

Capítulo 9

DE LAS CULEBRAS MONSTRUOSAS QUE HAY POR ACÁ, SU VARIEDAD Y MULTITUD, Y DE SUS PONZOÑAS Y OTRAS COSAS NOTABLES

Si en alguna parte del mundo hay monstruosas culebras o serpientes, por su grandeza formidables, por su veneno terribles, por su variedad inmensas y por su multitud ordinarias y siempre espantosas, son estas Islas, donde se hallan tantas que es casi milagro el vivir libres de sus venenos mortíferos, aunque no son pocos los que acabaron en breve sus días por haber con un acaso muy contingente encontrado con sus lenguas venenosas.

La grandeza de algunas es casi increíble ¹, y solas experiencias y la vista de los ojos, que no pocas veces las encuentran, la afianzan no sólo cierta sino infalible. La vehemencia de sus venenos (aunque ² en tierra donde hay tantas contras salutíferas); los casos muy ordinarios de las muertes repentinas en los mordidos de ellas, lo atestiguan.

Su variedad no tiene fin, pues son muchas las especies que se conocen y cuentan; y, finalmente, su multitud es tal que ni en el campo ni en el pueblo, ni en casa y ni en los montes, ni en los ríos o mares hay seguridad, pues en todas partes se encuentran y ven; que a no haber la divina Providencia (quizás en cast[igo] de la primera asechanza de donde salió tan gananciosa esta fiera) dándole un género de estolidez y torpeza, opuesta a aquella calidez primera, no sé cómo nos viéramos libres por acá de su fiereza, que, aunque no dejan siempre de acechar (testigos del primitivo asalto) al calcañar humano, nunca se ven libres del temor de la pena, afán inseparable de la culpa.

Comenzaremos, pues, a dar noticia de ellas por su grandeza; que siempre lo grande es más espantoso. *Halas* ³ las llaman acá con nombre

Chapter 9

CONCERNING THE MONSTROUS SNAKES THAT THERE ARE HERE; THEIR VARIETY AND GREAT NUMBER AND ABOUT THEIR POISON AND OTHER REMARKABLE THINGS

If in any part of the world there are monstrous snakes or serpents, formidable in size, frightful for their poison, infinite in their variety, commonplace in their numbers and always fearful, these Islands are the place. There are so many of them that it requires almost a miracle to live free from their deadly venom. Not just a few ended their days suddenly through having, by a very accidental circumstance, had an encounter with their poisonous fangs.

The size of some of them is almost incredible and not only experience but actual sight of them, for oftentimes we have the chance to see them, makes this not only certain but infallible. The force of their poison, even in a land where there are so many effective antidotes, is attested to by the very ordinary occurrences of sudden death from their bites.

Their varieties are countless, yet many kinds are known and counted. Finally, their numbers are such that there is no security from them either in the towns or house or in the forests, rivers or seas, for they are found and seen everywhere. If Divine Providence had not given this animal a kind of stupidity and dullness in contrast to that other quality perhaps as punishment for that first ambush from which this beast came forth so successfully, I do not know how we could keep ourselves free from their ferocity. Although they are always lying in wait to attack the human heel, evidences of that ancient assault, never are they found free from fear of punishment, an anxiety that is inseparable from fault.

We shall commence, then, by giving information about them regarding their size. What is large is always very fearful. *Hálas* they

générico, que corresponde a la voz común nuestra de “culebras, o “serpientes”⁴. Y en especial tienen muchos nombres según sus calidades.

A la mayor de todas llaman por acá *sava* ⁵ que, aunque no es ponzoñosa ni mata con veneno, llegan a crecer tanto que se engullen (¿qué mayor veneno?) un puerco, venado u hombre entero, aun sin magullarle los huesos si le coge al vuelo.

Magúllaselos, empero, tanto que los hace añicos si es mayor de lo que puede tragar; que, entonces, enroscándose por el cuerpo del que hizo presa, le magulla tanto que se lo puede fácilmente tragar. No tiene muelas esta fiera, y así no masca; sí muchos dientes en figura piramidal, muy agudos y como puntas de aleznas. Suele ⁶ tener dos y tres órdenes de ellos. Una vide yo que la conté tres órdenes; de modo que parecía un rallo de puntas aceradas y muy agudas.

De su grandeza dicen cosas portentosas. La mayor que yo he visto fue una que tendría el cuerpo como de un muchacho de tres a cuatro años en lo grueso. Trajéronme sólo la cabeza con parte del cuerpo, y así no vi la longitud, pero de esta dijeron que era muchacha aún y, como si dijéramos entre nosotros, doncella de poca edad. Con todo, se había comido, o tragado, un puerco casero que yo había dado a criar a un indio, que al ruido acudió. Y no pudiendo salir ella del corral o cerca, donde la cogió por haberle crecido con tan buen bocado la barriga, se quedó apretada entre dos palos, donde la mataron. Y así me trajeron el puerco muerto entero como lo había tragado (tendría un año, poco más a menos) y la cabeza del matador, con que yo quedé satisfecho y admirado de la monstruosa sierra de dientes, que ⁷ tenía, como dije, tres órdenes arriba y abajo, aunque encontrados (cosa que los hacía más fieros) de modo que encajaba los de arriba en medio de los de abajo.

Por esto dicen los indios en un refrán suyo: *Dao dinavi sin sava* ⁸, que quiere decir: “que es cosa sin remedio el escapar de sus dientes”, pues tiene tantos asidores cuantas puntas, y tantas guardas cuantos órdenes. Héme olvidado del número de los dientes, aunque los conté. Lo cierto es que eran muchos, y cada uno de ellos con unas puntillas como sierrecillas; que todo hace más difícil el que, una vez cogido, se escape.

De su mayor grandeza no he oído punto fijo, ni los indios saben decir a cuánta magnitud llegarán. Compáranlas a grandes vigas y a

call them here as a generic name; it corresponds to our ordinary word, snake or serpent. In particular they have many names according to their characteristics.

The largest of all is called here *sawa*; although it is not poisonous nor kills with poison, it grows so large that it swallows, what could be a greater poison, whole: a pig, deer or a human, even without crushing the bones when caught in flight.

The bones of the victim may be crushed so much, however, that they become small bits, if the victim is larger than the snake can swallow. Then it twists itself about the body of its captive and crushes it enough so that it can be easily swallowed. This beast has no molars and thus it does not chew, but there are many very sharp teeth, pyramidal in shape and like the tips of awls. It usually has two or three rows of them; I saw one in which I counted three rows so that it seemed like a grater of steel-like and very sharp points.

About their great size they tell portentous things. The largest I have seen was one which had a body with a girth like a boy of three or four years. They brought me only the head and part of the body so I did not see how long it was. But they said of it that it was a young one, and as we would say among ourselves, a young maiden. Nonetheless, it had eaten or swallowed a domestic hog which I had given a native to raise. He ran to its aid at the noise; the snake not being able to leave the corral or place where he had seized the hog, because its stomach had enlarged with such a substantial bit, it remained caught between two logs where they killed it. So they brought me the whole of the dead hog just as the snake had swallowed it, it was about a year old, and the head of the killer. With this I was convinced and marveled at the monstrous ridge of teeth. As I said, he had three rows above and two below, which met, so that those above were encased between those below. A circumstance that make them more terrible.

For this reason, the natives say in one of their proverbs: *Daw dinagit sin sawa*, that is to say, that "it is impossible to escape their teeth, for it has as many fasteners or points and as many guards as there are rows". I have forgotten the number of teeth, although I counted them. It is certain that there are many and each one of them with little points like little locks. All of this makes it most difficult for one to escape when seized.

About their greatest size, I have heard no definite statement, nor do the natives know how to describe to what size they grow. They

troncos de árboles de más de una braza de cerco. Lo cierto es que suelen tragarse un venado entero con sus astas, sin quebrárselas, y aun he oído varias veces decir a estos naturales que le cuesta la vida a la culebra, porque el venado, viéndose en un punto engullido y dentro su seno, hace fuerza con las astas, que abre[n] camino por los hijares de la portentosa culebra, por donde él se sale vivo, dejándola a ella muerta.

También es ordinario acudir estos naturales, cuando oyen gruñir los puercos de monte, cuando los caza esta culebra y se los traga ⁹, que ya lo conocen, y matan la culebra para sacar el puerco del buche, y esto lo hacen no pocas veces.

Diré lo que he oído en un cantar suyo antiguo (que éstos son como sus historias y memorias de sus antigüedades) en que cantan (*fides sit penes auctorem*)¹⁰ como en la provincia de Samar hubo unas de estas culebras tan grandes que se tragaba los hombres enteros, y una vez (así lo dice especialmente) se tragó una mujer que estaba tejiendo, con su telar y todo; que, aunque sus telares (como después veremos) no son ni tan grandes ni con tantos trastes como los nuestros, es empero menester más de seis palmos ¹¹ de boca para que quepa lo ancho de sus mantas, y el palo o caña en que las tejen. Y dice el mismo cantar que se extinguió aquel pueblo y sus moradores, unos muertos de dicha *sava*, y otros huidos de su miedo, como diremos después.

Bitin ¹² llaman a una especie de estas culebras *savas*, y son las más largas, aunque no las más gruesas, porque se sube a los árboles altos, y, dando una o dos vueltas en una de sus mayores ramas con la cola, se deja caer y descuelga¹³ lo restante del cuerpo hacia la tierra. Y allí se está babeando y echando unos espumarajos blancos en gran cantidad, a que suelen acudir los puercos monteses, pensando que es cosa comestible, y los lamen, y ella entonces les da con su cabeza otra vuelta por la mitad del cuerpo y les aprieta hasta que los mata, y, retrayéndose otra vez a lo alto, se come allí la presa; que esta traza le enseñó o la naturaleza o la necesidad, para cogerla a menos riesgo.

De estas culebras, dichas *sava*, se dice comúnmente por acá que crían los famosos carbuncos, y que los tienen en la frente en una como ventanilla que tapan con un pedazo de su pellejo, que alargan o encogen cuando quieren, y que reluce como una candelilla ¹⁴ (y, aunque me

compared them to great beams and to trunks of trees of more than an armful in circumference. The fact is that they may swallow a deer complete with its antlers without crushing them. I have even heard it told many times by these natives that it cost the life of a snake, because the deer in its turn finding itself swallowed and in the stomach cavity, uses force with the antlers to open a path through the flanks of the prodigious snake through which it emerges alive, leaving the snake dead.

It is also the normal thing for these natives to come running when they hear the wild hogs grunt, as these snakes hunt them and swallow them. The natives know this then and kill the snake in order to take the pig out of the stomach. They do this very frequently.

I shall relate what I have heard in an ancient song of theirs (these are like their histories and remembrances of their antiquity) in which they sing (*fides sit penes auctorem*). In the Province of Samar, for example, there was one of those huge snakes which swallowed people completely. One time, the song says this very particularly, he swallowed a woman, who was weaving, with her loom and all. Although their looms, as we shall see later, are neither as large nor with as many parts as ours, it is, however, necessary to have the mouth open more than six *palmos* in order to enclose the breadth of their blankets and the poles or bamboos on which they weave them. The same [song] relates that that village was destroyed, and of its inhabitants, some were killed by this *sawa* and others fled for fear, as we shall describe afterward.

