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Visualizing the Past/Peopling the Past

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Voicing the Past – Final Project: Translated Referential Index

Eder, Francisco J.

1985 *Breve descripción de las reducciones de Mojos*. Translated by Josep M. Barnadas. Historia Boliviana, Cochabamba.

*Bio: Francisco J. Eder was born in 1727, to a German family in the mining town of Schemnitz – a multicultural location, found in modern-day Slovakia, that was then under the authority of the Hungarian crown and ultimately the Austrian Holy Roman Emperor. At the mere age of 15, Eder finished his early studies and entered the Jesuit novitiate of Trencin, Slovakia. In accordance to the strict academic curriculum of the Jesuits, Eder spent many years preparing for his ordination: after two years in Trencin, he studied philosophy for three at the Jesuit University of Tyrnau, only to then visit both his hometown and Neusohl to obtain teaching practice in the Order’s local schools. Even when he sailed to the New World Eder was still missing some scholastic experience, as evidenced by the two more years he spent as a student finishing his theological formation in Lima’s College of San Pablo. Finally, in 1753, Eder was ordained as a Jesuit priest and sent as a missionary to the Mojos Mission, where the Order had spent almost a century building around 20 reductions. Eder was specifically assigned the reduction known as San Martin, in the eastern half of the area; he stayed here for fifteen years, until he returned to his native land in 1770, soon after the Spanish king Charles III decreed the expulsion of the Jesuits from his lands. Back in Neusohl, the priest spent the last two years of his life writing his chronicle and sharing with his peers the products and memories he gained from his time at the Amazon basin*

*His work: in the words of the scholar and translator Josep Barnadas, Eder’s chronicle was, first and foremost, “a catharsis” for the author’s obsession with the Americas. At the same time, the piece was meant to quench the hungry curiosity Eder’s acquaintances showed regarding the New World’s exotic lands and peoples. Not only do we know that the priest exhibited samples of Mojos fabrics to his European acquaintances, in the text itself we often find Eder explaining how he writes to share the unique world he found across the Atlantic. Even today the work is considered a literary treasure as the most complete historical source we have about the Mojos during the colonial period. Furthermore, the book has the added bonus of being a first-aperson account written by an actual witness of the events described – a rare treat for audiences of all time periods. Nevertheless, despite his detailed descriptions of the region’s climate, fauna, and societies, there are sections that ought to be considered with a grain of salt. After all, Eder was affected by the cultural and spiritual perceptions of his time – ideas of the Americas that rendered their people as inept, uncivilized crowds in dire need for education, which would in turn be a justification and vehicle for conversion. Consequently, readers of the Eder’s treatise must recognize the author’s colonial bias and unravel the true aspects of the Mojos Indians: complex cultures who conducted life through their own, unique systems, divisions, and structures. As opposed to the Jesuit and his colonial contemporaries, we must hence find and value these differences in hopes of learning more about those who have yet to write their own “Descripción”.*

Modern Scholarship

*20th Century Historians: As opposed to Eder, who regarded Mojo Indians as uncivilized and in dire need of European civilization, contemporary authors on the topic focus on the unique aspects and contributions of Mojos societies during the Colonial Period. Current scholarship on the topic then concentrates on the social organization, traditions, beliefs, and lifestyle of the Indians before the Spanish sailed to America. For example, scholars such as Alfred Metraux, Rogers Becerra Casanova, and Rodolfo Pinto Parada have contributed rich ethnographical and folkloric studies of the Mojos region. At the same time, there is a clear shift in the methodology and materials used by current researchers, as the changes in academic interests have led to a greater reliance on Indian demographics, land tenure patterns, social organizations, and oral narratives. Hence, even though they study the same time period Eder lived through, today’s experts are vent on revealing that the local stories that may have been misplaced after multiple waves of European activities, mindsets, and conflicts.*

Introductory Dissertation on the Kingdom of Peru

Conditions of the Kingdom

Lima, Capital of the Kingdom

Character of its Inhabitants.

Amenity of Lima

Abundance of the Land.

Quality of the Climate

Possibility of Cold or Unhealthy Climate.

Earthquakes

America, Mother of Spain.

Ostentatious Lifestyles of Lima.

 Lima’s Luxurious Fashion.

 Abundance of Fleas.

 Abundance and Conditions of Pagans.

 Linguistic Duality.

 Rebellious Indian from Tarma

 The Rebel’s Strategy versus Lima.

