

Capítulo 26

DE LAS AVES DE RAPIÑA NOCTURNAS, Y VARIEDAD DE MURCIELAGOS QUE HAY EN ESTAS ISLAS

Pocas aves de rapiña (aunque todas viven de rebatar lo ajeno, y más marítimas) puso Dios en esta tierra, quizás porque habían de sobrar en ellas hombres que suplen y exceden sus rapiñas; pues en su antigüedad, (como veremos después), el que más arrebatava era el mayor y el que más podía; costumbre que aún no han olvidado hoy, aunque la tienen impedida, porque ha[n] venido otras aves de mayor[es] uñas por acá, y que les han quitado el arrebatav, o lo han tomado para sí.

Por acá son águilas reales los oficiales y ministros del rey, que con su real nombre, (y bien contra su voluntad y ordenanzas), viven de la rapiña de estos pobres, que cuanto tenían bueno les quitaron. Gavilanes son los cobradores, que, con ocasión de cobrarles sus tributos, meten las uñas hasta sacarlos la carne y la sangre.

Sacres somos todos los ministros sagrados que forzosamente hemos de vivir de su sudor y sangre, que, aunque deuda debida, pues como dijo San Pablo: *si seminamus vobis spiritualia; quid ne carnalia vestra metamus, etc*¹. Si nos contentáramos con sólo lo necesario para ella, justo era y debido; pero, si al ministrarles, han de dar de comer, (que esto nunca falta), y para lo congruo de vestir, etc., que es necesario, hasta aquí se puede sin sacar uñas;

Chapter 26

CONCERNING THE BIRDS OF PREY, NOCTURNAL [ONES] AND THE VARIETY OF OWLS THAT THERE ARE IN THESE ISLANDS

God placed a few birds of prey in this land (although all birds live by plundering what belongs to another, and mostly those of the sea). Perhaps, because of this there has been a superabundance of people in it who have made up the deficiency and surpassed their rapine. For in ancient times, as we shall see afterwards, the worst plunderer was the greatest and most powerful; a tradition which has not been forgotten even today, although it has been restricted because there have come other birds more thievish over here. They have stopped the plundering or have taken it over for themselves.

Here, the royal eagles are the officials and ministers of the King who in his royal name and quite contrary to his will and ordinances, live by stealing from these poor. Whatever they have that is good is taken away. The falcons are the collectors who under pretext of collecting the tributes, overcharge to the point of extracting flesh and blood.

We, all the sacred ministers, are *sacres* who necessarily must live from their sweat and blood; however, the debt is proper for as Saint Paul said: *Si seminamus vobis spiritualia; quid ne carnalia vestra metamus, etc.*¹ (1 Corinthians 9:11) If we would content ourselves with only what is necessary for it, it would be just and fitting. But, if they must provide food for the minister, so that this never be lacking and what is necessary for suitably clothing himself, etc.; up to this point it can be done without taking by force

pero si han de dar para otras muchas cosas superfluas y vanas, como el fuego [sic] y otros peores, y más para atesorar y juntar millares, como tal vez sucede, (y ¡ojalá no fuera tanto como es!) ¿quién duda que será el ministro que los ha de amparar y defender de los otras aves de rapiña; el milano mayor osacre, que, con ocasión de lo sagrado de su oficio, mete las uñas tanto que los desuella, y, como milano, ni aun a los polluelos perdona, que, por lo implume, (sonlo todos estos indios), debíamos dejarlos plumejar.

Perdóneseme esta digresión, que con las uñas me arrebató la pluma, el afecto y deseo de que los ministros todos, que estamos en este ministerio de indios en todas partes y tierras (que, aunque tal todos ellos son unos, en lo miserable, corto y pobre, aunque tal vez en tierras muy distintas y distantes, más o menos ricas, pues las riquezas parece se las dió Dios para otros), fuéramos, ya que tratamos de las aves, unas fecundas palomas, que cuidáramos más de aumentarlos, fecundarlos y enriquecerlos a ellos de bienes espirituales que a nosotros de los temporales.

Y que, pues nos trajo Dios de tan lejos y distantes tierras a las suyas, seamos como la perdiz (que por acá no la hay), de quien dice el Espíritu Santo: *Perdix fovet quae non peperit*², que aviva y empolla los huevos que no puso, (sean de la misma o de diversa especie), y los saca a luz; que a estos huevos que en su antigüedad y gentilidad ciega sacaba el demonio (ave de rapiña que tantas presas hizo en ellos para hacerlos participantes de sus tinieblas), les empollemos nosotros para sacarlos hijos de la luz, comunicándoles su resplandor y enseñándoles sus obras, para que caminen como hijos de ella los que tantos siglos caminaron en la de sus tinieblas; que éste es el verdadero parir a que llama San Pablo: *Iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis*.³ Y debe ser el mayor y mejor tesoro del ministro evangélico. Pero baste de ésto hasta el *Libro I*, de la *Segunda Parte*⁴, etc.