One variety of these *sawa* snakes, they call *biting*; it is the longest although not the largest in girth. It climbs tall trees and twines itself around one of the largest limbs once or twice with its tail, allowing the rest of its body to fall and to slip down towards the ground. There it slavers and exudes at the mouth a great quantity of foam; the wild hogs come up thinking that it is something edible and lick it. The snake then, twists around their bodies with its head and squeezes them until it kills them. Drawing itself back up again, it eats its catch there. Either nature or necessity has taught it this scheme for seizing its prey with the least risk.

About these snakes, called *sawa*, it is commonly said here, that they grow the famous carbuncles and that they have them on the forehead like a little window which they cover with some skin which opens and closes as they wish. They say, that it shines like a little candle;

persuado que no sólo las *savas*, sino otras también de las culebras, y aun otros animales, los crían) de estas es más constante la fama de muchos, así indios como españoles, que dicen lo han visto y aun cogido.

Diré lo que he visto y oído a personas de todo crédito en esta parte. En el pueblo de Ogmuc ¹⁵, en la isla de Cebu [*sic*] ¹⁶ me dijo un principal que era fiscal mayor de los Padres, que él había visto una culebra con una de estas piedras, y me pidió gente para que le ayudasen a cogerla y matarla. Díselas; y, porque yo hice ausencia a visitar otro pueblo, cuando volví me trajo una piedra redonda pero chata, mayor que la yema del dedo pulgar, de color amarillo como de oro, pero sin relucir. Preguntéle si era aquella, y díjome que sí. Y añadió: “Padre. según la facilidad con que esta piedra cayó, ya la había la culebra quitado el resplandor y luz (dicen que lo suelen hacer, y aun esconderlas, cuando se ven apretadas sin que se pueda hallar jamás). Guardéla y téngola, aun cuando escribo esto, en mi poder. Todos cuantos la han visto y saben de ésto, dicen es piedra de culebra, pero no tiene resplandor, aunque es transparente. Y después que está en mi poder, que ha más de veintiocho años ¹⁷, ha ido echando de suyo unas pecas blancas a trechos, mayores o menores (no llega al tamaño de media lenteja la mayor mancha, ¹⁸ de modo que parece jaspeada).

Dicen [tiene]¹⁹ varias virtudes, aunque no he hecho experiencia de ellas; muchas sí de otra que tengo (que llaman también de culebra), de que trataremos más abajo: de modo que, si ésta fue carbunco, se eclipsó. Y después acá me he acordado varias veces de que yo vi en Girona [*sic*]²⁰ en un frontal de oro de martillo que tiene aquella catedral, y en él varias piedras, y en medio una como un huevo, que dicen es carbunco, también sin luz, por cierta medicina con que dicen se la quitaron, y el resplandor lúcido, por no darla a cierta reina. Esto oí allá, y acá me ha parecido que pudo también adulterar ésta, o deslucirla mejor, quien sabe naturalmente la hierva con que lo pueda hacer. Y de otras semejantes he oído por acá lo mismo.

Pero de que se ha hallado uno con luz, o resplandor, como de una vela, y que de noche se podía jugar con él a los naipes y leer una carta, me lo contó un Padre ministro antiguo de acá, docto y santo, varón de

however, I am convinced that not only the *sawas*, but other snakes as well and even other animals grow them. Of these snakes, this is the most constant story among many, both natives and Spaniards, who say, that they have seen the stone and even taken hold of it.

I shall relate what I have seen and heard from completely reliable persons in this regard. In the town of Ormoc, on the Island of Cebu, a *principal*, who was the '*fiscal mayor*' of the Fathers, told me, that he had seen a snake with one of these stones. He asked me to get the people to help him catch it and kill it. I gave them to him. And since I was absent visiting another town, when I returned he brought me a round, but flat stone, greater than the tip of the thumb, It was yellow in color like gold, but without any luster. I asked him if this was the one and he said yes. He added, "Father, according to the ease which this stone fell, the snake had already taken off the brilliance and shine." They say that they are accustomed to do this and even to hide them when they find themselves cornered without their ever being found. I kept it and have it, even as I write this, in my possession. Everyone that has seen it and knows about this, says that it is a stone from a snake. But it has no luster, although it is transparent. After it had been in my possession for more than 28 years, it began to develop by itself some white spots at greater or lesser distances apart. The largest of these did not come to the size of half a lentil, so that the stone seemed speckled.

They say that it has various powers; however, I have no experience of them. There are many, however, in the case of another which I have, which they also identify as from a snake, of which we shall treat in greater detail below. Hence, if it was a carbuncle, it has lost its luster. Later, here, I have remembered several times seeing in Gerona, on a frontal of gold and wrought metal which that cathedral possess. and among the various stones, one in the middle like an egg which they say is a carbuncle also without luster. This is due to a certain chemical process they used, they say, to eliminate it and its magnificent brilliance, so as not to give it to a certain queen. This is what I heard when I was there. Here, it has appeared to me that someone could also have adulterated this one or tarnished it more who is acquainted with the herb by which it could be done naturally. I have heard the same thing about other similar stones over here.

But the fact is, that one has been found with luster or brilliance like that from a candle and with which at night one could play cards

toda verdad y de mucha calidad, llamado él Padre Juan Antonio Campión (de quien trataremos en el último *Libro* cuando de su muerte, que fué en mis manos).

Díjome, pues, este Padre que, estando en el pueblo de Guivan,²¹ de la Isla de Ibabao, se halló un esclavo de cierto principal de aquel pueblo dentro de una tinaja (tiene[n] allá muchas guardadas en el monte para poner aceite, de que tienen gran tanto²² en aquel pueblo, por no embarazar con ella sus casas), y que, yéndola a sacar entre las malezas, la vio que relucía, y, temeroso no estuviese allí la culebra (dijo había visto varias veces allí una culebra muy ponzoñosa que acá llaman *pangavasun*²³, y que era muy grande), no se atrevió a meter la mano ni ver lo que era, hasta que avisó a un compañero suyo, y ambos fueron, hicieron ruido y menearon con palos la tinaja por ver si estaba dentro la culebra, y, viendo que no salía, se llegaron y hallaron una piedra del tamaño, según dijeron de un *Daó*²⁴ (es una fruta como [una]²⁵ avellana de grueso) muy luciente. Escondiéronla, y de noche fueron a un español, que estaba allí cobrando tributo, y por muy poca cantidad (como no sabían su precio y valor) se la vendieron.

Súpolo después el amo. Alegó nulidad. Acudió al Padre dicho, que hizo sus diligencias para que el español la volviese, o la sacase para que la vieses, pero no hubo remedio, porque temió que, si la sacaba, no se la habían de volver. Y se quedó con ella porque no hubo quien le pudiese apremiar a volverla.

Como éste, y el pasado hay muchos casos semejantes de carbuncos, o que se han deslustrado con el fuego y perdido su resplandor, o de otros que han engañado a los indios, llevándose por vil precio lo que tanto se estima y vale; de modo que me parece que no se puede dudar el que se hallen, pero no solo en las dichas culebras, aunque los de ella son mayores, sino también en otras de las muy ponzoñosas, y aun en los gusanos que llaman ciento-pies (de que trataremos más abajo), que dicen tienen también de estas piedras muy resplandecientes, aunque menores, y en general aun en las lagartijas se hallan más o menos resplandecientes o lustrosas.

Pasemos ya a tratar de las culebras ponzoñosas, que son sin número. *Ibingan*²⁶ llaman a la que en México víbora y, aunque dicen que allá son muy grandes, acá las exceden en tamaño, aunque no parece

and read a letter. according to an old missionary Father here, a learned, saintly and completely truthful person, of great character known as Father Juan Campion. We shall say something about him in the last *Book* when we speak about his death, which was in my hands.

This Father, then, told me that while he was in the town of *Guiuan* on the Island of *Ibabao*, there was a slave, of a certain *Principal*, who found one in an earthen jar. They keep many of these in the forest so as to put oil in them with which they have a great trade in that town, in order not to clutter up their houses with them. Upon going to get the jar out of the thicket, he saw that it shone and fearful lest the snake might be there, he said that on various occasions he had seen the very poisonous snake which they call here *pangauason* and which was very large, he did not dare to put his hand in, nor see what it was until he notified a companion of his and they both went. They made a noise and wiggled the jar with sticks to see if the snake was inside. Seeing that it did not emerge, they came up and found a stone of the size, as they said, of a *daó*, which is a fruit, the size of a thick hazelnut, very lustrous. They hid it and went to a Spaniard at night who was there collecting tribute. For a very small amount they sold it to him, since they did not know its price and value for their poll tax.

The master of the native, finding it out later, alleged the sale to be null. He went to this Father who made efforts to have the Spaniard return the stone or produce it so that they might see it, but it was fruitless because he feared that if he produced it they would not return it to him. He kept it because there was no one who could compel it to be returned.

Such as this and the one before, there are many similar instances of carbuncles which have either become dulled by fire and lost their luster or others that have deceived the natives who ask for a miserable price for what is so greatly esteemed and valued. Therefore, it seems to me that one cannot doubt that they may be found, not only in the snakes mentioned, however, although these are the largest, but also in others of the most poisonous variety and even in the worms which they call centipedes. We shall discuss them below. They say that these have also lustrous stones, although smaller. In general even in the little lizards are found resplendent or lustrous stones.

We may now pass on to treat of the poisonous snakes, which are numerous. The one known in Mexico as viper is called here *ibingan*; although it is said that they are very large there, here they exceed

son tan carniceras como allá, ni tienen cascabel. Más ponzoñosas sí, pues pocos se escapan mordidos de ellas, y más si muerden a medio día, que por esto a una especie de estas llaman los indios *odtohan*,²⁷ que quiere decir que, en picando a mediodía, morirá antes de anochecer sin remedio.²⁸

Así le sucedió a un muchacho de nueve a diez años, a quien picó una de estas culebras al punto de medio día, estando jugando con otros cerca de un pie de cañas de estas grandes de acá, donde tenía su guarida. Y aunque le dieron muchas contras, y a mi me lo trajeron a las cinco de la tarde, poco más o menos, no pudimos, con cuantos remedios aplicamos, librarle, porque ya el veneno se había apoderado del corazón. Y así antes de las seis murió, aunque aquel mismo día había yo curado a otro a quien por la mañana había mordido otra culebra de la misma especie, por no estar el veneno quizás tan fuerte en esta especie por la mañana como al mediodía, o porque no tiene el cuerpo humano las mismas disposiciones, y más acá con los calores, que con el fresco que suele hacer por las mañanas.

Dumorogmon ²⁹ llaman a otra especie, más fiera aún que la pasada, en especial cuando tiene hijos pequeños, porque suelen envestir a los que pasan por allí cerca y es de tan mortal veneno como la otra. Es negra totalmente, excepta la barriga que es cenicienta, y el negro es muy atezado. Suele hacer su casa, o nido, juntando mucha cantidad de broza, que acá llaman *dogmon* ³⁰, y de esta particular diligencia suya (que las demás se acojen en troncos de palos huecos, o entre peñas etc.) le dan el nombre que quiere decir “que hace semejantes montones,” y no solamente a los hombres y animales enviste, pero aun a las otras culebras si pasan por cerca de su habitación.

Diré aquí lo que me contó un principal de todo crédito (y que era fiscal mayor y cabeza de *Barangay* ³¹ que acá llaman a los que son caciques, que así los llaman en otras partes de Indias, que corresponde a “señores de vasallos” en nuestra lengua, porque ellos eran en su antigüedad los señores absolutos, como veremos, cuando tratemos de su modo político y gobierno antiguo).

