu*. But these were larger and carried twelve or more natives as rowers whom they call *bariga*. When the sea struck a blow, the vessel filled with water and foundered but because of the counterbalance of the *katig*, as we have said, it did not capsize. Everyone threw himself into the sea, leaving me alone in the vessel, perhaps with water up to my throat, very well soaked and submerged. In the middle of the ocean they bailed out all the water and got into the vessel again. Then we proceeded on our journey. If the natives were not equal to the fish as swimmers, there would be much greater risk than this. However, the danger is not negligible in this manner of sailing with these vessels.

We have already related how this kind of vessel, or *balutu*, is made; some of them of large capacity even though of a single log or trunk are hollowed out in the manner mentioned, these are large enough for a crew of many rowers. Although they have little cargo capacity because the sides are low in the water, they are very light. This is because there are some artisans, *panday* as they call them here (this is a generic term for all crafters) who make them so graceful and of such elegant lines that they say of them that they are like arrows. Below we shall speak of their lightness in general and particular.

There is also a variety of *balutu* which we have already said are called *tilimbaw*. More than the large *balutu*, they carry in addition one or two planks attached to each side. Therefore, these *tilimbaw* are rendered of greater capacity and are more suitable for cargo.

This type of vessel is very common in the Island of *Bohol*¹ where quite a few they place, instead of planks, the bark of the trees which they call *upak*² or *dagpak* which are plentiful for this purpose. They strip a complete trunk of its bark while it is still green and recently cut down. They roll it up inside out and tie it up tightly rolled, leaving it until it dries. They spread it out and it becomes flat like a board of two, and sometimes more, *palmos* in width and the same length as the *balutu*. They fasten this to the side of the ship with little nails of bamboo fastening a rattan split in half as an edging. This rattan serves to strengthen this bark pressing it to the side and to hold the nails which are placed in the middle of this rattan. The result is that a little *balutu*

pequeño, aunque los hacen largos, tan levantado de bordo, que es capaz de mucha carga, yendo lo más ordinario (véase cada día por acá) la mitad de dicha corteza dentro del agua y la mitad fuera de ella; cosa que causa no poca admiración, pues muchas de dichas cortezas no exceden en lo grueso al canto de un real de a ocho, y con todo son tan tenaces y fuertes que sirven del modo dicho y muchos días, siéndoles un ahorro muy grande este de las *opac*, o *dagpac*, puestos en los *balotos* al modo dicho; y no admira menos el que sin brea, ni otro betún, no hacen agua alguna. Tan bien como esto las clavan, y con solo cañas que resisten las mares y sus olas sin rasgarse, que es cosa bien singular.

Y, yendo de *minore ad maius*³ en las que son verdaderamente embarcaciones labradas con arte, la menor de todas es la que llaman *balasian*⁴. Es de poco porte y más les sirve para ir a ligera de unas partes a otras, cuando van a sus fiestas y convites de cerca, que para carga; si bien también cargan arroz y otros géneros en ellas, añadiéndoles las *upas*, que decíamos, de corteza de árboles, con que agrandan aun embarcacioncillas mucho menores, por ser cosa muy socorrida para ellos, fácil de poner, y, añadiendo – y es lo mejor que tiene ésta *upak*, – poco peso al casco, añade mucho espacio para poder cargar; y aun encima de la *opac*, cuando se ven cargados en demasía, añaden de ojas de palma, que es otro medio fácil con que remedian y levantan sus embarcaciones menores; uno que llaman *dalupi*⁵, hecho de dichas hojas todo alrededor del navío; que, aunque de cosa tan delgada como una hoja delgada, y encajadas unas con otras, les añaden una como tabla por lo ancho, bastante a resistir las marejadas ordinarias, aunque no los golpes de mar recios; que para ellos, ni el *dalupi* ni la *opac*, *dagpac*, dichas son bastantes.