 Number of Inhabitants.

 Variety of Names

 Climate Diversity.

 Uncultivated Regions.

 Where the Desaguadero River Ends

 The Peruvian Alps

 Dangers across the Roads.

 Abundance of Mules.

 Variety and Excellence of Horses.

 Mules and Horses of Paraguay.

 Lack of Wood and its Supply.

 The Alpaca

 The Vicuña and the Guanaco.

 Decline of Indian Population

 (Indian) Poverty

 (Indian) Dwellings

 (Indian) Food.

 Traces of (Indian) Paganism

 Causes Behind Indian Population Decline

 Indian Hate against Spaniards

 Hidden Ancient Treasures

 Rich Mines

 Indian Gratitude Towards a Poor-yet-Amicable Governor

 Fermented Corn Drink: Chicha

 (Indian) Ancient Monuments

 The Fortress of Cuzco

 Burials of the Ancients

 Gold and Silver Mines.

 Mount Illimani.

 Gold-bearing Rivers

 Chukikamata River.

 Gold-bearing River near the City of Oruro.

 Lima’s Viceroy and His Jurisdiction.

 (Lima’s) Archbishop, University, and Royal Court.

 (Lima’s) Inquisition Tribunal and Religious Orders

 Local Love for Trinkets

 (Lima’s) Abundance of Fruits

 The Avocado (and Other Fruits)

 (Lima’s) Flowers and Vegetables.

 Lima’s Bread

 Abundance and Uses of Sugar

 Delicious Food

 Easy Enrichment

 American Hatred for Spaniards

 Genius and Learning Skills in Lima.

 Methods of Travel

 Abundance of Fish

 Hunting

 Hare-like Viscacha

 Quails

 The Common Ram

 Use of Carriages.

 Number and Conditions of Gardens

 Buildings

 Abundance and Employment of Africans

 Mint Houses

 Salary for Bishops, Governors, and Parish Priests

 Price for Goods

 Garrisons and Soldiers.

 Peruvian Ignorance with Firearms.

 Risk of Portuguese Invasion to Peru.

 Peruvian Wines.

 Devout Peruvians.

 Travel Safety between Kingdoms.

 Local Vices.

 Size of Peru.

Distance between Cities.

 Modern Spanish Mail.

 Ancient Writing Forms

 Two Routes to Quito

 Wealth of the Ancient Kings.

Brief Description of the Land and its Inhabitants in which the Company of Jesus Has Founded its Reductions.

Book 1

Chapter 1:

A: Climate and Air

1.1.88. Warning on the Differences Between the Kingdom of Peru and its Reductions.

1.1.89. Location

1.1.90. On the Latest Missionary Activity in the Region.

1.1.91. Region’s Common Name: Moxos.

1.1.92. Linguistic Abundance and Diversity.

1.1.93. (Reduction’s) Year of Discovery, Tribes Encountered, Number of Reductions, and Chieftains.

1.1.94. Damages by the Portuguese.

1.1.95. (Portuguese) Reasons Behind their Actions

1.1.96. (Portuguese) Bribing the Indians.

1.1.97. Plains of the Region.

1.1.98. Forests and Savannahs

1.1.99. Bigger Forests.

1.1.100. Burning of the Savannahs.

 1.1.101. Birds of Prey during the Burnings

1.1.102. On the Origins of the Region’s Indians – a Rebuttal.

1.1.103. Previous Spanish Incursions.

1.1.104. Author’s Theory on the Origins of the Region’s Indians

1.1.105. Local Gold Mines.

 1.1.106. Local Tribute Paid to the King

Chapter 2:

 1.2.107. Type of Heat

 1.2.108. Excess of Worms due to the Weather.

 1.2.109. Fishes’ Reactions to Heat

 1.2.110. Increasing Heat from the Burning of the Savannah.

 1.2.111. Nighttime Heat.

 1.2.112. Use of Rivers to Soothe Heat or Aches.

 1.2.113. Air Humidity

 1.2.114. Meat’s Lack of Taste

 1.2.115. Forest Density

 1.2.116. Cracks from the Heat.

B: Winds, Tempests, and Earthquakes

 1.2.117 The Two Main Air Currents: North and South.

 1.2.118. Southern Currents Known as “Surazos”.

 1.2.119. (Surazo) Intensity and Duration.