Díjome, pues, que, viniendo un día al pueblo ³² para esperar al Padre, que había de llegar al pueblo a visitar (como acá solemos) la gente y juntarla, al llegar cerca de la iglesia (que como de indios eran sus cercas, o tabiques, de palos y mal parados) oyó golpes dentro de

them in size, although it does not appear that they are as carnivorous as there, nor do they have a rattle, but are more poisonous. Few escape who are bitten by them, and especially if bitten at midday. For this reason, the natives call one variety of these, *udtohan*, which means that in biting anyone at midday, he would die before nightfall without fail.

Thus, it happened in the case of a boy of nine or ten years who was bitten by one of these snakes at exactly noon. He was playing with some others near a cluster of bamboos, of the very large variety that grow there, where the snake had his cover. Although they gave the boy many antidotes and they brought him to me at approximately five in the afternoon, we could not bring relief with whatever remedies we applied because now the poison had seized the heart. Hence, he died before six; however, that same day I had cured another whom another snake of the same variety had bitten in the morning, because the venom perhaps is not as powerful in this species in the morning as at midday, or because the human body does not have the same ability, especially here with the heat, and with the coolness that occurs in the morning.

They call another species *dumorogmon*, which is more fierce even than the previous one; especially when it has small offspring, because it is accustomed to attack those who pass near it and its poison is as fatal as in the other. It is completely black, except for the belly which is ash-colored; the black is very black indeed. It constructs its dwelling or nest by joining a large quantity of bark and leaves which here they call *dugmon*. As a result of its particular activity they give that name which means "to make these similar piles." The others take shelter in the trunks of hollow logs, or between rocks, etc. It not only attacks people and animals, but even other snakes if they pass near its dwelling.

I shall relate here what a *Principal*, who is completely worthy of credence, told me. He was *fiscal mayor* and *cabeza de barangay*, as those are called here who are *caciques*, and called thus in other parts of the Indies and which corresponds to lords and vassals in our tongue, because in ancient times they were absolute lords, as we shall see when we treat of their political ways and their ancient government.

He told me, that he was coming one day to the town to wait for the Father who was to arrive at the town to visit the people, as we are accustomed to do here. On this arrival to gather them together near the church, which because it was a native church, its walls or partitions were of poles and badly constructed, he heard blows inside the

ella, como de los hombres que luchaban con grandes zapatazos de cuando en cuando. Admiróse, porque no había hombre, chico ni grande, en el pueblo. Llegóse a ver lo que era, y vió dos culebras (la una de esta especie *dumorogmon*, y la otra *Ibingan*, de que dijimos en el numero pasado), enroscándose y dándose bocados. Su tamaño, me dijo, era de una palma que llaman *anahao* ³³, que es mayor que el muslo del hombre más fornido.

No se atrevió a llegar cerca, pero con curiosidad atendió a ver en qué paraba ³⁴. Y después de un grande rato dijo que la una de ellas se quedó como vencida y medio amortiguada en mitad de la iglesia, y la otra se salió fuera, aunque a poco rato volvió con unas matillas de hierba (no la pudo conocer, aunque dijo tenía las hojas pequeñas y de color verdinegro) y, llegándose a la otra que estaba medio muerta o amortiguada (del veneno, sin duda, de la contraria), le aplicó dicha hierba en los oídos y sienes, y se la puso después en la boca, con lo cual la otra volvió en sí y se salieron ambas fuera de la iglesia, a cuyas espaldas había hecho la una su nido ³⁵, o *dogmon*, que dijimos; que, cuando se juntó la gente, deshicieron y quemaron, con que se huyó.

Para contar todas las demás especies de culebras ponzoñosas que hay por acá y decir sus propiedades y diferencias, era menester un libro entero. Diré de las más nombradas algo, y acabaré con la menor de todas y de mayor ponzoña en el capítulo siguiente.

Manlalaio ³⁶ llaman a una culebra muy pintada y que casi vuela [porque da unos saltos tan largos que parece vuela]³⁷. Y cuando camina, lleva la mayor parte del cuerpo en el aire, en que está casi en pie. Es ponzoñosa y se arroja de los árboles contra la gente, o se viene como volando a ellos, cuando quiere hacer presa. Esta es una de las más temidas de estos naturales, porque, cuando uno la ve, la tiene ya encima.

Calapiun es de escamas, entreveradas de negro y amarillo. Parece muy bien y es también ponzoñosa, aunque algo torpe. Llámánla así porque se parece a la fruta de un bejuco, llamado *calapi* ³⁸, que es de estos colores.

Ongor ³⁹ llaman a otra que según su nombre, enviste a los pájaros ⁴⁰ o a los que pasan por cerca de ella, y es de las más ponzoñosas.

Taligatos ⁴¹ a otra especie que dicen (será cuento suyo) que son

church, as though from men who were fighting and with great stamping as of feet from time to time. He wondered at this, because there was not a single man, young or old in the town. He came up to see what it was; he saw two snakes, one of the *dumogmon* species, and the other *ibingan*, of which we spoke in the past number, twisting about one another and biting each other. He told me that their size was about a palm called *anahaw*, which is larger than the thigh of a robust man.

He did not dare to come near to them but filled with curiosity he waited to see how all would end. After a long interval of time, he said that one of them was left as though conquered and half dead in the middle of the church. The other went outside, although in a short time it returned with a little bunch of herbs. He was not able to recognize it, although he said that it had small leaves and of a deep green color. Coming up to the other one which was half dead or dying, doubtless from the venom of the other one, it applied this herb to its ears and temples. Afterwards, it put it in its mouth with the result that the other revived and both went out of the church, at the back part of which the one had made its nest or *dugmon*, as we said. When the people assembled, they took it apart and burned it so that the snake fled.

In order to describe all the species of poisonous snakes which are here, it would take an entire book to show their peculiarities and differences. I shall say something of the best known and I shall finish with the smallest of all the most poisonous, in the following chapter.

They call *manlalayog* a very mottled snake and which almost flies because it makes a series of leaps so long, that it seems to be flying. When it travels, it carries the greater part of its body in the air so that it is almost standing upright. It is poisonous and throws itself from the trees onto people, or it comes after them as though flying when it wishes to take a captive. This is one of the most feared by these natives because when one sees it, it is already on top of him.

The *kalapiun* has scales of a mixture of black and yellow. It has a fine appearance and is also poisonous but somewhat torpid. They call it thus because it resembles the fruit of a rattan, called *kalapi*, which has these colors.

Ungor is what they call another one, which, according to its name, attacks birds or those who pass very close to it. It is one of the most poisonous.

Taligatos is another species which they say, it is their story, has

cien compañeras en que, en matando una de ellas, todas las demás acuden: y así, aunque la vieran, no la matan.

Finalmente, fuera nunca acabar. Las especies que yo he contado, pasan de veinte; unas peores que otras. Algunas he visto yo con la lengua hendida en dos partes; otras, en tres, otras con una sola, pero con alillas como hierro de saeta.

Los colores son varios. Hélas visto totalmente verdes, sin mezcla; otras medio verdes la parte de la cabeza, y la de abajo coloradas. De estas dicen que, en mordiendo, vive tanto el herido cuanto dura en secarse una hoja de plátano, que de verde suele poner[se]⁴² amarilla y algo colorada, y otras cosas a esta tenor; todo la cual dicen enseñados de la experiencia de la eficacia de sus venenos.

a hundred companions. Upon killing one of them, all the rest rush up. Consequently, even if people may see them, they would not kill them.

Finally, to sum up, for otherwise we would never finish: the varieties which I have counted exceed twenty; some worse than others. I have seen some with the tongue extended in two parts; others in three, still others with only one but with little wings like the iron of an arrow.

They have various colors. I have seen them completely green without any mixture; others with the head section half green and that of below, colored. About these, they say, that when bitten, the wounded one lives as long as a banana leaf takes on drying to turn from green to yellow and somewhat reddish, and other matters in this vein. All of them they tell as taught from the experience of the deadliness of their poisons.

CHAPTER 9 – ANNOTATIONS

¹ In Muñoz text *indecible*.

² In Muñoz text *aun*.

³ *Hálas* - Snake. Also the figure of a snake. V. gr. *Tinocob aco sin hálas*. I have been bitten by a snake. Cfr. Sánchez de la Rosa, Antonio, and Alcázar, Antonio Valeriano. *Diccionario español - bisaya para las provincias de Samar y Leyte*, Manila, 1914, 135, Bisayan Part.

⁴ In Muñoz text *culebra* and *serpiente*.

⁵ *Sawa*. Vide *Sawá*. Boa. The biggest snake known. Its length can reach ten meters. The color of the skin can vary much, but it is always a combination of beautiful colors. It is not poisonous. According to the natives of Samar it is so strong that it can hold a carabao. Its excrement is medicinal. Cfr. Sánchez - Alcázar, *op. cit.*, 293, Bisayan Part.

⁶ In Muñoz text *suelen*.

⁷ In Muñoz text *pues*.

⁸ *Daw dinagit sin sawa*. It seems to be one of the sayings of the natives of Samar. *Alcina* does not translate literally, but it seems to mean that it is impossible to escape a difficult situation as it is impossible to escape the *sawa*.

⁹ In Muñoz text *cazan estas culebras y se los tragan*.

¹⁰ *Fides sit penes auctorem*: Let us give credit to the author.

¹¹ *Palmo*. From the Latin *palmus*. A measure of longitude divided equally in twelve parts or *dedos* (fingers). It is equivalent to 21 centimeters. It is supposed to be the extensions of an outreached hand of a man from the tip of the thumb to the little finger. (Cfr. *Real Academia Española. Diccionario de la lengua española*, h-zuzon, Madrid, 1984, 1000).

¹² The word is spelled correctly with the 'g' at the end; however, it is common to pronounce it without it and only as *bitín*: a serpent of various colors which usually stays high up in the trees. Sánchez - Alcázar, *op. cit.*, 50, Bisayan Part. Tramp identifies it as a boa constrictor, *op. cit.*, p. 53. It is not poisonous, with brown markings and found in tropical America also.

¹³ In Muñoz text *descolgar*.

¹⁴ In Muñoz text *candela*.

¹⁵ *Ormoc* is the official name but properly and correctly it should be known as *Ugmuk*; it is cited thus in ancient chronicles and in early histories. It is situated on the eastern coast of *Leyte* between the towns of *Merida* and *Albuera*, on a fine bay.

The word *ugmuk* means, according to Artigas y Cuerva, 'a low area; a sunken place.' According to Judge Romualdez, this word must come originally from the root or variant of *dugmu*, *dugmuk* o *rugmuk*. The place which the *población* occupies is much

lower than the rest of the terrain around it. As if from the north to the south and toward the east, it is so formed that the waters run to the river which runs by the extreme north of the town.

Tramp, cites these two words and gives its meaning in the entries: *dugmo*, v. to crush; to squeeze to the ground; to fall flat on the ground. *Dúgmok*: v. to crush; to squeeze; to know down; to disintegrate; to break into tiny pieces; to break violently. *op. cit.*, p. 140. Sanchez provides the similar meaning: *dugmuc*: rotten thing something like powdered and grinded ash or flour.. - *nadugmuc na*. To grind. Derivatives seem difficult in explaining matters.

Father Combés says that this is a contraction of the word *lumu-luku*, which means 'a town situated near the bottom of the bay'.