No se hallan por acá águilas ni otras de las aves altaneras que en otras partes del mundo se dan varias y de que la

from them. But if they must provide many other superfluous and vain things, such amusements and other worse things, especially which enable the hoarding and amassing of thousands, as sometimes happens (and would that it were not as frequent as it is!). Who doubts that it will be the minister who must assist and defend them from the other rapacious birds, who under the pretext of the sacred office sinks his talons until his victim is skinned and like the goshawk does not exempt even the nestlings, as all these natives, lacking protective feathers, seem to be. We ought to feather [clothe] them.

Forgive me for this digression which, as if, seized my pen with its talons because of my concern and desire that all of us ministers, engaged in this mission to the natives in all lands and regions (and all of them are one in their wretchedness, ignorance and poverty even though they may be in very separate and far distant lands, possibly rich, for it seems that God provided their riches for others) might be, since we are now speaking about birds, like prolific doves, more concerned with increasing, propagating and enriching them in spiritual goods than ourselves in temporal ones.

Since God brought us from such distant lands to theirs, let us be like the partridge (of which there are none here) about which the Holy Spirit speaks: *Perdix fovet quae non peperit*,² which brings to life and hatches eggs she did not lay, whether of the same or any other variety, and bring them into the light of day. Let us form these eggs which the Devil snatched away from their antiquity and primitive blindness, a bird of prey that made them prisoners and sharers in his darkness, and let us hatch them ourselves, so as to bring them up as children of light, telling of His splendor and teaching them of His works so that they, who for so many centuries have traveled in darkness, may now proceed as children of light. This is the true birth which Saint Paul calls, *Iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis*, etc.³ (Galatians 4:19) This must be the greatest and best treasure of the evangelical minister. But enough of this until [we come to] *Book One*, in *Part Two*.⁴

Eagles are not found over here, or others of the high-flying birds, as in other places of the world. There are several of which

cetrería distingue tantas que sirve de recreación y de útil.

Tampoco usan por acá estos indios de cazar con ellas, y apenas tienen otro modo de cogerlas que con lazos, de modo que los falcones, gavilanes o milanos que por acá se hallan, sólo así se sirven, para sí cazan y para sí se aumentan.

*Banog*⁵ llaman acá en su lengua en una palabra a los que nosotros con varias. Háyllos blancos todo el cuerpo, desde la cabeza hasta la cola por el vientre, y pardos o naranjados, obscuro las alas y espinazo; y estos son los más ordinarios y los que se llevan más pollos. Háyllos pardiscos, o manchados de negro y blanco, como los de España, y de éstos hay dos diferencias: los unos más grandes, e iguales en talle a los pechiblanco, y no menos cazadores que ellos que llaman *sicup*⁶; los otros, aunque con las mismas pintas, son menores y al modo de los que llaman “esparver” en Valencia, y en Castilla “cernícalo⁷”. Estos cazan las aves pequeñas y de ellas se sustentan.

Lo que hallo especial en estas Islas es que los naturales buscan los nidos de estos gavilanes, o milanos, no para comerlos, que no los comen, sino porque en ellos dicen se hallan ciertas raicillas o hierbezuelas, como cabellos, que ellos recogen y guardan con cuidado, y llaman *tagaltao*⁸, que quiere decir que hace subir a los peces a lo alto, porque dicen que el gavilán usa de estas raíces para coger los peces, y que el que las trae consigo cogerá mucho pescado; y, porque tiene[n] esto por cierto, buscan y compran a veces, a muy buen precio, dichas raicillas o hierbas. Dios sabe lo que es, y si acaso tienen la virtud que ellos dicen.

También en un pueblo de estos me contaron que uno de estos gavilanes se llegó a la casa de uno de estos indios, y se dejó caer en ella una astilla de palo no conocido. Recogióla la dueña de la casa, que lo tuvo a muy grande dicha, porque dicen (y es observación suya muy antigua) que este palo del gavilán tiene virtud para hacer que la mujer que lo tiene consigo, acabe mucho más presto la tela que teje, y que no se cansa tejiendo, antes siente unas grandes ansias de tejer y acabar su tela.

falconry distinguishes many, such as serve for recreation and usefulness.

Neither do these natives here hunt them; they hardly have any other method of catching them than with snares as in the case of the falcons, hawks and kites, which are found here. They are used only in this way; they hunt for themselves and increase by themselves.

In their tongue they use the single word *banug*⁵ to designate all those for which we have several. There are some with their entire body all white from the head and throat down to the tail. Their wings and back are brownish or dark orange color. These are the most common, and those which raise the largest number of young. Some are grayish and spotted with black and white like those in Spain; of these there are two different kinds. Some larger and equal in size with the white-breasted and are no less hunters than those which are called *sikup*.⁶ The others, although with the same spots, are similar and smaller to those which they call *esparver* in Valencia, and *cernícalo*⁷ in Spain. These hunt small birds and by this means must maintain themselves.