*Barangay*⁶ llaman a la que va creciendo ya en tamaño y talle; y estas embarcaciones, llamadas así, son las más ligeras que se usaban, y usan, por acá entre estos naturales. Lábranse sobre quilla cuadrada, añadiéndole sus tablas por banda, con que quedan bajas de bordo y a propósito para remar, como usan siempre en los dichos *barangayes*, con remos pequeños o cortos, que ellos llaman *bugsay*⁷, de que ya dijimos la hechura arriba y que son de

(although they make them long) has sides sufficiently raised so that it is capable of carrying much cargo. Usually it travels (it can be seen here any day) with half of this bark under the water and half out of it, a sight which causes no little wonder, for many of these bark sides do not exceed in thickness the width of a piece of eight. Nevertheless, they are so tough and strong that they serve in this manner and for many days. These *upak* or *dagpak* placed on the *balutu* in this manner are a very great saving. No less remarkable is the fact that without tar or any other coating they do not take any water whatever. This is how well they are fastened and with only the bamboo which resist the seas and their waves without splintering. This is a very remarkable matter.

Moving along from *minore ad maius*³ among those which are truly vessels fashioned with skill, the smallest of all is one which they call *balasian*.⁴ It is of slight capacity and is used especially to travel quickly from one place to another when the natives go to their celebrations and feasting too close to require any supplies. However, they carry rice and other kinds of things in them by adding the *upak*. These we said were of bark of trees with which they enlarged even the very smallest of their vessels because it was a very necessary thing for them, easy to put on and is the most suitable. This *upak* adds a little weight to the hull and much space to carry cargo. However, even on top of the *upak*, when they find themselves overloaded, they add palm leaves. This is another easy means by which they change and raise the sides of their smaller ships. It is a process which they call *dalupi*⁵ it is done with these leaves placed all around the vessel. Although this is a device as thin as a folded leaf and with one enclosed in another, it furnishes something like a board wide enough to resist the lesser movement of the waves but not the blows of heavy seas. Against these, neither the *dalupi* nor the *upak*, *dagpak* are sufficient.

Barangay,⁶ is what they call the next larger in size and proportion. The vessels bearing this name are the lightest that were used and are still being utilized by these natives here. They are rebuilt upon a square keel, adding boards for the side. They are completed with low sides suitable for rowing; they always use rowers in these *barangay* with small or short oars which they call *bugsay*.⁷ We have mentioned above how these were made, and

cinco o seis palmos de largo; la pala del remo como una pala de horno, aunque puntiaguda con proporción, no rema. Tendrá la pala como dos palmos de largo y uno de ancho, ensanchando hasta un palmo con proporción hasta medio palmo, o poco más, de la punta; que de allí abajo van angostando, y lo mismo para arriba hasta dichos dos palmos; y después son rollizos los palos, del tamaño de una caña ordinaria que, por hacerlos de madera gruesa y correosa, no se quiebran con facilidad. Pónenles en la parte superior un travesaño del mismo tamaño del brazo, de un *geme* de largo, que sirve para empuñarlos por allí, encajando en dicho atravesaño la una mano, como se suele en las muletas o palas de aventar trigo por allá, y la otra en lo que está inmediato a la pala dicha, que por ésto le hacen redondo, y todo ello es de una pieza, labrando cada cual su *bugsay* a su gusto. Es modo de remo mañero, que coge mucha agua y da buen impulso a la embarcación: y, como con estos remos se navega mirando a la proa, es más connatural el impulso que con los otros remos más largos, que los gobiernan como en las embarcaciones de Europa, estando las espaldas vueltas a la proa y los rostros a la popa; al contrario de los que usan de estos *bugseyes*.