It was at Ormoc where Magellan first anchored and where he stayed for a few days in the month of March 1521.

All in all, in August 1596, Father Chirino arrived to Ormoc, accompanied by Fathers Alonzo Rodriguez and Leonardo Celsi whom he left there and who were welcomed by the *datu* of Ormoc, who learned the *doctrina* well and received the faith eagerly.

In 1605 the Caragas and Camucons plundered and devastated, both Ormoc and Baybay, and took some 90 captives and slaughtered many others.

In 1634, Cachil Corralat better known in history as Sultan Kudarat, after making peace with the Spaniards, sent an expedition, composed of 22 vessels, to the Province of Leyte: robbing, plundering and setting the town of Sugud, Ibinangan, Cabalian, Canamucan, Baybay and Ormoc into flames. Ormoc was destroyed almost completely where eighteen *caracoas* arrived on December 3 in that same year. Artigas y Cuerva, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-325.

¹⁶ *The Copia Naval* text, the one we follow, mistakenly reads 'Isla de Cebu'; it should read 'isla de Leyte,' as the *Muñoz* text has it. Since Ormoc overlooks Cebu Island and Leyte like Samar, at that time, belonged to the province of Cebu, the *amanuensis* confused the province with the island.

¹⁷ In *Muñoz* text *18 años*.

¹⁸ In *Muñoz* text *la mayor de ellas*.

¹⁹ In *Muñoz* text *tiene*.

²⁰ A City in northeastern Spain, in Catalonia and some eighty kilometers north-east of Barcelona.

²¹ In *Muñoz* text *Givan*. A town of Samar situated on the southernmost eastern tip of the Island separated by shallow waters from three smaller islets of Calicoan, Sulanga and Candolu, running southeast. Today it belongs to Eastern Samar.

Sanchez has the word *Guiuang*, an adjective, which means something empty, void or hollow. *Op.cit.*, 130, Bisayan Part. Today Guiuan, without final g, is the spelling of the town. *Guiuanun*: is an individual who dwells there. The original word should be *giwanun*: rain water which gathers in the rock fissures of some cliffs which is brackish and mixed with salt water of the beaches. Cfr. *Ibidem*. Its second meaning is: a small creature that goes flying over the waters and known as *tejedera* (a whirling beetle.) *Op. cit.*

In his *Part Two* of the *Historia...1668, Book 3*, Alcina dedicates the entire Chapter 25 to this large ancient *pueblo*, known even in more ancient times as *Butag*. It was

this town that was sighted, states Alcina, by the Magellan expedition but he did not anchor there or on Suluan Islet, as Nicholas Cushner stated in his work: *The Isles of the West: Early Spanish Voyages to the Philippines 1521-1564*, pp. 19-20. Magellan made the first landfall on the Island of Homonhon, when he left the Ladrones Islands some three hundred miles away, on March 17, 1521.

Antonio Pigafetta, Magellan's chronicler states: "The island where we were is called Humunu [Homonhon] but inasmuch as we found the springs there of the clearest water, we called it '*acquada da li buoni segnialli*' (watering places of good omens)."

All remained on Homonhon for some ten days, from March 17-26. Two Sundays were spent there and on Monday of Holy Week they left and sailed further south where they anchored again at Butuan. Pigafetta: *The First Voyage Around the World and De Moluccis Insulis* (Regal Printing: Manila, 1969) pp. 23-25.

Homonhon Island is the second largest dependent island of Samar, out of the 259 of them. It is situated about fourteen miles due south of Guiuan and measures some 26 square miles. *Gazetteer of the Philippine Islands* (Government Press: Washington, 1903), p. 802.

It was in Guiuan that Juan Jose Delgado began to write his *Historia general sacro-profana, política y natural de las Islas del Poniente llamadas Filipinas*, in 1751, and completed it in Palapag, Northern Samar today, in 1754. It was published only in 1892 in Manila. In volume one, pp. 20 and 240 Delgado describes the large fortress that was built in Guiuan.

When the Jesuits were suppressed, the town of Guiuan, along with Balangiga and Basey passed into the hands of the Augustinians in 1768 and placed under the jurisdiction of Dagami-Dulag, Leyte. It was easier to reach them by sea (these are situated on the southwestern coast) than through the heavily forested overland terrain. (Pedro G. Galende, O.S.A., "The Augustinians in the Philippines: 1565-1890," *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, Vol. XXI, No. 435, Jan-Feb., 1965, pp. 35-79). Still today there is no road connection with Leyte except the circuitous road through Borongan, across the island to Wright and down, through the San Juanico Bridge, to Tacloban. There is boat service between Guiuan and Tacloban.

It would be well, finally, to mention this incredible marvel that took place in Guiuan, its small islands and environs beginning on December 8, 1944 during World War II in the Pacific. We mention it here not because of its connection to Alcina and his *Historia*, but out of historical interest for the scholars of the Pacific War.

A mammoth, gigantic military installation and airfield were constructed within a span of only fourteen days, at the southeastern tip of Samar. The Naval Base was located on a peninsula, three miles wide and eleven miles long and on Calicoan Island, which is more than a mile wide and seven miles long, and separated from mainland Samar by 800 feet of shallow water.

A survey party of four officers and 100 men arrived to Guiuan on December 3, 1944 to lay out the site for the bomber field, detachments of the 61st and 93rd battalions landed the next day, and earth moving was started a week later - December 8, 1944.

780 bulldozer operators and gradersmen were assigned and 184 men to equipment maintenance on a 24-hour basis. First landing by heavy planes was made on December 22, 1944, only 14 days after the start of construction. The men produced *7,000 feet of 100-foot strip with 50-foot shoulders; five alert areas, 5,000 feet of taxiways, and 50 handstands.*

On December 31, 1944, the first fighter squadron was ordered to the field. Surfacing of the strip with yellow coral was finished on January 15, 1945, and the next day

the first bomber squadron arrived.

After its completion, the strip was used principally by the Liberators of the Philippines, the 5th and 13th Air Forces.

Facilities were built for overhaul and repairs; gasoline storage for 15,000 barrels; administrative building; housing and messing facilities for 2,000 men, headquarters for the naval station was located within the boundaries of Guiuan. Office space was provided by renovating a schoolhouse and various other buildings and by erection of quonset huts and tents. Living quarters and messing facilities for 5,500 men were erected from quonset huts and tents.

Tubabao Islet, a triangular shaped island in Leyte Gulf, and tip of Samar, and west of Guiuan and separated from Samar by a narrow strait, was selected as the site for a 'Receiving Station'. It became a quonset city which included mess halls, recreation facilities, and utilities for 10,000 men. The islet was connected to mainland Samar by a timber bridge, 515 feet long and 22 feet wide, with a 58-foot clear span in the center of the channel.

Manicani Islet, 8 miles west of Guiuan, was built-up as a major destroyer-repair base and a ship-repair unit. Wharves, berths for several large floating dry-docks, administration building, shops, water and steam lines, power systems, and fire-protection systems were built and set up. A 1,500 by 80-foot pier was constructed, a pontoon pier and a jetty for LST's were erected.

Ship-repair facilities were housed in 80 quonset huts and 150,000 square feet of large timber trussed structures. 25,000 feet of lines were installed for a saltwater, fire-prevention system, sanitation, fresh water and steam systems.

Numerous power stations, each consisting of approximately 24, 75-kw generators and all necessary distribution centers.

Six floating dry-docks, including the giant sectional ABSD's were brought to Manicani Island. Water treatment plant having a capacity of 840,000 gallons per day was constructed. 150 acres of swamp land were converted to hard ground to accommodate the construction; 150,000 cubic yards of the coral being excavated from the bay. Harbor improvement at this activity included the moving of approximately 5,000,000 yards of material by blasting and dredging.

In the town of Salcedo, on the northeastern coast of Samar and about twenty miles away from Guiuan, one of the Navy's largest motor-torpedo-boat bases was constructed. This base had all the necessary facilities for the overhaul and repair of 25 boats, in addition to administration and operation buildings. Loading piers, catwalk pier capable of mooring 30 boats; quonset type huts were erected to house 3,000 men; facilities included supply, dispensary, dental and recreational facilities.

Five miles north of Guiuan, a 3,000 bed fleet hospital was erected. Wards, built in an H shape, consisted of 311 prefabricated buildings and 14 quonsets, with a floor area of 320,000 square feet. A mess-hall with capacity of 3,000 men, by September 15, 1945 was completed.

Northwest of the hospital, a mall ammunition depot was built. Personnel facilities and a large pier were included in the works. Also about twenty miles of roads leading to and within the site.

In Bulusao, 35 miles northwest of Guiuan, a tank farm was erected; 31, one-thousand-barrel oil tanks constructed by the 105th Battalion. In Balangiga town, a sawmill was erected. The first mill was opened February, and the second in March, 1945. The amount of lumber cut increased from 126,000 board feet of rough lumber sawed in March to 325,000 board feet of lumber in May.

On Calicoan Island, wharves for cargo vessels were constructed on the Leyte Gulf side of Calicoan. Supply facilities near the wharves were erected to provide for storage and issue of general provisions; spare-parts distribution center for the fleet; ship's stores, dry provision, oxygen, acetylene, carbon dioxide, perishable goods and cement, were stored. Quonset warehouses were built in groups of twelve, through ribs of adjacent buildings overlapping about one foot to make a warehouse 120 feet wide and 300 feet long. 24, 5,800 cubic-foot refrigerators were set up; a 3,600 man camp was built, which included offices; a 14-bed sick bay, post office, a theater, were opened in April 18, 1945 and completed by June of the same year. 2,126,000-gallon steel tanks, a pumping station and gathering lines were constructed to collect rainwater.

To handle the cargo shipped into the supply depot, three 500-foot timber piers and one 500-foot pontoon pier for seven cargo ships, and one jetty for five LCT's were constructed.

80 acres were covered in the base construction of a depot on Calicoan Island. Warehouses consisted of some 40 quonset buildings; automotive and construction and equipment parts depot was built to supply parts to the entire Philippines. Pontoon assembly depot, a radio sound pool, and medical and ordinance depots were set up. Water systems, pumping stations were completed in 90 days. 12,000 feet of 12-inch line were laid north of the hospital area to Salcedo. Two feeder lines (one 6-inch and the other 8-inch) were laid in the Mercedes area with the 8-inch line connected to the PT-boat well and placed in operation.

On Tubabao Island a receiving station, 15,000 feet of 12-inch welded-joint pipes were laid for the Guiuan filtration plant. Of this, 12,000 feet of pipe were welded together on the Samar shore and floated across the bay, to be eventually sunk and anchored to the bottom of the bay.

Many primary and secondary highways and roads were built. Mercedes highway, running north from Guiuan for 20 miles; Guiuan-Calicoan highway, which stretched from Guiuan, eastward past the airstrip, south across a causeway, between Samar and across Calicoan for 2 and a half miles south Cfr. *Building the Navy's Bases in World War II*, vol. II, U.S., GPO, 1947, provided for Cantius Kobak in 1972, while ministering in Santuario de San Antonio Shrine, in Forbes Park, Manila, by Robert Manley, a navy man during the war and one responsible for the construction of the Bataan Monument at Bataan.

The magnitude and the swiftness of the construction of this entire undertaking is mind-boggling and something the editors would like to consider as the 8th wonder of the world, considering the rugged, difficult, hostile terrain.