Something I find unusual in these Island is that the natives look for the nests of these sea hawks or kites, not to eat them, for they do not do this, but because they say that they find in them certain small roots or herbs like hairs which they take and keep carefully. They call them *tagaltao*⁸ which means that it makes the fish come to the top, because they say that the hawk uses these little roots in order to catch the fish. Because they hold this to be certain they look for and at times buy at a very high prices these little roots or herbs. God knows what the truth of the matter is and if by chance they have the power which they say they have.

Also, in a town of these natives, they told me that one of these hawks came down to the house of one of these natives. It let a splinter of wood fall on it inadvertently. The lady of the house took it and she regarded it as a touch of luck, because they say (it is a very ancient saying of theirs) that this stick of the hawk has the characteristic of enabling the woman who has it complete much faster the cloth which she is weaving and she will not tire from weaving.

(La misma virtud dicen ellos que tiene una piedrecilla que se halla en la cabeza o buche de las golondrinas, que en su lengua la llaman “piedra que aligera los brazos y hace tejer a prisa⁹”).

Vendió la que topó la astilla, que dejó el gavilán, a muchas mujeres que la pagaban por una rajilla [alajilla in text] de ella tres y cuatro reales, y lo tenían a gran dicha. Avisáronme, muchos días después de sucedido esto, dos principales de las más entendidas y que habían comprado de dichas astillas con ocasión de que una vez prediqué contra los que usan de palos o hierbas o raíces (que por acá es muy ordinario y pocos lo confiesan) para efectos que, según su virtud natural, no pueden obrar porque pecaban, etc., y con este escrúpulo me vinieron a preguntar si habían pecado o no.

Informéme entonces del caso, y lo que saqué de su dicho fue que ellas sentían verdaderamente más facilidad y los brazos muy ágiles para tejer, y que hacían más después que compraron aquella astilla en un día que antes en tres, y que en su antigüedad sabían que había sucedido otras veces y dado esta ave semejantes palos para el efecto dicho, y que por ésto lo habían comprado ellas y otras.

Preguntéles si la india que se los había vendido (que ya no estaba viva) era buena cristiana y frecuentaba sacramentos, o si tenía fama de usar de supersticiones antiguas, etc., a que me respondieron, sonriéndose; que fue como decir que tenía algo de esto. Díjeles que abstrayesen de cualquier pacto que pudiese haber implícito, y con eso veríamos [*viéramos* in text] si era virtud natural o tenía algo más. Con lo cual se fueron satisfechas.

Ahora piense el entendido, si como otras hierbas tienen virtudes notables y naturales, de (que ya hemos dicho harto), podrá también tener aquel palo del gavilán alguna; que yo me quedo con mucha duda, como la he tenido siempre, en que dicho palo y la piedra de golondrina, que acá llaman *saiao*¹⁰ (y todo el año se ve porque no hay frío que las eche de estas Islas, antes el calor las

These [folks] say that the same power is found in a little stone located in the head or craw of the swallows. In the native tongue it is called the stone which makes the arms lithe and causes one to weave rapidly.⁹

The woman who found the splinter which the hawk left, sold it to many other women, who paid her three or four *reales* for a splinter from it; they considered it as great good fortune. Many days afterwards two of the most intelligent *principalas* informed me that they had bought these splinters. This was due to the fact that one time I preached against those who use the wood or herbs or roots (here this is very ordinary and few confess it) for effects which these cannot perform by their natural properties. They cannot use them without sinning, etc. Due to this scruple, they came to me to inquire if they had sinned or not.

I, then, informed myself with the matter and what I draw from their conversation was that they truly felt that they became more facile, and their arms more agile for weaving. They said that they got more done in one day, after buying that splinter, than before in three and that they knew that in ancient times it had happened at other instances and this bird had provided similar splinters for this purpose. For this reason they have bought these and others.

I asked them if the native woman who sold them (she was no longer alive) was good Christian and frequented the sacraments, or whether she had a reputation for practicing superstitions, etc. They replied smiling that it had, so to speak, something like this. I told them that they must withdraw from any pact that might be implied. By these means, we would see if this was a natural power or whether the splinter of wood had something more. With this they went off satisfied.

Now, let the wise individual think, if other herbs have remarkable natural powers, of which we have already spoken at length, could not this splinter of the hawk also have some? I am very doubtful, as I have always been, regarding this splinter and the stone of the swallow, which they call here *sayaw*¹⁰ (this one is seen all-year-long because there is no cold to drive them away from these islands; rather the heat attracts them) about whether

atrae) tenga[n] la virtud dicha para dar agilidad y abreviar con las mantas que tejen; porque, si esta virtud fuera natural, ¿por qué había de ser para solas las mantas y no para labrados y otras costuras y obras de mujeres, y para los labores y faenas de los hombres?

De las noctuas, o aves nocturnas, hay más abundancia que de las de rapiña, pues se hallan por acá las lechuzas que llaman en Castilla, y acá estos indios *bucao*¹¹. Es ave para ellos infausta, porque temen, cuando se sienta encima de sus casas o cerca de ellas (como también en Europa), que se morirá alguno de ellos; y los muchachos pequeños temen más cuando la sienten cantar o graznar, porque dicen que son brujos que vienen a comérseles.