Y ya que tratamos de los remos, pongamos las otras diferencias de que usan estos naturales. *Gaor*⁸ llaman a los que sirven en las embarcaciones mayores y bordos más altos. Su hechura es una tabla redonda, circular, mayor que un plato ordinario. A estas amarran un palo rollizo, de largor competente, a lo alto de la embarcación, y, amarrándoles en los bordos, aunque no con toletes, como es nuestras embarcaciones, sino con unos palos que atraviesan, arrimados al bordo, levantándolos de la parte que mira a la popa y bajándolos de la otra, con que están enhiestos, y en ellos arriman dichos *gaores*, con que es fácil su movimiento y hace más impulso, porque no puede deslizar hacia arriba, con que toda la fuerza cae por bajo.

No usan jamás ir dos ni más hombres al remo en un remo, sino cada uno lleva el suyo. Y es cosa de no poca admiración a los que lo ven al principio ver a estos indios, que están remando un día de sol a sol, y dos y muchos, según es distante el término, siempre con el mismo tesón y fuerza, comiendo muy modera-

how they are from five to six *palmos* long. The blade of the oar is like a shovel for an oven but narrowing to a point, not rounded. The blade will have about two *palmos* of length and one of width. It widens proportionately to about a *palmo* at a point about half a *palmo*, or a little more, from the tip. From there on down it grows narrower. The same occurs above up to the two *palmos* length mentioned. From thereon the sticks are rounded to the size of ordinary bamboo. Since these are made of thick tough wood, they do not break easily. At the upper end they fasten on a cross piece of the same size as an arm and a *jeme* in length. This is used to grasp it, closing one hand around this crosspiece as is customary in the crutches or shovels for moving wheat over there in Spain. The other hand is placed at a point next to the blade. For the purpose they make this part round and the whole is of one piece; each one makes his *bugsay* to his own taste. It is a skillful kind of oar which takes a lot of water and gives a strong push to the vessel. Since these oars propel the ship facing the prow, the stroke is more suitable than with other larger oars which they manipulate, as in the vessels of Europe, with the shoulders turned to the prow and the faces to the stern, in contrary manner to those who use these *bugsay*.

Since we are dealing with oars, we will set down the other differences in the practices of these natives. They call those which they use in the larger vessels and on the top deck, *gaut*.⁸ Their form is a round circular board, larger than an ordinary plate. To these they fasten a cylindrical pole long enough to reach the top of the vessel. They fasten these onto the sides, although not with *toletes* as in our ships, but with some poles which they cross and tie to the sides raising them at the part that faces the stern and lowering at the other so that they are raised. On these they fasten these *gaut* so that they move easily and have a greater push to them because they cannot come loose in an upward direction. As a result, the entire force is exerted below.

They never have two or more men at the oar; rather, each one has his own. It is a matter of wonderment to those who see these natives for the first time rowing an entire day from sun up to sun-down, and the next, and many more, according to the length of the journey, always with the same energy and force. They eat

damente y descansando poco: que parece nacieron para este ministerio, en especial los playeros y que se crían con este ejercicio; que los de los montes a breve rato se cansan y se paran sin poder pasar adelante.

Tanto como ésto importa el criarse desde pequeños en este ejercicio, necesario a los playeros y forzoso siempre, pues aun los muchachitos muy pequeños lo usan, haciéndoles sus padres remos proporcionados a sus fuerzas.

A otro modo de remos, que imita totalmente a los nuestros, llaman *gaiong*. Son largos y de una pieza, y su hechura como los remos de los bergantines de España. Apáñanse mal con ellos nuestros bisayas; y, aunque hay algunas partes más hacia Poniente, donde los usan, hoy entre estos raro es el que los usa, porque cogen poca agua y el impulso es menos. Y como ellos, cuando se embarcan a sus solas, suelen ser pocos, pues tal vez se embarcan en embarcaciones bien capaces tres indios solos, con uno o dos *gaores*, hacen más que hicieran seis de los dichos *gaiong*. Fuera de que es mucho más fácil de hacer sin *gaor*, pues, como dijimos, a un palo tosco y entero que, cuanto mucho, lo descortezan, amarran las tablillas redondas que dijimos, con que hasta los muchachos saben hacer, y los *gaiong* se han de labrar despacio, y escoger madera correosa, aunque ésta no falta por acá, y tan buena como la de Europa, y estos naturalmente se van a lo que les cuesta menos trabajo.