However, what is more mind-boggling is what happened to all of this in almost lightening speed and fashion is its total cannibalization, dismantling and sale of equipment, disposed by the war-surplus central Philippine government agency. What transpired and happened to all of this is worse than any 'nightmare' that ever occurred!

It was a great Calbayognon, Samar politico, Jose Avelino, —who almost became president of the Philippine Republic and who was a Speaker of the Philippine Congress—the one responsible for the disposal of all army-navy-airforce material which was transferred to the Philippine Government when it was granted Independence in 1946.

Most of the equipment mentioned above was sold to business adventurers and mainly to the Chinese entrepreneurs at nominal cost. Much of the utilities were dismantled by the people from all over the Island of Samar and nearby islets. Even the water pipes running from the towns of Salcedo and Mercedes were torn out of the ground for metal to be sold.

Cantius Kobak visited many of these former facilities in 1967: it was truly a ghostlike atmosphere everywhere. Even the town of Guiuan was set back to the way it was in the mid-1600's. On the Island of Calicoan absolutely nothing was left of the splendor and glory of 1944-1945. There were elderly women, squatting and cutting out cement blocks where the runways were poured and putting them out for sale as bricks.

The other taxiways, aprons and landing strips had circular holes chiseled out and coconut trees planted; so much so, that the coconut groves were real neat-looking - no debris around them. This could have been a premier city of Samar if well planned and guarded. Somehow, devolution is stronger and more powerful than evolution, perhaps! Lucio Gutiérrez visited it in 1996. Guiuan town is as abandoned as it was before the time of liberation.

²² In Muñoz text *trato*.

²³ Unable to locate a word for this type of a snake; however, there is an entry, in Sánchez-Alcázar, under the term, *gauas* the meaning here is that which is outside or is drawn outside; excuse someone from penalty or guilt, free a person from danger or evil. V.gr. *Gauas na aco*: I am free. *Guiuanas si Maria Sin salas nga panorandon* Mary was liberated from original sin. Cfr. *Op.cit.*, 124, Bisayan Part.

²⁴ *Daó*. A large tree which carries a fruit like a plum; when mature it is hard; when green, it is made into a preserve or pickled. Sanchez-Alcaraz, *op. cit.* 107, Bisayan part. Tramp gives a wider and a more inclusive use of the word, but does not refer it to a tree or a fruit. *Daw*: adv. as; like; comparable, proportionate; seemingly; as if. *interj.* how! a. such; commensurate; comparative; comparable; proportionate. *part.* please (used with commands to show politeness); they say; they tell me; wonder (*interrogative*). *op. cit.*, p. 129.

²⁵ In Muñoz text *una*.

²⁶ *Ibingan*. Vide *Ibiñgan*. A very poisonous snake. It is of large proportions. The female, when breeding, can chase people. Cfr. Sanchez - Alcázar, *op. cit.*, 165, Bisayan Part.

²⁷ *Udtuhan*. [In Muñoz text *otlohan*]. The word comes from *ódto*. Noon, midday; the hour the sun and the moon are at their zenith and from which they start waning. Day, that is, time span between ten and twelve noon. V. gr. *Onina quita uuli cún odto ná an adlao*. We shall return when it will be noon. V.gr. *Caodtohun*. Noon. *Odtohan*. South. *Caodtohan*. Cfr. Sanchez-Alcaraz *op. cit.*, 218, Bisayan Part. Perhaps the snake is called *udtohan* because the one bitten will not reach alive the noon time. Tramp, simply describes it as noon; midday (10:00am - 2:00pm), *op. cit.*, p. 461.

²⁸ In Muñoz text *en picando (antes de anochece) al mediodía, morirá antes de anochece sin remedio*.

²⁹ *Dumorógmon*. A very large and poisonous snake. Cfr. Sánchez-Alcaraz, *op.cit.*, 117, Bisayan Part. Seemingly derived from the root word *dumóg*: *n.* defect; *a.* old and unsafe for use; corrupt; worn-out; threadbare. *v. stat.* to corrode; to putrefy. Or perhaps the word comes from *dugmuc*: something that is rotten, pulverized, Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.* Difficult to ascertain or determine.

³⁰ *Dugmon*. A nest creatures build to give birth; nest of leaves made by a sow to provide a place to give birth and rear its piglets. *vt.* to stay, as a sow in its straw bed after giving birth. Tramp, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

³¹ *Barangay*. A vessel thus called, used by the datus of early Philippines times. Cfr. Sanchez-Alcazar, *op. cit.*, 37, Bisayan Part. Tramp identifies it as ancient boats used by *datus* or chiefs; and *barangay* as a village, a unit of Filipino community founded in ancient times by the immigrating people of one boat, a *barangay*. *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

³² In Muñoz text *al pueblo* is not found.

³³ *Anahaw*. A fan palm, *livistonia rotundifolia*: a large tree used for fish corral posts which has wide leaves used for fans and hats. Tramp, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

³⁴ In Muñoz text *paraban*.

³⁵ In Muñoz text *cuyas espaldas tenía la una hecho su nido*.

³⁶ In Muñoz text *Malalaiog*. Derives from the word *Láyog*: To stretch or to lengthen, perhaps in likeness to one palm. *Layóg*. This is said precisely of the price of the *bahandines* which they give as *bugay* because they put a double price or more of their value. *Lalayogon guihapon en bahandi sa bugay*. *Malalayog*: a species of snake that is long and swift. *Nadupung na in malayog*. It is said of those who being very quick and capable, it seems they have become slow and numb and have lost their strength and alertness. Sanchez, *op. cit.*

³⁷ The phrase *Porque da unos saltos tan largos que parece vuela* is found in Muñoz text and lacking in the Naval copy, the one we follow.

³⁸ *Calapí*. A thick and long rattan, which gives clusters of fruit and is of a pleasant sour taste. *Baga hinolog nga calapi*. It is said of the pale and sick man. The husk of this fruit is of a yellowish color. Sanchez, *op. cit.*, 78, Bisayan Part. An edible fruit of rattan or winding palm plant. Tramp, *op. cit.* p. 81. Sanchez, *op. cit.*

³⁹ Unable to find this word.

⁴⁰ In Muñoz text *pasajeros*.

⁴¹ Unable to find this word; but the *gatós* means one hundred in Bisayan. *Gatusan*. A poisonous snake of this name. Sanchez, *op. cit.*, 124, Bisayan Part.

⁴² In Muñoz text *ponerse*.

Chapter 10

Capítulo 10

LA MENOR CULEBRA EN CUANTIDAD Y DE MAYOR PONZOÑA QUE POR ACÁ SE HALLA Y DE OTRAS SABANDIJAS PONZOÑOSAS

Trataré en este capítulo, dejando otras muchas culebras, de dos solas o tres, por ser particulares, y así ellas como lo que de ellas dicen estos naturales, y de otras sabandijas ponzoñosas y que suelen matar con su veneno.

*Tuna*¹ llaman estos naturales a una culebrilla que, por estar siempre en la tierra y metida en ella, se la da el mismo nombre; porque *tuna* quiere decir “tierra.” Es esta culebrilla (héla visto muchas ² veces) del color y tamaño de una lombriz de tierra. Llegará a tener un palmo de largo. Todo su cuerpo es de color de tierra como las lombrices que nacen de ella. Sólo se diferencia ³ en que tiene una cabecilla algo mayor con sus ojitos negros y su lengüecilla como arpón. Hay dos diferencias o tres de este género.

*Dupung*⁴ es otra que crece más; pero, cuando mayor es, no excede al tamaño del pulgar humano. Es algo más larga, pero tiene la cabeza dos veces mayor que su cuerpo. Y otra diferente es la que llaman *buragan*⁵, que es como media entre la *tuna* y el *dupung*, siendo su tamaño ⁶ mayor que la una y algo menor que la otra. De la eficacia y vehemencia del veneno de estas sierpecillas dicen que es incurable, y así tienen un refrán suyo que dice: *dao sinugor sin tuna*, que es decir que “ya es cosa sin remedio,” como a quien mordió la culebrilla *tuna*, y así desesperan y no quieren darles contras; que es cierto que, si se dan con tiempo, son provechosas.

De la llamada *dupung* dicen que es muy torpe y que se menea muy pesadamente; providencia divina porque, siendo tan ponzoñosa, si fuera tan ligera como otras, fuera mayor su daño, y así de esta culebra,

Chapter 10

CONCERNING THE SMALLEST SNAKES IN SIZE AND THE MOST POISONOUS THAT ARE HERE AND ABOUT OTHER POISONOUS REPTILES

I shall treat in this chapter of only two or three snakes, omitting many others, because they are curious both in themselves and in what these natives say about them and also about other poisonous reptiles which customarily kill with their venom.

Tuna is what the natives call here a small snake because it is always on the ground or beneath it. The word means 'earth' and that is why they are given this name. This little snake, which I have seen it many times, is the color and size of an earthworm. It reaches a *palmo* in length; all of its body is earth color like the worms which are born from it. The snake differs only in that it has a head somewhat larger, with black eyes and a tongue like a harpoon. There are two or three different types of this kind.

Dupong is another which grows larger, but when it is full grown it does not exceed the size of the human thumb. It is a bit larger but it has a head two times greater than its body. Another different one is what they call *burakan*, which is about halfway between the *tuna* and the *dupong*; its size being larger than the one and somewhat smaller than the other. As to the efficacy and potency of the poison of these little snakes, they say that it is incurable. Hence, they have a proverb which says: *Daw sinugod sin tuna*, which means that "it is a matter without any remedy," like the one who is bitten by the little snake *tuna*. And so, they lose hope and do not wish to give antidotes. It is certain that if these were given in time, they would be helpful.

Concerning the so-called *dupong*, they say that it is very sluggish and that it moves very slowly. This is divinely providential, because, being so poisonous, if it were as agile as the others, its danger would be greater. They have a saying about this snake, because it is

por ser muy espaciosa y torpe, y de la otra llamada *manlalaiong*, de que dijimos que parece que vuela, tienen un refrán que dice: *Dao dupung na an manlalaiong*, que es lo mismo decir que “la misma cólera se convirtió en flema,” y que “el más agudo y entendido suele tener sus necedades y yerros,” que corresponde al refrán latino: *Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*.⁷ Esta *dupung* viene a tener el color verdinegro, y la llamada *boracan* algo más verde y semejante a una flor que llaman *burac*, aunque la *dupung* es de mayor ponzoña.

A otra culebra, que va y viene también y vive en el agua como en la tierra, llaman *tigu*,⁸ de la cual dicen una cosa singular, y es que, cuando muerde a alguno, si el mordido da voces y llama a alguien, o en su ayuda o para otro efecto, que aquel que responde a la tal voz es el que siente la ponzoña, haciendo en él el efecto que había de hacer en el mordido: pero que, si no hay quien le responda, se queda⁹ en el mordido la ponzoña. Esto es tan asentado entre estos naturales que es común sentir de todos ellos.

Vean los filósofos cómo obra aquella ponzoña con tanta distancia y qué calidad es la suya; que, si es verdad lo que éstos dicen, excede al torpedo y otros animales que trasfunden el veneno, o calidad, por algún intermedio. Pero esta culebra no hallo yo el modo como puede, [sin que pase por algún cuerpo intermedio, como si que ya]¹⁰ hemos visto que pasan el veneno de algunas de las culebras que dijimos arriba, del palo con que se mató, a la mano y cuerpo del que no lo largó luego.