Lo que yo he reparado acá en estas aves, (que no lo oí en España), es que de noche (que van siempre dos o más juntas), van graznando muy a compás, de modo que comienza el macho, al parecer (porque es la voz mayor), con un solo graznado, como que dice: *vao*, y luego repite la hembra tres veces, a compás su distancia, la misma voz, a que repite el macho una sola. Y de esta manera se oyen, (como es de noche comúnmente cuando vuelan), de muy lejos; y estos graznidos, o voces dicen que son de brujas, y por esto los temen tanto.

Son entre los bisayas refrán estos pájaros, por lo grande y abierto de los ojos, de los mirones y embelesados y que se están atontados mirando algo; y así mismo lo son de los muy arañados, porque, cuando ven a alguno de esa manera, dicen que parece que ha reñido con algún *bucao*, que arañan mucho (como no ven de día) sin mirar dónde ni cómo.

De sus nidos, ni donde los hagan, no hay nadie que sepa, porque los labran o en altas peñas o en altísimos árboles y opacos, donde el sol no entra, lo esconde.

Dicen que en tiempo de poner sus huevos tienen otro canto muy distinto del que dijimos. Son inimicísimos de los cuervos. Y aunque los grandes de acá son como las lechuzas o búos de Europa,

they have the power mentioned to give agility for finishing quickly the blankets they are weaving. For if this power is natural, why would it have to be only with the blankets and not for embroidery and other needlework and crafts of the women and for the work and labors of men?

About the *noctuas* or nocturnal birds, they are more abundant than the birds of prey, for owls are found over here which in Spain are called *lechuzas* and these natives here *bukaw*.¹¹ It is a bird of a bad omen for them because they fear that when they perch on their houses or near them (as also in Europe) that some of them will die. Small children fear them more when they hear them hoot or wail because they say that they are wizards who are coming to eat them.

I have discovered something here about these birds that I have never heard of in Spain. It is that at night, they always travel two or more together and they hoot in a measured musical time. This it seems that the male begins, because this is the loudest cry, with a single hoot, as if saying *Vaw!* Then the female responds three times, at a measured interval, with the same cry. To this the male replies once. In this manner they hear each other, (since it is at night ordinarily when they fly) from a great distance and it is said that these hoots or cries are from wizards, for this reason they fear them so much.

Among the Bisayans, these birds inspire an adage: due to their large and wide eyes, concerning busy bodies and those astonished and who are stupefied on looking at something. Likewise it refers to those who are scratched up, because when they see someone in this condition, they say that it seems that he has fought with some *bukaw*, which scratches very hard (since they do not see in daylight) without regard for where or how.

About their nests and where they build them, no one knows because they build them either on high rocks or hide them in the tallest and densest trees where the sun does not penetrate.

They say that at the time when they lay their eggs, they have another cry very different from the one we have described. They are deadly enemies of the crows. Although the larger owls here are like the barn owls or *buos* of Europe, there are other smaller ones

hay otros menores y de las mismas calidades. Quizás corresponden a los mochuelos de España o a las cornejas, que con un nombre, por su semejanza, confunden acá.

Vengamos a los murciélagos, que por acá son muchos y muy distintos de los de Europa. Media ave los llaman [sic] Platón, y medio ratón Valla; que concuerda con la voz o nombre que les dan en Valencia y Cataluña donde les llaman “*rat-peñat*,” que es lo mismo que “ratón con alas”.

Es cierto que de todas las aves es sola la que tiene leche y cría sus hijuelos en sus pechos, donde los trae asidos mientras son pequeños y que no tienen fuerzas para volar; y ellos se asentan bien que es menester mucha fuerza, aun muerta la madre, para hacerles apartar de sus pechos.

Vuelan por acá, no rateros y poco (como dijo un autor extranjero), sino mucho, muy alto y muy lejos. Sus diferencias no son pocas, y sus tamaños los distinguen más que la figura, que en todos es la misma, y en las propiedades se diferencia poco.

*Cabug*¹² llaman acá a los mayores. Sónlo casi como una gallina de España, poco más a menos. Viven muchos juntos. Su retiro es, o en cuevas grandes y hondas por lo sombrío, o en manglares espesos y junto al mar. Están arracimados en los árboles, todos colgados boca abajo, y suelen asirse diez y más, unos de otros, en especial de la especie segunda que son menores, y por eso se llaman *cabugcabug* (que suena “diminución” en esta lengua la repetición del nombre). He oído a muchos de los indios que comen de los grandes con gusto, y aun europeos y gente de puesto aventajado por acá, gustan de ellos.

Dicen saben, estando bien manidos, y semejan a un lechoncillo de los que se suelen comer de pocos días nacidos. Límpianlos muy bien, o pelan, con agua caliente como a ellos. Córtanlos las alas y, asados o guisados, los comen.