En tercer lugar entran las embarcaciones que ellos llaman *biroc*⁹. Son de bordos más altos y que son más a propósito para cargar; y, aunque eran comúnmente de poco porte los que ellos usaban, después que están acá los españoles los hacen mucho mayores, pues con ellos antiguamente, cuando aun no había tantos champanes (ya dijimos son navío de la China; en otro lugar diremos su hechura y porte, que son muy distintos de los nuestros) llevaban a sus dueños, los encomenderos, los géneros que los pagaban de tributo, que, como veremos en la *Segunda Parte*, era arroz, mantas y cera y aun mucho vino de la tierra. Y yo me acuerdo haber alcanzado algunos *birocos* tan grandes como las sahetias del Mar Mediterráneo, y de no menos carga que ellos, llevando estos de ventaja el usar de remos que aquellas

very moderately and rest little, and it seems that they were born to this task, especially the seamen who grow up in this undertaking. Those from the mountains tire in a short while and stop without being able to move at all.

This is the importance the fisherman being raised from childhood in this necessary and always required activity. Even the very small boys practice doing it, and their fathers make oars for them in proportion to their strength.

Another class of oars, completely patterned on ours, they call *gayung*. They are long and of one piece, and they are shaped like the oars of the brigantines of Spain. Our Bisayans are poorly acquainted with them, and although there are some places more toward the west where they use them, today one rarely finds a native who uses them because they take very little water and the thrust is less. For when they travel by themselves, they are few in number. Perhaps three natives are traveling alone in a rather large vessel. With one or two *gaut* they accomplish more than six of them might do with these *gayung*. Moreover, it is very much easier to make a *gaut*, for as we have said, it is of one piece of rough, solid wood. To the part that they strip of bark they fasten the plate-like pieces of wood, as we have said, which even the boys know how to make. The *gayung* have to be fashioned slowly, and tough wood must be selected although, this is plentiful here and is as good as that of Europe. These natives naturally take to whatever costs them the least work.

In the third category are set down the vessels which they call *biruk*.⁹ They have higher sides and are more useful for cargo. Although the ones they used to have ordinarily were of small capacity, after the coming of the Spaniards, they made them much larger. In ancient times when there were not yet so many *champanes* – as we have already said, that they are ships from China; elsewhere we will relate their shape and capacity which are very different from ours – they carried in them to their masters, the *encomenderos*, the goods that they paid them as tribute. This, as we shall see in the *Second Part* [of this *Historia*] was rice, blankets, grain and even much wine from the land. I remember having known some *biruk* as large as the *sahetias* of the Mediterranean Sea, with no less capacity for cargo. They are propelled

no usan, con que facilitaban más sus viajes. Ya usan poco de estas embarcaciones al presente por ser más en cantidad los champanes dichos y más al propósito para cargar, como diremos en su lugar, con que solo hacen hoy cuál o cuál de los menores para sus tratos y contratos entre sí.