Y un Padre nuestro a quien en el camino asaltó una de las dichas culebras (que no hizo poco de defenderse con el bordón que llevaba, que era de un recio bejuco, con que la mató, y lo mismo sucedió a un criado mío con un cuchillo), por poco muriera despues, porque del bordón se pasó a la mano y se fué esparciendo por el brazo y cuerpo, de modo que a puras contras se pudo atajar aunque lo lavó muchos meses. Pero que por el aire, y ésto respondiendo no más, se comunique, y que, si no hay quien responda, por más que grite no se embargue su operación, es cosa maravillosa e inaudita.

Dejando ya las culebras, vamos a otros animalillos o sabandijas (que aunque no tanto) hay algunas poco menos ponzoñosas.

very slow and torpid, and of the other called *manlalayog*, that we said that seems to fly, which states: *Daw dupong na an manlalayog*, which is the same as saying, "that anger is turned into phlegm" and that the "sharpest and wisest usually has its follies and errors", which corresponds to the Latin saying: *Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*. This *dupong* comes to have a dark green color and the so-called *burakan* is a bit greener; similar to a flower which they call *burak*. The *dupong*, however, is more poisonous.

Another snake, which also comes and goes, and lives in the water as well as on land, is called *tigu*. They tell a curious fact about it. It is, that when it bites someone, if the person bitten raises an outcry and calls someone, either for help or for some other purpose, the one who responds to that call is the one who suffers from the poison. It works the effects on such which it would have done on the person bitten. But if there is no one who replies to the person bitten, the poison works on the latter. This is so well agreed to among these natives that it is a common belief of all of them.

May the philosophers look into how that poison works at such a distance and what quality it has. If what these people say is true, it surpasses the '*torpedo*' and other animals which communicate the poison or quality through some intermediary. But I do not find in this snake the manner in which it can do so without it passing through some intermediary body, as we have seen that the poison passes from some of the snakes of which we spoke above, from the stick with which it was killed to the hand and body of the person who did not let go of it immediately.

One of our Fathers was assaulted on the road by one of these snakes. He made great effort to defend himself with the staff which he carried and which was of heavy cane with which he killed it. The same thing happened to a servant of mine with a knife. The Father might have died shortly afterwards, because from the staff, the poison passed to his hand and was dispersed, although his arm and body, so that with very pure antidotes it was arrested. However, he washed it for many months. But it is a marvelous and unheard of thing that the poison may be communicated through the air to someone who does no more than respond, and that if no one does, regardless of how much he shouts, its operation may not be hindered.

Leaving the snakes now, we go on to other little animals or reptiles that although they are not as poisonous as the snakes, there are some slightly less poisonous.

La mayor y más ordinaria es la que llaman *olalipan*¹¹ estos naturales, y los españoles acá cientopies, porque tienen muchos. Su hechura es como de escaques o escamas, tan largas como lo ancho de su cuerpo. Serán los mayores como el grueso de un dedo; los más largos tendrán un palmo. Son de muchos colores: verdes, amarillos, colorados, pardos y entreverados. Muerden tenazmente, no sólo por la boca sino por la cola también, en cuya extremidad tiene unas como puntas de alicates con que muerden también.

Es fatal su veneno para los puercos, o domésticos o monteses; para los hombres no tanto, aunque a algunos los maltratan mucho. Dura la fuerza del dolor veinticuatro horas y después ablanda. Suelen hincharse mucho las partes donde mordió. A algunos les dañan poco. Testigo soy yo, a quien han mordido algunas veces, y sólo sentí un escozor algo ardiente, y dejaron una roncha no muy grande, pero con sólo un poco de saliva se me quitaba el escozor en breve.

Es su contra más eficaz el ajo molido y otros muchos palos; hasta el molave¹², que acá el más ordinario (como dijimos) es contra molido, o raspado, aplicado al lugar y bebiendo su agua.

De estos dicen que crían sus piedras¹³ también, como carbuncos, y a algunos he oído yo que los han visto. Yo no la he visto y así no lo sé de cierto.

Cuentan acá los chinos que su Rey tiene una piedra de estos cientopies, muy reluciente, y que la estima mucho, que es señal de que será muy buena, por la indecible o increíble riqueza, que dicen tiene aquel Rey, de piedras preciosas; tanto que, cuando los años pasados robaron sus palacios y le mataron, se dijo por acá, que los soldados tártaros sacaban las bolsas, llenas de ellas, que trocaban a viles precios por comida y otras cosas viles.

Hay, fuera de los cientopies dichos, muchas arañas y de muchas diferencias, muy grandes y muy pintadas algunas, aunque no todas ponzoñosas. Eslo mucho una que llaman *damang*¹⁴ en unas partes. Es tan gruesa, o más, que el dedo pulgar, peluda, y se cría en partes húmedas, y dicen de ella que es casi tan ponzoñosa como las culebras.

*Banaiao*¹⁵ es otra especie, pequeña y de cortas piernas¹⁶, coloradas como la grana y tan ponzoñas que mata muy en breve. Hay muchas en la isla de Oton, y no son pocos los caballos, vacas, y aun hombres, que suelen morir de sus mordeduras.

The largest and the most common is the one these natives call *ulahipan* and the Spaniards here centepede because they have many feet. Their form is like *escaques* or scales, as long as the width of their body. The largest would be about the thickness of a finger and the longest are a *palmo*. They are of many colors: green, yellow, red, brown and multi-colored. The bite tenaciously; not only with their mouths, but with the tail also, where at its end they have something like pincers with which they also bite.

Their poison is fatal for hogs, be it domestic or wild; it is not as deadly for people but does affect some badly. The force of the pain lasts twenty-four hours and afterwards it eases. The places that are bitten customarily swell greatly; for some the pain is small. I am a witness as one whom they have bitten various times. I felt only a sharp, somewhat burning pain; these left a small swelling, but with only a bit of saliva I quickly rid myself of the smarting.

Its most effective antidote is ground garlic and many other kinds of logs. Even *molave*, which is the most common here, as we said, is an antidote when ground or scraped off, applied to the spot and its liquid drunk.

About these creatures, they say that they also grow their stones like carbuncles; I have heard from some that they have seen them. I have not seen them and so I do not know for certain.

The Chinese here say that their king has a very lustrous stone from these centipedes and that he esteems it greatly. This is a sign that it would be very fine because of the indescribable or unbelievable wealth of precious stones which they say that the king has; so much so that when they robbed his palaces in times past and killed him, it was said here that the Tartar soldiers carried off their pockets filled with them, which they traded at paltry prices for food and other mean things.

There are, aside from these centipedes, many spiders with many differences, very large and very much spotted; some, although not all, are poisonous. One that is especially so is what they call *damang* in some places. It is as thick or more so than a thumb; hairy and propagates in humid places. They say of it that it is almost as poisonous as the snakes.

Banayaw is another species with small and short legs; its color is like fine cloth and it is so poisonous that kills very quickly. There are many in the Island of *Oton* where not a small number of horses, cows and even people die frequently from their bites.

Muchas cosas he reparado yo en las arañas de por acá; sus redes y modos de cazar notables, que, estando lejos y escondidas, tienen dispuestos fuera de la tela, que sirve de red, varios hilos por donde suben y bajan a coger lo que cayó en su red, siendo cosa pequeña; que, si es grandecilla las rompe (que para los pobres desvalidos cualquiera tela de araña basta, cuando para los ricos y poderosos ni aun las mayores maromas). Con todo, hay algunas arañas por acá que tejen un hilo recio, que resiste, y se rompe con alguna dificultad. Yo he probado a tejerlos ¹⁷ y hacer un cordoncillo que puede muy bien servir para atar algunas cosas. Las demás cosas dejo por no alargar.

Pero, antes de pasar a otros animalillos ponzoñosos, diré de uno que es género de cientopies, aunque delgado y mucho menor que el que dijimos arriba. Llámalo *atipapalo*,¹⁸ porque, pisado o cortado, reluce como fuego de azufre y casi imita su olor. Este no es ponzoñoso, aunque mata, según dicen, cuando se entra en los oídos de alguno, porque va royendo hasta llegar al seso, y para esto es medicina la cola que dijimos del *miru*.

Otro género de cientopies es al que llaman *baiur*¹⁹ acá. Su hechura como unos gusanos que hay en España, redondos y algo negros que, en tocándolos, se encogen y ponen redondos o enroscados. Estos son tan grandes ²⁰ como el mayor dedo de la mano, cantan de noche como grillos pero mucho más recio, porque tienen la voz muy ²¹ sonora. Suelen echar unas espumas blancas que dicen son muy ponzoñosas. Hay varias especies de ellos, y los menores son como los de España de este género.

A los alacranes de allá llaman aca *urangurang*,²² porque se semejan a los camarones del mar. Su tamaño y hechura es como la de España, aunque acá son menos ponzoñosos, pues, cuando pican, sólo se hincha algo la parte donde picó, aunque a algunos les suelen dañar más, y casi como los cientopies, de que tratamos arriba. Debe de depender de las calidades así del agente como del paciente; y de este modo hay otras muchas sabandijas ponzoñosas, y apenas hay alguna que, poco o mucho, no tenga algo de esto, por las calidades de esta tierra que inclinan más a ser nocivas que en otras. Y así, por no alargar, las dejo, que basta de lo que es tan contrario a la vida en tantos y tan diferentes animales como acá acechan siempre a ella.

I have examined many notable things about the spiders, their webs, their remarkable manner of catching. Being at a distance and hidden, they have arranged outside of the web, which serves as a net, various threads by which they rise and descend to seize what fell into their net, providing that it is a small object. If it is a little large, it breaks the web. For the poor and destitute any kind of spider-webs is enough to hold them captive, whereas, for the rich and powerful not even the largest rope suffices. All in all, there are some spiders here that spin a strong thread which resist and is broken with some difficulty. I have tried to spin it together and make a little cord which can well serve to tie various things. The other matters I omit so as not to prolong this too much.

But before going to other small poisonous creatures, I shall tell about one which is a kind of centipede, although thin, and much smaller than that which we describe above. They call it *atipalo*, because when trod on or cut, it shines like the fire or sulphur and almost imitates its odor. This one is not poisonous although it kills, they say, when it gets into someone's ears, for it continues to gnaw until it gets to the brain. For this the remedy is the glue of the *miru*, as we said.

Another kind of a centipede is the one they call *bayur* over here. Its appearance is like some of the round worms that exist in Spain and somewhat black. When one touches them they contract and become a ball or curl up. These are as big as the large finger of the hand; they sing at night like the crickets, but very much louder because they have a very resonant voice. They usually emit some white foam which they say is very poisonous. There are various kinds of them and the smallest are like the ones of this type in Spain.

The scorpions of Spain are called here *uragutang*, because they resemble the shrimps of the sea. Their size and shape is like those in Spain; although here they are less poisonous. For when they bite, the part bitten only swells a bit; however, with some, it is usually more painful and almost like the centipedes which we discussed above. The effects will depend both on the characteristics of the agent as well as the sufferer. In this category there are many other poisonous reptiles and there are scarcely any which, in small or large degree, does not have something of this quality, because of the nature of this land where they tend more to be noxious than in other places. Hence, in order not to prolong this, I shall stop. This is sufficient about which is so opposed to life in so many and such different types of creatures as here are always lying in ambush to destroy.

Añadiré acá lo que apunté arriba, tocante a una piedra que llaman “de culebra,” no sé si por hallarse en ellas [o por ser contra ellas] ²³. Téngola conmigo, y así hablaré con más experiencia y mejores noticias que de otras que entran por el oído, que son más falibles.