Contóme un Padre de los nuestros, que estuvo en este ministerio de bisayas muchos años, que una vez, yendo navegando, llegó

here, and with the same characteristics. Possibly they correspond to the red owls of Spain, or to the *scops owl* which, because of their resemblance, have one name and are confused here.

We come now to the bats, which over here are numerous and very different from those in Europe. Plato called them half-bird and half-rat Valla, which agrees with the word or name which is given in Valencia and Cataluña, where they call them '*rat-peñat*,' which is the same as 'a rat with wings'.

It is certain that of all the birds it is the only one that gives milk and nurses its young at its breasts, where it carries them in its grasp while they are young and do not have the strength to fly. They hold them so firmly that great force is needed even when the mother is dead, to release their hold from their breasts.

Here they do not fly low along the ground and for short distances, as a foreign author has said, but for long distances, very high and very far. There are many differences among them and their size distinguishes them more than their shape which is the same in all. In their characteristics, they differ little.

Kabug,¹² they call the large ones here. They are almost as large as the hens in Spain, more or less and many live together. Their place of retreat is either in large, deep caves because of the darkness or in thick mangrove trees near the sea. They are clustered in the trees, all hanging head down, and ten or more hold on one to the other, especially those of the second variety which are smaller. For this reason they call them *kabugkabug* ('one who sleeps'; the repetition of the word in this language makes it 'a diminutive'). I have heard from many of the natives that they eat the large ones with relish, and even Europeans and people of high position here like them.

They say, that they taste fine when well-prepared and are similar to a small suckling pig of the kind that is eaten a few days after birth. They clean them thoroughly or skin them with hot water, like the latter. They cut off the wings and, after roasting or boiling, they are eaten.

One of our *Padres*, who had been in this mission of the Bisayas for many years, told me that one time, while traveling by

con su embarcación a un paraje donde hallaron muchos de estos murciélagos grandes. Mataron los bisayas barigas¹³ (que así le llaman acá la gente de esquipazón o boga) los que quisieron. Dispusiéronlos para comerlos. Asaron algunos, y díjome dicho Padre que olían tan bien que le dió gana de probar a qué sabrían. Hízolo, y dijo que le supo a muy regalado lechoncillo porque estaban gordos, y que sólo tenía[n] un olorcillo particular, aunque no tan malo como suelen tener los lechoncillos machos, (si no los capan, estando aun vivos, cuando los quieren comer), y que le parecía, (añadió), que se podían comer muy bien. De los indios no todos los comen. En algunas partes lo usan mucho, en otras poco, y en otras nada, antes hacen mofa de quien los come.

Añadamos acá una fábula de los bisayas que les da el [*en in text*] nombre y la causa de andar de noche. Esta es que, acabados de criar todos los pájaros (no sabían en su antigüedad quien los crió, aunque tuvieron algunos rastros, como veremos en el *Libro siguiente*), se juntaron para que escogiese cada cual su comida, y no se fuesen quitando unos las de los otros. Fueron escogiendo su voluntad y gusto, y, llegando su vez [*ven in text*] a este murciégalo grande, escogió para su especie la fruta de un árbol que acá llaman *tabigui*¹⁴, que a la vista es hermosa, grande como un melón mediano y semejante no poco, (vista de lejos), a las naranjas grandes de China. Riéronse todos de él, porque esta fruta, aunque de lindo talle por afuera, dentro no tiene más que unas pepitas muy grandes, como huevos, aunque de diferentes hechuras para llenar el casco. Son durísimas, amargas é insulsas, (aunque muy a propósito para curar cámaras de todo género, y las de sangre mejor, que esta virtud no la supieron las aves).

De esta acción le quedó el nombre de *cabug*, que en esta lengua quiere decir “*bobo y que sabe poco*”. Y también un refrán suyo, que sirve en no pocas ocasiones muy al gusto, y es que, cuando uno escoge lo que le llena el ojo, sin averiguar su bondad, como a la mujer hermosa y necia, al hombre galán y atontado, a la fruta de buen color y podrida, etc. le dicen *dao napili sin tabigui* que quiere decir: “que escogió, como el *cabug*, la fruta del *tabigui*, buena sola para vista, no para otra cosa.”

water, he came in his boat to a place where they found many of these large bats. The *barigas*¹³ killed as many as they wanted. *Barigas* are called here the ship's crew or rowers. They prepared them for eating. Some they roasted. The Father told me that they smelled so well that it gave him the desire to find out how they tasted. He tried it and said that it tasted like very fine suckling pig, because they were fat. However, it had a peculiar odor, although not as bad as the male sucklings usually have if they do not castrate them while still alive when they wish to eat them. It seemed to him, he added, that they could be eaten very easily. Among the natives, not all eat them. In some places, they do so a great deal; in others rarely. Still in others, not at all do, rather they make fun of those who do so.