*Caracoa*¹⁰ es otra embarcación que usaban, y usan hoy, y viene a corresponder a los bergantines de España, aunque de estas es más la hechura por la cantidad de “*darambas*” que dijimos, de “*cates*” y “*burutlanes*” que llevan, y para estas Islas son los mejores navichuelos, o embarcaciones, y los más a propósito para armadas; que de ellos usaban estos en su antigüedad cuando, infieles, salían a robar a las otras islas enemigas; que, como veremos, todas eran, y parecen, unas galeras pequeñas, como dijimos. Tienen más que ellas el poder llevar tres o cinco órdenes de remos. Y así es al presente en las armadas que con nombre de su Majestad y a sus expensas se hacen, en que siendo la boga y manejo de indios, es la guarnición y gente de guerra de españoles, y con ellas se navega con más comodidad, dejando que pescan mucho menos agua que por allá con las galeras y bergantines, por poderse entoldar todas con las “*cayanes*” que dijimos ya; si bien no se niegue la verdad: hoy son ya mucho más pesadas las que se hacen por disposición de los españoles, pues, por añadirles más comodidad, las hacen de más peso y volumen; y así las de los indios nuestros enemigos, que las hacen siempre a su modo, como las hacían estos cuando eran solos, se ríen de las nuestras, pues con su ligereza se transponen: y en la mar, sino es por alguna contingencia rara, nunca les dan palmada, porque es tanta su diferencia como el vuelo de un gavián al de una gallina, jugando estos nombres a lo trocado.

Estas diferencias de embarcaciones usaban en su antigüedad, y usan aún hoy, que labran muy bien, excediendo de esta arte los indios bisayas a todos los demás de estas islas, pues parece que nacen todos ellos carpinteros o *pandaies*, que llaman acá. Y así, aun en las fábricas de nuestros galeones, que son continuas en

advantageously by the use of oars, which they do not carry in the Mediterranean, and so make their travel easier. At present, they use very few of these vessels because of the larger number of *champanes* which are more adapted for cargo, which we shall tell about in its place. Therefore, today they only make whatever number there are of the smaller ones for dealings and trade among themselves.

*Karakua*¹⁰ is another vessel which they used to have and still do today. It closely resembles the brigantines of Spain, although the former is larger in size because of the quantity of *daramba*, as we said, of *katig* and *burutlanes* which they carry. For these islands they are the best ships or vessels and the most suitable for war fleets. These people used them in ancient times when, as infidels, they went out to plunder other enemy islands, as we shall see all of the islands were accustomed. They look like small galleons, as we have said. More than these latter, they have the capacity to carry three or five rows of oars; this is the case at present in the war fleets which are built in the name of His Majesty and at His expense. On these the rowers and hands are natives and the garrison and fighters are Spaniards. With these one can travel in much more comfort, aside from the fact that they displace much less water, than with galleons and brigantines over there. This is because they are able to cover the entire ship with the *cayang*, as we have already said. However, the truth cannot be denied that today those made by the order of the Spaniards are very much heavier, because in adding more comforts they cause them to be heavier and bulkier. Thus, it is that those of the natives who are enemies of ours and construct these ships always in their own way, as they used to make them when they were alone, – they make mockery of ours because by their lightness they disappear. On the sea, unless it is by some rare circumstance, never are they beaten because the difference between them is like the flight of a hawk from that of a chicken using these names as figures of speech.

They used these various kinds of vessels in ancient times, and they use them even today. They construct them very well. The Bisayan natives excel in this skill all the other inhabitants of these Islands, for it seems that all of them are born carpenters or *panday*, as they are called here. Hence, even in the construction of our

estas Islas y necesarias, porque de las naos del comercio con Méjico depende la conservación y aun el todo de estas, solo los indios bisayas, sin distinción, llevan plaza y salarios de *pandaies* u oficiales carpinteros, y no los otros indios, sino que lo sean de antemano. Y aun ha habido algunos indios bisayas que se han igualado a los mismos españoles en saber disponer y labrar las maderas de cuenta para las naos, dándoles salarios mayores que a muchos españoles. Y, entre otros, aunque pudiera contar muchos, un principal del pueblo de Palapag, donde dispuse mucho de esta *Historia*, Don Juan Polacay, que ha pocos años que murió con muchos de edad, me dijo que se había hallado en todas las fábricas que, después que están acá los españoles, se han hecho en estas Islas de Bisayas, donde han sido las más, que pasan de veinte galeones grandes, sin bajeles menores ganando sueldo de oficial mayor y cabeza de los otros.