 1.2.120. Cold and Dry Surazos

 1.2.121. Morning Baths.

 1.2.122. Impact of the Surazon on the Portuguese Settlement of Mato Grosso.

 1.2.123. Animal Need for Warmth.

 1.2.124. Tempests.

 1.2.125. Earthquakes.

C: Summer, Winter, and the Constellations

 1.2.126. Missionary Introduction of Winter-Summer Months.

 1.2.127. Rainy Months

 1.2.128. Sporadic Fog; lack of Hail or Snow.

 1.2.129. Native Take on Eclipses.

 1.2.130. Stars and Clear Skies.

 1.2.131. Native Names for Constellations.

 1.2.132. Morning Dew.

 1.2.133.

Chapter 3:

1.3.133. Three Main Causes for Flooding.

1.3.134. Height of the Waters.

1.3.135. Where Do Animals Go During the Floods?

1.3.136. Where Do Fishes Go During the Floods?

1.3.137. Floods’ Fatal Consequences.

1.3.138. (Floods’) Damage to Domestic Animals

1.3.139. (Floods’) Damage to the Plantations.

1.3.140. (Floods’) Duration.

1.3.141. How Insects Multiply

1.3.142. Benefits of the Floodings.

Chapter 4:

1.4.143. Main Rivers

1.4.144. Minor Rivers.

1.4.145. Colors of the Land and its Rocks.

1.4.146. The Only Rock Used as Limestone.

1.4.147. The Many Dangers of the Mamoré River

1.4.148. Propitious Hunting near the Mamoré.

1.4.149. Itenes River and its Dangerous Chain of Rocks.

1.4.150. Rivers Flanked by Trees.

1.4.151. Dimoichico: Fish Dung.

1.4.152. Local Lakes.

Chapter 5: Variety of Bridges

1.5.153. Dry Wooden Logs

1.5.154. Bridges for Minor Rivers

1.5.155. Leather Bridges

1.5.156. Other Varieties.

1.5.157. Crossing a Bridge as a Rider.

Chapter 6: Fertility of the Land

1.6.158. Crops in the Forest

1.6.159. Methods for Forest Farming.

1.6.160. The Sugar Cane

1.6.161. Forests and Savannahs.

1.6.162. (Author’s) Admiration for Other Plants

1.6.163. Abundance of Rice

Chapter 7: External Description of the Pagan Indians

1.7.164. Height and Skin Color

1.7.165. Slender Physique

1.7.166. Disheveled Hair

1.7.167. Body Painting

1.7.168. Tattoos

1.7.169. Nose and Lip Piercings

1.7.170. Size of their Ears.

1.7.171. Three-headed Tibori Indians

1.7.172. Spotted Indians.

1.7.173. Other Body Parts: Forehead, Eyes, Eyebrows, Beard, Armpits Sign of Love, Nose, Chin, Mouth and Teeth, Fingers, Feet, Hair.

1.7.174. Use of Body Oils.

1.7.175. Numeric System.

1.7.176. Barbarian Living Spaces

1.7.177. Indian Garments

1.7.178. Lifestyle.

1.7.179. Bird Breeding

1.7.180. Polygamy

1.7.181. The Pagan’s Civilization

1.7.182. Guest House

1.7.183. Chieftains.

1.7.184. Chieftain Authority

1.7.185. Marriage Amongst the Arama.

Chapter 8: Description of the Indian’s Traits and Personality.

A: Some Features

1.8.186. Definition of the Indian

1.8.187. Discrepancy of his Opinions.

1.8.188. Love for Drinking

1.8.189. Indian Opinion on Celibacy

1.8.190. Happy Mood

1.8.191. Resistance Against Hunger and other Adversities.

1.8.192. Indians Disregarding Pain **(Not available/referenced by Barnadas)**

1.8.193. Indians Disregarding Death

B: More on the Topic of their Intelligence

1.8.194. On Learning: Children Surpass the Adults and Women Surpass Men.

1.8.195. They Do Not Know How to Love

1.8.196. Willingness to Eat Dirt

1.8.197. Peaceful Demeanor.

1.8.198. Proclivity to Lies.

1.8.199. Proclivity to Petty Thefts.

1.8.200. (Indians) First Timid, Then Cruel.