We shall add here a story of the Bisayans which has given them their name and the reason why they go about at night. It is this: after all the birds had been created (they did not know in their antiquity who created them, although they had some inklings, as we shall see in the following *Book*) they came together so that each one might select his own meal. So that they might not be depriving one another of it, they were to make the selection, each one to his own wish and taste. When it came the turn of this large bat, he selected for his species the fruit of a tree which here they call *tabigi*.¹⁴ It is lovely to behold, large like medium sized melon and quite similar, seen from a distance to the Chinese oranges. They all laughed at him because this fruit, although a pretty shape outside, inside has no more than several very large seeds like eggs, although of different shapes in order to fill the opening. These are very hard, bitter and tasteless, although very useful for accruing loose stools of all kinds and especially bloody one. This power was unknown to the birds.

For this decision they gave him the name of *kabug*, which in this tongue means 'dunce, one who knows little'. There is also a saying of theirs which is used on many occasions very much to the point. It is that when one chooses what has caught his eye, without determining its worth, such as the woman, beautiful and stupid, or the elegant but foolish man, or the fruit of fine color but rotten, etc., they say *Daw na piti sin tabigi*, which is to say: 'that they selected like the *kabug*, that selected the fruit of the *tabigi*, good only to look at but good for nothing else'.

A los más pequeños, que son [como] los ordinarios de España, llaman acá *colalapnit* o *colacnit*, y con otros nombres, con poca variación de letras, todos semejantes. Y dánles este nombre por las uñas o garfios con que se cuelgan y araña[n].

Estos, en tiempo de invierno, o grandes vientos, se recogen también en cuevas y otros lugares defendidos. En verano y tiempo bonancible son perjudiciales e inmundos, porque suelen recogerse en las iglesias y casas grandes, (cuales son por acá solas las de los Padres), y las infestan a veces por muchos e inmundan por sus excrementos, que huelen malísimamente. Cuéstanos mucho trabajo por acá, en dichos tiempos, el vernos libres de ellos y de sus inmundicias. Y ni bastan muchos púas, espinas y matas que punzan mucho, ni otras diligencias.

Oí decir los años pasados que en nuestra iglesia de Manila fueron tantos que rogaron a un Padre nuestro, ministro muchos años de estos bisayas, (tenido por santo), que los conjurase y echase de la iglesia, como dicen se hizo con algún buen efecto por entonces.

Tienen, con todo, algo proficuo todos estos murciélagos, grandes y chicos, y es que el estiércol y excrementos que dejan en las cuevas, donde se retiran, (háylas grandísimas, y algunas con tanta basura de estas semiaves que tienen a cuatro y más palmos de alto todo el suelo, y en lo más oscuro a más de braza de hondo) de esta basura, pues se hace y puede hacer salitre siempre que quisieren, y se sacará muy bueno y en cuanta cantidad quisieren.

Hay en estas partes de Bisayas muchas cuevas donde se hallará mucho; en especial cerca del pueblo de Leyte, (donde ya hemos hecho mención), hay una capacísima y muy llena de este estiércol, y que pudieran de él beneficiarse muchos quintales de salitre, si hubiera quien se aplicara a ello.

El modo es conforme al con que se saca de las tierras salitrales, sacando lejía de esta y dándole sus cocimientos y hervores

The smaller ones, and which are like the common ones in Spain, are called here *kulalapnit*¹⁵ or *kulaknit* and by other names, with slight variation of the letters, all of them similar. They gave them this name because of the talons or claws with which they suspend themselves and scratch.

In the winter time or season of strong winds, these disappear into caves and protected places. In the summer time and in fair weather they are a nuisance and dirty because they are accustomed to gather in the churches and larger houses, of which the only ones here are the houses of the *Padres*. These are infested at times by many of them and they dirty them with their excrement which smells most foul. It causes us much work here in these seasons to free ourselves of these bats and their filthiness. It is not enough to have many stickers, spines and prickly shrubs which sting them hard nor other efforts.

I have heard it said that in past years that there were so many in our church in Manila that they begged one of our Fathers, a minister for many years among the Bisayans and regarded as a saint, to exorcise them and eject them from the church. This they say was done with some good results for the time being.

Nevertheless, all these bats, large and small, have some advantage. It is that the droppings and excrement which they leave in the caves where they hide (there are very large caves and some with so much dung from these half-birds that it is four and more *palmos* deep all over the floor and in the darkest part it is more than a *braza* deep). Of this dung, saltpeter is made and can be made as often as they wish. It is extracted of fine quality and in whatever quantity they wish.

There are in these regions of the Bisayas many caves, where large amounts may be found; especially, near the town of *Leyte*, about which we have already made mention, there is a spacious cave there and very full of these droppings. From it they could refine many *quintals* of saltpeter, if there were anyone who would apply himself to the task.

The method is applicable to that by which it is taken from saltpeter deposits in the ground. They make a lye of this and put

hasta que tenga punto, y, echando en tinas de agua, se cuaja y hacen los carámbanos que vemos en el buen salitre.