Y yo soy testigo de algunas, en que me he hallado y corrido por mi mano el juntar los indios. Lo primero que me pedían los maestros mayores era que llamase al dicho Don Juan Polacay, y otro llamado Figuman, por la experiencia que tenían, de que se les podía fiar cualquiera fábrica de estas.

Digamos algo de la ligereza de estas embarcaciones antiguas de los bisayas, que es cierto fue mucha de un *barangay* de uno de los encomenderos de estas islas, llamado Pedro Méndez, que, aunque no lo vi yo, lo oí a muchos que se embarcaron no pocas veces en él. Decían que era tan ligero que nadie podía estar en pie en él cuando remaban; y, con no tener más que dos órdenes de remos, uno a cada banda, aunque era de bordo bajo pero largo, y que cogían bien el agua con los remos, caminaba al remo de sol a sol, desde el pueblo de *Paranas*¹¹, donde se labraron varios de estos *barangayes*; y el mismo maestro – indio que les hacía, me hizo a mi uno pequeño – hasta la ciudad de Zibu, donde tenía dicho Pedro Méndez su casa, con haber más de cuarenta leguas de distancia, saliendo con el sol, salido del un pueblo, y llegando al otro antes de ponerse; que parece cosa increíble, pues cami-

galleons which is continual in these islands and necessary, because the maintenance and even the building of the ships of trade with Mexico depends on these. Only the Bisayan natives without distinction have employment and wages as *panday* or skilled carpenters. It is not so with the other natives, unless they have been so previously. There have been Bisayan natives who have been equal to the Spaniards themselves in knowing how to select and fashion the wood in suitable manner for the ships. They are paid salaries greater than those of many Spaniards. Among others, although, I could mention more, a chief of the town of Palapag where I composed much of this *Historia*, Don Juan Polacay, who died a few years ago at an advanced age. He told me that he participated in all the construction which had been in these Bisayan Islands after the Spaniards came, where most of it had been done, that there have been more than twenty large galleons, not to mention lighter craft. They paid him a salary of chief clerk and head of the others.

I am eye witness in some cases where I have found myself engaged and there was entrusted to me the task of gathering the natives. The first thing that ship masters asked me was to call this Don Juan Polacay and another one known as Figuman, because of the experience they had enabling them to be entrusted with any kind of construction of these ships whatever.

Let us consider briefly the lightness of these ancient vessels of the Bisayans. Certainly it was extreme in the case of a *barangay* of one of the *encomenderos* of these Islands, Pedro Méndez. Even though I have not seen it, I have heard of it from many who have traveled in it frequently. They said that it was so light that no one could stand on his feet in it when they were rowing. Yet, it had no more than two rows of oars, one at each side, even though it lay low in the water but long. They took the water well with the oars traveling by oar from sun up to sundown from the town of *Paranas*¹¹ – where various of these *barangay* were built. This same native master who constructed this, made a small one for me – as far as the City of Cebu, where the said Pedro Mendez had his house. Although it was a distance of more than forty leagues, on leaving after the sun was up from one town, they arrived at the other before it set. This seems incredible for they were traveling

naba a más de cuatro leguas por hora; pero la multitud de los testigos no lo deja dudar, y casi lo mismo experimenté yo en el *barangay* pequeño que en dicho pueblo hice, pues nunca topé con otra embarcación que, haciendo *Romba* – que llaman estos indios – o recateado, que llaman en España, que es, para los que no lo saben, apostar a cuál andrà más – que me emparejase, y, navegando yo no pocas veces, lo advertí, por cerca de la orilla del mar o de algún río, nunca me podía emparejar hombre alguno, aunque corriese mucho, siguiéndome por la playa. Y de esta manera pudiera contar de otros para su ligereza a la vela.