Es su hechura puntualmente como una lenteja grande, su tamaño como la uña del dedo pulgar, el color verde oscuro, muy sólida y de mediano resplandor. Tiene a la una parte una mancha blanca, que está como ojo en medio de la piedra, y en ésta está su virtud; que no pocas veces he hecho la experiencia (por ser tan ordinarias por acá las mordeduras de las culebras y otros de los muchos animalejos ponzoñosos que hemos dicho) y las más con feliz efecto, y, cuando acuden con tiempo, siempre con bueno. Su uso es éste: en trayendo algun mordido de culebra, se busca la herida, que a veces es tan pequeña que no se halla. Cuando trae sangre, aplícase la piedra en dicho lugar, y se ase tan *fuertemente a él como si la clavaran con algún clavo*. Chupa la ponzoña tan sensiblemente que se siente que la llama y retira, aun cuando no se sentía su infección.

Estáse de esta manera apegada en aquel lugar hasta que chupa toda la ponzoña, y, en no habiendo más, ella misma se desase y se cae de suyo, dejando ya sin ponzoña el cuerpo. Para sacarle la ponzoña a esta piedra de dentro, se pone luego en algún vaso a remojo, con una poca de leche de cualquiera animal que sea, o de mujer. Puesta en la leche, comienza a hervir de suyo y despedir de sí la ponzoña, de modo que medio tiñe la leche con la sangre que chupó emponzoñada. Derrámase luego en parte excusada, porque cualquiera animal que la lamiera, muriera sin duda. Límpiase dicha piedra con un paño y guárdase. Y aunque he hecho con ella muchas experiencias, diré la que poco ha hice delante de muchos con un criado de casa, que de este caso se coligirán los otros, pues todos son semejantes.

En la cabecera de Palapag, que está junto al cabo del Espíritu Santo, fue una mañana un mozo de casa a sacar agua de una fuente muy copiosa que está bien cerca de ella; al poner el pie en el arroyo que sale de dicha fuente, sintió que le había picado algo, y, al mirarlo, vio que entre la hierbecilla de la orilla estaba una culebra, de las negras y muy ponzoñosa, que dijimos arriba, y luego se sintió asaltado de la ponzoña.

I shall add here what I pointed out above regarding a stone which they call of snake. I do not know whether it is because they are found in the snakes or because they are protection against them. I have it with me and so I shall speak with more experience and better information that the other kind which comes through hearsay and is more fallible.

Its shape is exactly that of a large lentil, its size like the nail of the thumb, its color is very dark green. It is very solid and moderately bright. It has on one place a white spot which is like an eye in the middle of the stone. In this lies its efficacy, of which I have frequently had experience, because the bites of snakes and other of the many poisonous animals are very commonplace here, as we have said, for the most part with happy results, and when they use it in time, always with good effect. This is how it is used. On bringing in someone bitten by a snake, one looks for the wound, which at times is so very small that it cannot be found. When blood is let, the stone is applied to that place, and it clings as strongly to it as if it were fastened with a nail. It draws out the poison so delicately that one is aware that it is attracting the poison and drawing it even when the infection was not felt.

In this way the stone is attached to the place where the poison is until it is all drawn out. When there is no more, the stone loosens itself and falls off by itself leaving the body now without a poison. In order to draw out the poison from the inside of the stone, it is placed in some vessel to soak with a bit of milk from any animal whatever or from a woman. When placed in the milk it begins to boil by itself and to emit the poison itself so that the milk is tainted with the poisoned blood which was drawn out. It is then poured out in some privy because any animal that may lick it would surely die. This stone may be cleaned with a cloth and put away. Although I have made many experiments with it, I shall tell about one which I performed a short time ago in the presence of many persons upon a household servant. From this example the others can be surmised for all are similar.

In the *Cabecera de Palapag*, which is next to the *Cape of Espiritu Santo*, there went one morning a household servant to draw water from a very copious spring. When he was near it, on putting his foot in the stream, which came from that spring, he felt that something had bitten him. On looking for it, he saw that among the little weeds of the bank, there was one of the black snakes, and very poisonous, as we have said above. He felt himself attacked immediately by the poison.

Amarróse por la pantorrilla un lienzo (que fue cerca del tobillo, o encima de él, donde le picó). Pudo volver a casa cuando ya tenía la pierna hinchada. Avisáronme, y fue preciso subirle a brazos. Hicimos las diligencias dichas, y no había media *Avemaria* ²⁴ que tenía la piedra aplicada cuando se asentó — que antes estaba con el dolor tendido — y dijo: “Ya chupa la piedra el veneno porque siento que se va hacia atrás”.

Estuvo poco más de un *Avemaria* la piedra y se desasió ella misma, y el mozo se levantó bueno y se desató el pañuelo de la pierna y se fue por su pie a lo que tenía que hacer.

Esto pasó delante de muchos de fuera, y algunos de dentro de casa, que no poco se admiraron. Y lo mismo me ha sucedido con otros varias veces.

Dióme esta piedra un piloto portugués en agradecimiento de algunas buenas obras que se hizo ²⁵ en cierta ocasión, que le importaba su reputación, y aun más; y me dijo que por la experiencia que de ella tenía, no la daría aunque le diesen doscientos pesos por ella. Importóle muchas más mi ayuda, pues vale más la honra que todo el haber.

Hállanse estas en el reino de Macasar,²⁶ donde se vende más baratas, pero no salen todas igualmente eficaces, siempre sí provechosas. Y aunque no sea más que el que huyen las culebras de donde ella está, es de mucha consideración para esta tierra.

Quiero acabar este capítulo con otro caso no tan feliz como éste, que me sucedió con otro mozo de casa antes que yo tuviese dicha piedra, y de él se colegirá lo maligno y fatal de estos animales y sus ponzoñas, y se conocerá también lo que dicen estos bisayas de las diferencias que hay entre estas culebras, señalando al veneno de unas menos de una hora, de algunas medio día, de otras ocho, y de otras tiempo más largo.

Fue, pues, al caso que en la cabecera de Carigara ²⁷ (en la isla de Leyte y cerca del pueblo que le dá el nombre, como dijimos arriba), yendo a rezar una madrugada la gente de casa, como se usa siempre, uno de los mozos de ella pisó uno que le pareció palo (era como el molledo del brazo, según dijeron, y como los palos que acá sirven de mano, o majadero, para moler o pelar el arroz, que ellos llaman *baio* ²⁸), pensando

He fastened a handkerchief around the calf, near the ankle where he was bitten, or above it, and was able to return to his house. By that time his leg was already swollen. They told me about it and it was necessary to raise him up by the arms. We performed the aforementioned diligences and it was not even half an *Ave Maria* after the stone had been applied when he sat up, when before he was lied down with the pain. He said: "now the stone is drawing out the poison, because I feel that it is diminishing."

The stone was in place a little more than one *Ave Maria* when it detached itself and the servant arose well. The handkerchief was untied and he went off walking to whatever task he had to do.

This happened in the presence of many from outside the household and some inside it. Many were amazed and the same thing has happened to me at other times.

A Portuguese pilot gave this stone to me in gratitude for some good deeds that I performed for him on a certain occasion which concerned his reputation and even more. He told me that because of the experience he had with it, he would not give it away even though they might give him two hundred pesos for it. My assistance was worth much more to him; for honor is worth more than any possession.

These stones are found in the kingdom of Macassar where they are sold more cheaply; not all are equally efficacious, but always beneficial. Even though it be no more than that the snakes flee the place where it is; this is an important consideration for this land.

I wish to end this chapter with another instance, not as happy as the one above. It happened to me with another household servant before I had acquired this stone. From this narrative it will be seen how malignant and fatal these animals and their poisons are. It will also be recognized what these Bisayans say concerning the differences that there are among these snakes; the poisonous quality of some manifesting itself in less than an hour, others in half a day and still others, in eight days and others even longer.

It happened that in the *Cabecera of Carigara*, on the Island of *Leyte* and near the town which gives it its name, as we said above, the people of the house going to prayer one morning, as is always done, one of the servants stepped on something that looked to him like a stick. It was like the fleshy part of the arm, as they said, and like the sticks that are used for a pestle or wooden pole for pounding or hulling rice,

sería alguno que acaso hubiesen allí dejado los muchachos era, empero, culebra que volvió la cabeza y le mordió encima del calcañar del un pie.

Sintió dolor, aunque no mucho, de modo que fue á rezar con los demás; pero en acabando, se halló más dolorido. Avisáronme, subió a arriba, díle varias contras, y, entre ellas, la tierra de San Pablo que acá es universal y muy eficaz remedio para todo género de ponzoñas, bebiéndola desleída con una poca de agua. Y son infinitos los que en todas estas Islas, por su beneficio, se han escapado de la muerte y librándose de dichas ponzoñas y de otras infecciones venenosas con tan celestial medicina, necesarísima en estas partes, tanto cuanto en cualquiera otra del mundo, por lor mucho que hay de uno y otro.

Parece que se sintió sin efectos del veneno después de bebida esta santa tierra, y volviose a su ministerio. Y estuvo tan bueno que pudo danzar en una fiesta, muy célebre, que diez o doce días después de lo dicho hicimos a [Nuestro]²⁹ Santo Padre Ignacio, juntando con ella la del Santísimo Sacramento, en que acompañó a otros muchos que danzaron (han salido los bisayas famosísimos danzantes y exceden a los demás de todas estas Islas Filipinas, en el aire y mudanzas, poco inferiores a los mejores españoles).

Pasada la fiesta, comenzó a sentirse algo indispuerto y ponerse pálido. No entendimos jamás que fuese del veneno sino de otro accidente. Hizo cama algunos días, sin saberlo yo, más de que estaba indispuerto, hasta que me dió gana de ir donde estaba, que era en casa aparte, donde vivían todos los mozos. Y cuando le ví, me admiró, porque tenía los ojos tan verdes como la hierba del campo, el color muy amarillo y que algo tiraba a verde claro. Escupió delante de mi y parecía zumo de hierbas muy verdes.

Entonces supe que había días que cuanto echaba por todas las vías del cuerpo era del mismo color. Eché de ver que era el veneno que había poco a poco hecho su operación, y, aunque aplicamos muchos remedios de raíces medicinales, no hubo remedio; con lo cual le dispuse para la muerte, y murió con todos los sacramentos; pero quedó, luego que murió todo el cuerpo como si le hubieran teñido de verde o dádole por todo él con zumo ³⁰ muy espeso de hierbas. Tanta como ésta es la actividad y eficacia de estas ponzoñas fieras.

which they call *bayo*. He thought that it might be one which the children had accidentally left there. It was, however, a snake which turned its head and bit him above the heel of one foot.

He felt pain, but it was not excessive, so that he went to pray with the others. But on finishing, it became more painful. The told me; he came up and I gave him various antidotes; among them '*la tierra de San Pablo*' which is universally used here and a very efficacious remedy for every kind of poison, drinking it with a little solution of water. There is an infinity of persons in all these islands who have escaped from death through its merits and been delivered from these poisons and other poisonous infections by this celestial medicine, so completely necessary in these regions as well as in any other place in the world, because of the great prevalence of all these dangers everywhere.