No falta quien haya hecho acá la experiencia, (yo he hecho la prueba), y sacó salitre tan bueno como el que de otras partes se trae a estas, con no pocas expensas del Rey. Y de hecho, en la isla de Mindanao, donde hacen los moros no poca pólvora, y con que nos hacen, han hecho y harán, (si Dios no le remedia), muchos daños, no se gasta otro salitre más que la suciedad de estos dichos murciélagos, preparada y dispuesta al sol (o fuego manso para enjugarla), y, molida, se mezcla con los demás ingredientes de la pólvora, que, aunque es algo más tardía en prender fuego, como más térrea y más expuesta a humedecerse, les sirve como a nosotros la nuestra, y ¡ojalá no se hubiera[n] experimentado sus efectos para nuestro daño, como se experimentan frecuentemente! que se hubieran estorbado ya del todo, si no se hubieran retirado repetidas veces, (como se ha hecho), los presidios que desde las primeras entradas en aquella isla, y muy recién llegados a estas los españoles le pusieron, y han puesto, varias veces, y retirado otras tantas: el por qué, Dios lo sabe, que los demás no lo alcanzamos. Sólo vemos que lo que unos pusieron bien otros lo quitan mal, y todo pasa.

Pero dejemos ésto para otro lugar donde lo trataremos más [d]espacio. Sólo añadido aquí, por remate de los murciélagos, lo que dice Escolano, autor Valentino, de un murciélago (rey de España con esta metáfora) que, según cierta profecía (Dios sobre todo), que él trae en su *Historia* (véala el que quisiere), que ha de conquistar a Jerusalén y vencer los moros, etc., que todo podrá ser por allá, y Dios así lo haga; pero por acá con suciedad de murciélagos dan no poco que entender los moros a los españoles, y Dios quiera, (que no querrá), que no acaben con todo ésto.

it to cook with herbs until it reaches a finished state. They put it into earthen jars of water where it congeals and forms those icicle shapes which we see in good saltpeter.

There is no lack of persons here who have made the experiment. I have tried it and derived saltpeter as good as that which is brought to these islands from other places, at no little expense to the King. In fact, on the Island of Mindanao, where the Moros make considerable quantities of powder with which they presently do, have done and will do us great harm, if God does not prevent them, they use no other than the droppings of these bats, prepared and exposed to the sun or slight fire to dry it, ground and mixed with the other ingredients of powder. Although it is somewhat slower in taking fire as well as more perishable and more susceptible of getting damp, it serves them as well as ours does. Would that they had not tried out its effects to our injury as they do frequently. They would never had done this if the garrisons had not been withdrawn on repeated occasions, as they have done, garrisons placed there from the time of the first entries into this island, when the Spaniards had first arrived in them. They placed them various times and have withdrawn them just as often. Why this is, God knows! The rest of us do not understand it. We only see that what some establish well, others abandon badly and it all vanishes.

But let us leave this matter for another place, where we shall discuss it at greater length. I only add here as a conclusion to the chapter on the bats what Escolano says, a Valencian author, about a bat (referring to the King of Spain by this metaphor). According to a certain power of prophecy (God being over all) that he relates in his history, he may foresee whatever he wishes, that he will capture Jerusalem and conquer the Moros, etc. All this may be done over there, and may God make it so, but here, with the dirt of the bats, the Moros have given the Spaniards a great deal to learn. May God not grant, and He will never grant, that they will not put an end to all this! □

Chapter 26

ANNOTATIONS

[1] *Si seminamus vobis spiritualia, quid ne carnalia vestra metamus, etc?*
If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?

[2] *Perdix fovet quae non peperit?* The partridge hatches the eggs she did not lay.

[3] *Iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis, etc.* I give birth again until you are formed in Christ, etc.

[4] This is a frequent theme in Alcina's writing and reports to the Jesuit higher superiors in Rome. Cf. "*Alcina's Report on the Status of the Bisayan Missions in the mid-17th Century*," in *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. X, 1978, No. 39, pp. 498-553. The editors of Alcina also acquired recently another report made by Alcina when he left the Samar and the Bisayas, where he completed a term as Vice-Provincial and Rector, for Manila, to San Miguel. The Ms. is still unpublished but highly interesting. The manuscript comes from the Central Jesuit Archives in Rome (ARSI) and was addressed by Alcina to Fr. Juan Marin, and written on June 8, 1670.

[5] *Banog. Banug.* Or *banugun, bagnun*: a sparrow hawk. *Baga kanan banug man yadtu kulu mu.* 2. is one species of little fish also known by another names such as *mangnay*, vel, *tangbali*. 3. a species of the *pagui* o *raya* llamado *banugun*. 4. *Binanug*, a kind of a root of the species *ubi*. 5. *Magbanug, magkigal*, a dance of women. *Magbanug siya.* Their dancing is with extended arms, like the hawk when it flies with spread out wings. Sánchez, *op. cit.*

In Tramp, we have this description for *banug*: raptor (general term for bird of prey); falcon; hawk; koel; osprey; white-breasted sea eagle; white and red eagle kite, *Haliastur indos intermedus*; sparrowhawk, *Besra accipiter virgatus*, subsp. *Accipiter virgatus confusus*. *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

[6] *Sicup. Sikup.* A species of sparrowhawk or falcon. *Maisug nga tuud ngan dakuy mata. Daw mata san sikup.* It is said of those with angry look. *Baga din magit nga sikup.*

In Tramp, *sikup*: bird of prey variety; black-winged kite, hawk, sparrowhawk; plaintive cuckoo, *Cacomantis m. merulinus*. *Op. cit.*, p. 396.