1.8.201. Limited Creativity

1.8.202. Disregard for Personal Safety.

1.8.203. Example: Perils of Tigers.

1.8.204. Example: Perils of Caimans

C: More on the Topic of their Traits

1.8.205. Proclivity to Sultriness

1.8.206. Refusal to Admit Blame

1.8.207. Prideful Character

1.8.208. Slow of Thought

1.8.209. Desire for Self-Praise.

1.8.210. Timid but Astute

1.8.211. Incapable of Keeping Secrets.

1.8.212. Always Ready to Run Away

1.8.213. Proclivities of Women.

Chapter 9: On Ancient Native Works

1.9.214. Construction of Bridges/Embankments.

*- It is often only when confronted with great risk or necessity that men expose their true creative potential. In the case of the Moxos Indians, the recurrent floods covering the savannah (as well as their insistence on visiting and drinking amongst their friends) serve as inspiration to build their own bridges. With excavated earth, they are construct paths that are high enough to rise above the waters and wide enough to hold two horse-carriages side-by-side. The holes made from digging are then used as water deposits in which to plant maize and other crops during the hot, dry summer months. The Baure built enough of these bridges to sprinkle the Moxos landscape, although by the 17th century, due to an abundance of canoes, they were abandoned to time and the elements.*

1.9.215. Fortification of Channels.

*- As a defensive mechanism against their aggressive, cannibalistic Guarayo people, the Baure surrounded their islands with multiple miles-long pits, each backed by steep ground barricades that protected them from their enemies’ assaults. Unfortunately, the Guarayo forces still managed to breach the defenses and reach the islands, which is why the Baure were supposedly overjoyed when the missionaries arrived, as they could hopefully provide them with a long-overdue sense of security. But while the Guarayo stopped invading the islands, they switched strategies and focused instead on Christian ships transporting goods and Indians downriver. Once such attacks reached the attention of the Royal Court at Charcas, the Spanish authorities ordered a Portuguese militia to put an end to the threat; a conclusion that was never fulfilled due to the tensions between both nations in the colonies and abroad.*

1.9.216. Other Groundworks

*- Due to their altitude, some savannahs would never flood and so required further excavations in order to be navigated. The Indians hence modified such lands with artificial channels. Local legends even tell of an ancient Baure chieftain who, wishing to discover what the sun, moon, and stars were made of, ordered his men to build the tallest tower man had ever seen. But upon digging its base deep into the ground, the construction was interrupted by scalding waters found underground. Upon realizing their impossible task, the workers killed the chief and abandoned the gargantuan project.*

Chapter 10: Indian Superstitions

A: References to Some Superstitions

1.10.217. (Author’s) Opinion on Certain Indian Superstitions

1.10.218. Origin of Superstitions

1.10.219. The Spirit/Deity Known as “Achane”

1.10.220. The Achane’s Belt

1.10.221. Calming the Achane with Banquets

1.10.222. Take on Twin Births

1.10.223. The Title of Arama for Animals

1.10.224. The Marari Plant

B: Other Superstitions

1.10.225. On the Arama Tiger

1.10.226. The Arama Tiger as Inheritor of a Death Man’s Property

1.10.227. Superstitious Methods to Qualm a Hungry Tiger

1.10.228. Respect for Individuals Hurt by Tigers.

1.10.229. Shamanistic Claim to Transformative Powers.

1.10.230. Native Take on Rainbows.

1.10.231. Superstitions Reference Even Rivers, Lakes, and Forests

1.10.232. The Origuere Lake

1.10.233. Habit of Saving Fingernails and Hair.

C: On the Same Topic

1.10.234. Beliefs on the Motire

1.10.235. Beliefs about Fish Bait

1.10.236. Beverages Produce from Bones of their Deceased.

1.10.237. Beliefs on some Trees

 Chapter 11: Superstitious Procedures to Cure the Sick

1.11.238. (Indian) Opinion on the Causes for Disease

1.11.239. The Motire as a Medic

1.11.240. Supposed Extractions as Cures for Diseases

1.11.241. Method of Handling Cardiac Aches

1.11.242. Method for Dealing with Difficult Births

1.11.243. Singers during Times of Birth or Disease.

1.11.244. On Wound and Sores

1.11.245. Opportunities for Vengeance.

 Chapter 12: How to Obtain the Pagans’ Sympathy; the Uncomfortable Trip; Shows of Friendship with the Priests; Interactions with the Portuguese

A: Periods for Traveling and their Inconveniences.