It seems that he felt himself to be without the effects of the venom after drinking this holy 'soil' and returned to his duties. He was in such good health that he was able to dance in a very noted feast which we held for our holy Father Ignatius, ten or twelve days after the above occurrence, joining with it that of the Most Blessed Sacrament. In this he accompanied many others who also danced. These Bisayans have shown themselves to be very famous dancers and surpass the others of all these Philippine Islands in the grace and the movements which are hardly inferior to those of the best Spanish ones.

When the *fiesta* was over, he began to feel somewhat indisposed and became pallid. We never believed that it might be the poison but rather some other cause. He took to his bed for a few days without my knowing more than that he was indisposed, until I felt the inclination to go where he was staying. He was in a house apart, where all the servants lived. When I saw him I was astonished because his eyes were as green as the grass of the field; his color very yellow and tending somewhat to be green. He spat in front of me and it seemed like a sap from very green grass.

Then I found out that for some days whatever he ejected through all the outlets of the body was of the same color. It is apparent that it was the poison which had performed its work little by little. Although we applied many remedies of medicinal roots there was no remedy. Therefore, I prepared him for death and died with all the sacraments. But as soon as he died, his whole body became as if completely green or had been all covered with the thick juices of herbs. Such as this is the action and effect of these violent poisons.

De lo dicho se colige cuán a la sorda van obrando, conociéndose sus efectos cuando ya es incurable el contagio, como acá lo experimentamos cada día; aunque, si se acude con tiempo y antes que el veneno se esparza por el cuerpo, sanan muchos; y sus contras, que no son pocas, tienen buen efecto. Pero más que ellas, la tierra de San Pablo, como dijimos, y la dicha piedra, como manifiestan los efectos.

From what has been gathered, one may realize how quietly these poisons go to work. One becomes aware of their effects after the infection is already incurable, as we experience here every day. However, if there is aid in time, and before the venom has spread through the body, many get well. The antidotes, which are numerous, have good results. But better than any other is this '*tierra de San Pablo*', as we said, and the aforementioned stone, as their effects demonstrate.

CHAPTER 10 – ANNOTATIONS

¹ *Tuna Vide Tona*. A snake of this name, small and very poisonous, normally found under the earth. *Baga sinogud sin tona*; it is said of what has no remedy, as if to say, if a viper bites you, no remedy is found in the pharmacy. Cfr. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, 363.

² In Muñoz text *algunas*.

³ In Muñoz text *diferencian*.

⁴ *Dupong*. A green snake, E.g., *Buhay kabtang san dupong, may dupong nga putong, ngan may uga nga dupong, nga бага uga in kalunhaw, ngan amo an malara*. This is an example of sluggishness and bluntness because they are as light as the others, as they are in the sea. *Sanchez [1711], op. cit.*

⁵ Derived from the Bisayan term *burak*: In Leyte it is the same as *alangilang* or whatever other flower of a tree. *Karbuburak, katpamurak*: a time of flowers or blossoms on trees. And for *burakan*, Sánchez [1711], gives this entry: a kind of a vine or also a name of snake which is not poisonous, nor large. E.g. *Burakan nga halas*, because it resembles a vine. *Op. cit.*

Under the entry *burak*, Tramp gives the following: *llang-ilang, Cananga odorata*; a tree whose flowers are very fragrant. It provides a necklace beads; its oil forms the basis of a perfume industry. *Op. cit.*, p. 63. This word *burakan* refers primarily to a tree along with its flower known as the *ilangilang* which is a fine light green after which this snake is named. This snake is not poisonous. Cfr. Sánchez [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁶ In Muñoz text *tamaño algo mayor*.

⁷ "Sometimes even the good Homer sleeps."

⁸ According to Sánchez, *tigó* or *tigú* is a water snake. In another entry he has again *tigú*, or *tigó* or *tighok*: which means to foresee, foretell, augur; to divine, to guess. To hit upon, to divine; to cast power; to have strong resistance. *Op. cit.* Tramp identifies it well: *tigó*: sea snake variety, *Hydrophiidae* family. Also, as divination, foreboding, guess, conjecture. *v.* to diagnose; to divine; to forecast; to infer; to make a conjecture; to predict; to solve. *vt.* to guess. *a.* foreboding; ominous, portentous. *Op. cit.*, p. 437. "*Tigu*: Snake that lives ordinarily in the sea. Cfr. Sánchez [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 354.

⁹ In Muñoz text *se queda* is lacking.

¹⁰ The Naval copy omits the words in brackets, taken here from the Muñoz copy. The Naval copy adds *si que ya* after *como puede*.

¹¹ *Ulahipan*. [In Muñoz text *olalaipan*]. The spelling given here is from Sánchez; the people in Samar use it and pronounce it as *olalipan*, as the manuscript text has it, in *Copia Naval*. Also entered as *ulalahipan*: centipede. [1711], *op. cit.* "*Olalahipan*: Centipede. A poisonous insect with two small pincers with which it bites and causes pain. The body has many rings, with two feet on each one. To reduce the pain caused by the biting of said insect, the Bisayan people use the tobacco leaves, or the point of smoked tobacco, rubbing well the effected part with the tobacco. They also use the

very centipede, if it can be caught, powdering it and applying it to the affected part, held by a cloth to keep it in place. Others make an incision in the affected part to let the blood flush out and apply the snake stone. This in fact is the best and most efficient remedy. The insect causes no injury if the two pincers it has are cut off." Cfr. Sanchez, *op.cit.*, 219, Bisayan Part.

¹² The *hamorawon*: a very strong timber and good for posts, columns. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.* *Vitex geniculata*, the tree has hard yellow wood for construction and is considered as first class lumber used in construction. Tramp, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

"*Hamoraon*: Molave. "This tree can reach a height of fifty feet. Often times it grows curved. Its wood is considered the best known in the Philippines. Its use is great. It is appreciated for all types of works. Its color tends to hayish; when working on the wood, it smells like honey. The wood is extremely hard and crystal like and it can be cut and work upon easily; usually it has knots and holes. This is the hardest, because the one free of this is not so hard. Placed inside the earth, water and lime and lasts for a long time.

There are three varieties: molave *malobagohon*, molave *bayabason*, and molave *lanhon* or *madlaw*. The molave *lanhan* is the best; its wood is yellow. Water drunk as infusion wherein pieces of molave *lanhan* have been placed, serve as antidote. Grated wood of this molave *lanhan* can be applied as plaster to wounds to contain the blood. The thin cuts of the molave *lanhan* can be used successfully with wounds, even if they are big. They can be left attached to the blood until they fall off. The resin of this tree can be used against the bitings of snakes, centipedes, and other poisonous insects, heating it in the fire until it will smoke. Later on it is applied to the wounded part, in such a way that the smoke will reach the affected area; this operation should be repeated as many times as it would be necessary." (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, 403, Bisayan Part)

¹³ In Muñoz text *piedrecitas*.

¹⁴ Unable to find an entry in either Bisayan dictionary nor even a derivative.

¹⁵ Unable to find an entry in either Bisayan dictionary.

¹⁶ In Muñoz text *patas*.

¹⁷ In Muñoz text *torcerlo*.

¹⁸ *Atipalo*. Vide *atitipalo*: a very thin centipede that when stepped upon glows and if it enters the ear it blocks it up. Sanchez [1711] *op. cit.* Tramp, enters it simply as a small centipede. *Atipapalo*: "Phosphoric insect, with many legs. If it enters the human ear, it causes great pain and even death" Cfr. Sanchez, *op.cit.*, 23, Bisayan Part.

¹⁹ *Bayur*. Vide *bayúd*: a millipede, centipede; silverfish; a multiped worm-like invertebrate. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*, p. 46.

²⁰ In Muñoz text *tan gordos*.

²¹ In Muñoz text *más sonora*.

²² A small fish which when it eats, it just pecks a little and no more and does not eat large morsels. Sanchez [1711], *op. cit.* Under the entry only *urang*, Tramp describes it as a freshwater shrimp. *Op. cit.*, p. 467.

²³ The words in brackets from the Muñoz text are lacking in the Naval copy.

²⁴ Latin, for the first two words in the prayer, "Hail, Mary....."

²⁵ In Muñoz text *que le hice*.

²⁶ Today the largest city on the Island of Sulawesi which is a part of the Indonesian Archipelago. There is also a strait of that name extending 600 miles between Borneo and Sulawesi.

²⁷ *Carigara*. More properly and in a Bisayan way: *Karigara*, or even more appropriately, *Kalgara*. A town situated on a bay of the same name in northern Leyte. The name originates from the word *Kan-Gara*: the 'n', according to phonetics rules is changed to 'l' and thus *Kalgara*. The word may mean a place, an area, a spot — of Gara, perhaps one of the first occupants of this locality, according to Judge Romualdez. [This we can read in the number 8 of the Leyte journal *Noli me Tangere*, of May 30, 1909.]

The Jesuits arrived to Leyte, according to Chirino, and to Carigara by river on July 16, 1595, accompanied by Fathers Cosme Flores, Juan del Campo and Brother Gaspar Garay along with a slave from Ternate, called Martin. They were received with hospitality by an 'encomendero', Cristobal Trujillo.

Father Chirino entered this note in his *Relación*: "This was the first place where the Society initiated the doctrina in this province, where its first Mass was celebrated, the first fiesta in honor of the Holy Cross, with great solemnity and also the first Baptism..."

Father Francisco Encina, who arrived here in 1596 stated: "These people are by nature peaceful and of a good disposition. There are no gold mines here, but there is sustenance in abundance; for this soil is very fertile, fine rivers and excellent climate.... There is a teacher in Carigara who teaches reading and music to the children, who learn easily..."

On October 22, 1605, while the town was at Mass, a fleet of 18 *caracoas* of *Karagas* surprised and stormed into the town. The fright and confusion of the people was indescribable, knowing their inability to face the enemy much less to fight them. All attempted to flee; those who made a distance were saved, but many were killed in their houses, on the roads and even in the woods. The atrocities could not have been more barbaric or reprehensible! The canibalistic vultures, in cold blood, snatched the babies from the mothers embrace whom they took by the feet and beat their heads against the rocks and more. Pulling out the intestines of the murdered, they salted the livers and dipping them in lemon juice, ate them raw. They also salted human flesh and packed it into jars. Not satisfied with all these atrocities, they set the buildings and fields on fire and untied all the *bankas* from their anchorage and sailed away with some 160 captives.

Carigara, as the other towns of Leyte, suffered from various piratical attacks. In the year 1621, while the Jesuits were all assembled in Cebu, to celebrate the Beatification of Saint Francis Xavier, the Boholanos broke out in rebellion against the Spaniards and Jesuits. This resentment which was fueled by the *Diwatahans* on Bohol, spilled over to Leyte. When the Jesuit Society was suppressed, the Augustinians again returned to Leyte to continue their work of evangelization. *Carigara* was a Capital of the Province until the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Artigas y Cuerva, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-305.

Alcina, in his *Part Two, Book Three, Chapter 22*, has something to say about Carigara and a footnote has ample background material on this town.

²⁸ *Bayo*. A pestle, a pole for pounding rice or grain in a mortar. *Magbabayo cami sin humay*. We are pounding the rice. Sanchez, *op. cit.* 43, Bisayan Part. Tramp has the same description.

²⁹ In the Naval copy *nuestro* is lacking.

³⁰ In Muñoz text: *zumos de hierba muy espeso. Tanta como ésto es la actividad y eficacia de estas ponzoñosas fieras.*

*Cantius J. Kobak, O.F.M.,
Milwaukee, Michigan,
1997*

*Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P.,
University of Santo Tomas, Manila,
1999*