Sirva otro testimonio en uno de los *birocos* de que traté arriba, del cual me aseguraron muchos que se embarcaron no pocas veces en él, que, partiendo el sábado en repetidas ocasiones, después de Misa de la Virgen, que acá se dicen todas ellas cantadas y con solemnidad, y levantando la vela desde el pueblo de *Tinagu*¹², cabecera que fue antes de la residencia de Samar y hoy lo es *Catbalogan*, llegaban a la ciudad de Zibu a tiempo de oír la *Salve*, o Letanías de la Virgen, que se cantan también todos los sábados a las cinco de la tarde, siendo algo más la distancia de este pueblo a Zibu que desde el de *Paranas*; y, si bien la diferencia de la vela a los remos es muy grande, es cierto que había de andar casi seis leguas por hora para poder hacerlo, y, no siendo las embarcaciones ligerísimas, fuera imposible.

Los timones, aunque antiguamente los usaban, y aun hoy lo más común al modo nuestro, uno solo en la popa (que en dichas embarcaciones, hechas a su modo, eran sin hierros, y solo con un palo algo largo y dos o tres anillos de bejuco – que para los mares de por acá, tan grandes como hemos dicho, parecía casi fútil – la experiencia mostraba que no solo eran, y la facilidad de poder renovar dichos anillos de bejuco – que en los de hierro es muy al contrario aun en mitad de la mar – les es y fue de mucha comodidad como cada día lo experimentamos ya hoy, con usar, como usan, también de otro género de embarcaciones propias de las islas de Mindanao y Jolo, que llaman *juangas*, usan

at more than four leagues an hour, but the large number of witnesses leaves no room for doubt. I experienced almost the same thing in the little *barangay* which I made in this town. For I have never chanced upon another vessel and on making *romba*, as these natives call it, or *recateado*, as they call it in Spain. For those who do not know, it means to compete to determine which can go faster or which could stay even with me. Very often, while sailing I have noticed while near the shore of the sea or of some river that never has any man been able to keep up with me, although he might run for a long distance following me along the beach. In this manner, I might relate other instances regarding its lightness in navigating.

There is further evidence concerning one of the *biruk* of which I spoke above and of which many have assured me who traveled many times in it. Leaving on Saturday, on numerous occasions, after the Mass of the Blessed Virgin, which here is sung by all with solemnity, and raising the sail at the town of *Tinagu*,¹² which used to be the principal village of the *residencia* of *Samar* – today it is *Catbalogan* – they arrived at the City of *Cebu* in time to hear the *Salve* or Litanies of the Virgin. These are also sung every Saturday at five in the evening. The distance from this town to *Cebu* is somewhat more than from that of *Paranas*. Although the difference between sailing and rowing is very great, it is certain that one would have to travel about six leagues an hour to do it. If these ships were not the very lightest, it would be impossible.

The rudders, although used in ancient times and even today, are for the most part in our style, just one in the stern. In these vessels they are made in native fashion without nails, and of a single piece, somewhat long with two or three rings of rattan. For the seas here which are very rough, as we have said, they would seem almost worthless. Experience has shown that they were not; the case with which these bands of rattan are replaced, which is the contrary with these of iron, especially in the middle of the ocean, makes them, and always has made them, very useful, as we find out each day. At present, with the use of, as indeed they do, another kind of vessel peculiar to the Islands of *Mindanao* and *Jolo* which they call *juangas*. Here they use two rudders in the

de dos timones, como los usan dichas *juangas*, y aun en algunas cuatro; y, porque de ellos, con lo que tienen diferente de lo que hemos dicho, hemos de tratar después, cuando tratemos de los enemigos que infestan estas Islas, lo dejo en este lugar de hacer. Véase el capítulo 20 del libro quinto de la segunda parte.¹³

manner of these *juangas*. In some, they even utilize four. Since we must speak later concerning other differences than those we have related about when we spoke of the enemies that infest these Islands, I shall omit them here. Look at *Chapter 20 of Book 5*, in the *Second Part [of the Historia]*.¹³

Chapter 10

ANNOTATIONS

[1] *Bohol*. As our readers may know, this is one of the six Bisayan Islands and the smallest of the six with 1,534 square miles in area. The Filipinos there have their own language – Boholano – and quite different from that of the Samar-Liñeyte Bisayan, but related.