1.12.246. Months for Travel.

1.12.247. Forests during Travel

1.12.248. Savannahs during Travel

1.12.249. Food for Travel

1.12.250. Nightly Concerns during Travel

1.12.251. Slowness of the Trip

1.12.252. Guides or Signals to Initiate the Trip.

B: How to Present Oneself and Sympathize with Them

1.12.253. How to Defend the Encampments

1.12.254. Rebuttal – Sarcastic Remarks about “Buying” Local Faith

1.12.255. What Indians do with their Given Gifts

1.12.256. Missionary Treatment of Pagans.

1.12.257. Irrevocable Proof of Friendship: Gifts to Boys and Girls.

 C: Difficult and Uncomfortable Return

1.12.258. Lament on the Poverty of Missionaries

1.12.259. Required Preparations Before the Trip

1.12.260. Inconveniences during the Trip

1.12.261. The Trip’s Most Uncomfortable Inconveniences

1.12.262. The Sick and Tired Burdening the Trip

1.12.263. Amazement of Indians when Arriving to the Reductions

D: Prejudices to the Faith Sparked by the Portuguese

1.12.264. Mamelukes: Who they are and where they come from.

1.12.265. How the Mamelukes Dispersed.

1.12.266. How the Mamelukes Have Increased Their Numbers

1.12.267. Mameluke Expeditions to the Pagans

1.12.268. Resistance from the Ethnicity Known as the Caturorinos

1.12.269. Deceit by the Mamelukes.

1.12.270. Mameluke Cruelty with Captives.

1.12.271. Provenance of Previous Information

Book 2

Chapter 1: Different Species of Trees, Including Fruit- and Non-Fruit-Bearing

A: Practical and Medicinal Trees

2.1.272. Differences with European Trees

2.1.273. Copaiba or Taramoboco

2.1.274. Aceite de Maria (Mary’s Oil)

2.1.275. Isiga

2.1.276. Sasafras.

2.1.277. Palo Santo (Holy Stick) or Canelo

2.1.278. Chunia

2.1.279. Quinaquina

2.1.280. Palo Brasil (Brazilwood)

2.1.281. Tamarind

 B: Cedar, Cocoa, Vanilla, Coffee, Oranges, and Lemons; Abundance of Wax and Honey

2.1.282. Cedar

2.1.283. Cocoa

2.1.284. Vanilla

2.1.285. Coffee and Abundance of Wax- and Honey-Producing Trees

2.1.286. Orange and Lemons

 C: Palm Trees, American Almond Trees, Wild Cotton, Venomous Trees, and Echemoboco

 2.1.287. Palm Trees

 2.1.288. Almond Trees

 2.1.289. Wild Cotton

 2.1.290. Venomous Trees

 2.1.291. Echomóboco

 D: Plantain, Yucca, American Pine Seeds, Grown Cotton, and Other Fruits and Plants

 2.1.292. Plantain

 2.1.293. Yucca or Mandioca

 - *An original root of the American continent, the yucca is used equally throughout many of its lands. The plant itself is small, with many branches bearing knots separated by around an inch and leaves similar to the fig trees’. After removing the edible part (that is, the root), the branches are stored in the hills. There, the humidity helps preserve them until they are buried underground to plant the next harvest before the next raining season – in other words, around March and April. The roots are extracted in small groups, usually enough for two or three days, so that they keep growing instead of quickly drying out once they confront the blazing sun. It is not uncommon to find bundles of up to 40 yuccas, some thick as a femur and stretching up to 20 centimeters.*

 2.1.294. Two Types of Yucca: Sweet and Bitter

 - *Before learning about their uses, it is necessary to know about the two types of yucca found in the area: that which is called “sweet yucca” by the Spaniards or “cuhupa” by the Indians; and the wild yucca, also known as “bitter yucca” or mapihere. The former can be cooked and eaten without any dressings or spices; the latter though contains a light venom that, if left untouched, may cause violent fevers, vomit, stomachaches, and headaches that can drag an individual into madness. Because of how difficult it is to distinguish these types, even amongst the Indians, thieves who think they are stealing sweet yucca quickly pay their dues.*

 2.1.295. Use of Sweet Yucca

 - *The sweet yucca can be cooked and mixed with any meal as soon as it is harvested. Especially in regions where people lack bread, it is often roasted under burning ashes and served inside leaves because of its tenderness. Its flavor is similar to roasted chestnuts, albeit slightly sweeter. It can be easily preserved by drying it under the sun, even in the coldest regions where it can also be dug underground or frozen throughout the night. In the reductions, it is often allowed to grow underground for two years, as they usually can only get thicker and longer.*