[7] *Cernícalo.* Spanish for the kestrel or sparrowhawk. Perhaps the small Old World falcon, *falco tinunculus*, having brown and gray plumage. Any of the several similar birds. The word comes from the Middle English *castrell*, an alteration of Old French *crosserell, crecelle*, 'ratle,' kestrel (from its cry), from vulgar Latin *crepicella* (unattested).

[8] *Tagaltao*. Unable to locate the meaning of this word; however, the first part of it – *tagal*: means a large rooster.

[9] “The stone which makes the arms lithe and causes one to weave rapidly”.

[10] *Saiao*. *Sayaw*. This is a reference to the sea swallow. The primary meaning of this Bisayan word is a popular dance: the *taruk* or also called *sabay*. *Sumayaw ka, manga kabtang sin pagsayaw, patadpatad, busabus, cun paparihun pagpitad*. – *Kun luwayluway, sikdung an ibabaw, ngan saluhun sa kamut*. *Sayaw*. *The swallow*. Sánchez [1711], *Ibid*.

[11] *Bucao*. *Bukaw*. A bird so-called which has large eyes, Sánchez states. *Baga kanan bukaw an mata mu. Daw mata ngnan bukaw*. A bracelet of gold or silver is also called by this name. *Bukawan* is a species of orange. *Ibid*.

Tramp describes this owl thus: night prowler; oriental screech owl; *Otus bakkamoena everetti*; Philippine bubuuk, *Ninox philippensis centralis*. *Op. cit.*, p. 56. Also a fruit of the *Dapdap* or flametree.

[12] *Cabug*. *Kabug*. A common bat of Samar and Leyte, *Kerivoula jagerii*, K., *hardwickii*, 42-69 mm. Long or 2.7 in; vampire. *Ibid*.

A bat as large as a hen. Its other name is *kabisaw* or *kabilaw*: a species of bat like the hawk or chickens. Sánchez, *op. cit*.

“*Kabug*: A large bat and of a foul odor. — They are hanging head down from the branches of the trees. When they defecate it falls on its own body. Thus the Bisayans say: *bá maiti an kabug, amuy it-han an iya lawas*. When one corrects others, when he has the same faults, the Bisayan say: *daw naiti nga kabug*. That is, the one who spits against the sky, gets the saliva on his face. When the bat gives birth, the small ones cling to the breast of the mother. They are not released until they can fly. – *Daw naghahambin nga kabug*. It is said of those who have a little money and tie it with seven knots. – *Daw nagpili nga kabug*. It is said of those who make the wrong choice believing it was the best. *Baga hinurunan sin kabug ini nga balay: ó бага гинһаһаһонан син кабуһ инһи нга балай*. It is said of the foul smelling house.” De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 73.

[13] *Bariga*. This is a Bisayan term: “Individuals who are in charge of baggage, furnishings and materials transported by sea-vessels and those who managed the boats. *Pipira na an aton bariga? Upat katawu in barigaun, nga nadulung sa iraya sining bahandi sa Padre*. Sánchez [1711]”, *op. cit*.

“*Bariga*: the ship’s crew or rowers used during the time of the Moros.” De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 38.

[14] *Tabigui*. *Tabigi*. A certain species of mangle or a mangrove tree which has a fruit as large as the Chinese orange; however, it is useless and filled with hard seeds. *Baga ako nakapilin tabigi*. It is said of those who have made the wrong choice based on this fable of the *kabug*. Cfr. Sánchez, *ibid*.

According to Tramp: a mangrove tree, *Xylocarpus granatum*, whose juice is used as a net preservative and dye. A medium tree whose bark is bitter and

stringent. As a v. it means to redden; to dye fish nets; to dye with this bark. *Op. cit.*, p. 413.

“*Tabigi*: A tree so-called; it grows on seashores and places where seawater thrives and its fruit is not edible.” De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 322.

[15] *Colalapnit. Colacnit*. Both words should read thus: *kulalaknit* and *kulapnit*. *Kulaláknit*: a small long-tongued fruit bat of Samar, *Macroglossus lagochilus*, 70 mm. or 2.7 in. long. 2. Philippine dawn bat of Mindanao, Luzon, Lubang and Marinduque. *Eonycteris spelaea glandifera*, 122 mm. or 2.7 in. long. 3. common bat of Leyte and Samar, a smaller variety, 42-69 mm. long or 1.66-2.7 in. long. *Kerivoula jagerii* & *hardwickii*.

The *kulalapnit*: a [small] bat. Tramp, *op. cit.*, p.116.

Sánchez gives an entry for *kulagnit*: A small bat. Also *ulalaknit*, *kulapnit*, or *kulalapnit*. *Op. cit.*