The island in more ancient name was *Bool*, named perhaps after a type of tree with the same name which thrives along the seashores.

In the Indonesian Sulawesi Island, northern portion called Sulawesi Utara, there is a place called *Buol* facing the Celebes Sea. Some years ago, one of the editors here, [C. Kobak] had seen an older map where the place was identified as *Bool*. Could this be the origin of the ancient Boholanos? On the southern portion of this Sulawesi (or ancient Celebes) Island is found the ancient Makassar (today Ujung Pandang) from where Alcina believes the Bisayans also originated. Sánchez describes it thus: “*Bool*: a maritime tree, with a circle in the leave and fruit. This is poisonous at least the seed. *Bool* is also the ‘crust of the *morisqueta*.” Sánchez, [1711], *op. cit.*

De la Rosa-Alcázar offer us this entry under “*bool*: cooked or boiled, unsalted rice called *morisqueta*” in Spanish. Also identified as a “maritime tree”.

[2] *Upak*. One of the layers of the tree bark which are placed in the vessels or ships in place of the last plank. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*

To strike on some part. De la Rosa-Alcázar, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

[3] *Minore ad maius*. A Latin phrase: “from the lesser to the greater”.

[4] *Balasian*. Better *barasian*: A type of a vessel also known by the name of *panagatan*. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*

[5] *Dalupi*. A waist-board of *nipa* placed on the side of the boat; when it is the bark of the tree it is called *upak kalapi* or *tigbaw*, when of wood it is called, *dalupian*. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*

[6] *Barangay*. Or *barangayun*, *barangyun*: a sea-vessel so-called. *Balisa*. *Ibid.*

“*Barangay*: an ancient type of a vessel on which the datu voyaged.” De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 37. *Barangay* is a Bisayan term borrowed by the Tagalogs and used by them.

[7] *Bugsay*. “A short oar which at the upper portion has a shape like a cross and utilized especially when paddling the *baluta*, *bankas* and small boats.

To row with that oar. Parts of the oar: *Tampung*, the smooth part where one holds the oar; *burutbutkun*, the handle; *sulipad*, the wide or the board of the oar; *kulud*, the spine in the middle – *Bugsayun*: the material from which the oar called *bugsay* is made.

It is interesting to note that this piece for navigation is so important that as simple as it is, it has four parts to it, each with special name.

[8] *Gaut*. The fastening of the oar or of anything else; *Bugauti*, also the fastening of the oar. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*

[9] *Biroc*. *Biruk*. Or *biduk*: A large and a deep vessel which can carry much cargo and is also very light. De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[10] *Caracoa*. *Karakua*. "A very small boat or vessel, moved with oars, very popular to the Philippines." *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[11] *Paranas*. An ancient town situated on the eastern coast of Samar between Hiabung and Hinabangan. At turn of the century the American renamed it to Wright, after one of the early officials in the Philippines, Luke Wright.

[12] *Tinagu*. A name of one of the ancient settlements and one of the first *cabeceras*, along with Catubig, established by the Jesuits upon their arrival to Samar in 1595. The name *Tinagu* is derived from the term *tagu* which means 'to hide'; *tinagun* which means 'hidden.' The settlement was off the coast and hidden from the sea. In about 1612, when the town was burned, the *cabecera* was transferred to *Palapag* along with a new *cabecera* established in Catbalogan. Alcina will describe this history in his Part Two of this *Historia*.

[13] This reference of Alcina to Chapter 20, of Book 5, of the Second Part, proves clearly that the Second Part of Alcina's *Historia* was composed of five books. Unfortunately most of this Second Part is lost forever.