 2.1.296. Use of Bitter Yucca

 - *The bitter yucca is used more often than its sweet counterpart, even though it is not roasted or boiled. Instead, the yucca is chopped similarly to the watercress; it is then washed many times and wrung, only to then placed to dry until toasted by the sun. The product is finally used in this shaped to make dough with which one can prepare bread and buns. In order to prepare stronger chicha, Indians would add a drizzle of this yucca to the mix. Most Europeans, upon trying out both types of the root, would be surprised by its nutritional properties its easy-yet-abundant harvest, and its simple cooking methods. Eder was so amazed by the yucca’s revolutionary dietary attributes that he prayed some Spaniard or Portuguese could ship it back to their own continent to better feed the farmers, the hungry and the poor alike.*

 2.1.297. American Pine Seeds

 2.1.298. Grown Cotton

 2.1.299. Chirimoya

 2.1.300. Avocado

 2.1.301. Pineapple

 2.1.302. Plants

 2.1.303. Opinion of a Portuguese Nobleman on the Reduction

 2.1.304. Bush Known as Cobaerese

Chapter 2: Animals

2.2.305. Danta/Anta: The Great Beast

2.2.306. Ababari: the aquatic dog.

2.2.307. Capybara

2.2.308. Peirina

B: The Tiger

 2.2.309. Tiger Species: The Blonde Tiger

 2.2.310. Tiger Species: the Multicolored Tiger

 2.2.311. (Tigers’) Strengths

 2.2.312. (Indian’s) Astute Protection for Donkeys

 2.2.313. Passive Horses

 2.2.314. Fight between the Caiman and the Tiger

 2.2.315. Example of the Tiger’s Strenght

 2.2.316. Enemy of Humans

 2.2.317. (Tiger’s) Speed

 2.2.318. (Tiger’s) Diet

 2.2.319. Observation on Hounds used for Hunting

 2.2.320. (Tiger’s) Pelt

 2.2.321. Swine Herder Precautions Against Tigers

 2.2.322. (Tigers) Eating Turtles.

 2.2.323. (Tigers) Fishing

 2.2.324. (Tigers) Hunting Birds

 2.2.325. (Tiger’s) Hunting Schedules

 2.2.326. Tiger Species: The Black Tiger

 2.2.327. Tiger Sightings

 2.2.328. No Tiger Attacks on Missionaries Yet.

 2.2.329. First Example of a Tiger-Missionary Encounter

 2.2.330. Second Example of a Tiger-Missionary Encounter

C: Other Major Animals

 2.2.331. Ant-Eater

 2.2.332. (Ant-Eater’s) Strength and Diet

 2.2.333. Dangers of the Ant-Eaters to Dogs and Tigers

 2.2.334. Two Types of Wild Swine

 2.2.335. Other Minor Swine

 2.2.336. Deer-like Hó

 2.2.337. Deers

 2.2.338. Horses and Cows

 2.2.339. Risks and Deaths of Horses and Cows

 2.2.340. Lions

 2.2.341. Bears

 2.2.342. Monkeys

 2.2.343. (Monkey’s) Curiosity

 2.2.344. Monkeys as Thieves

 2.2.345. Ridiculous Indian Opinion of the Monkeys

 2.2.346. Trapichero: Sugar-Mill Monkeys

 2.2.347. Other Smaller, Colorful Monkeys

 2.2.348. Deer-like Gamos

 2.2.349. Melero/Ororipoari

 2.2.350. Pale-Throated Sloth (Perico Ligero or Chuivana)

 2.2.351. Feral Felines, Guinea Pigs (Cui), and Turtles

Chapter 3: Birds

A: Black Vulture (Gallinazo)

 2.3.352. The Black Vulture

 2.3.353. Ungratefulness of the Vulture

 2.3.354. (Vulture’s) Damages to Cattles

 2.3.355. Iyochere, the Black Vulture’s Boss

 2.3.356. Differences between American and European Birds

B: Other Major Birds

 2.3.357. Ostrich

 2.3.358. Minor Ostrich

 2.3.359. Vulture-like Coromo

 2.3.360. (Coromo’s) Defending its Eggs

 2.3.361. Wild Turkeys

 2.3.362. Parrot (Papagayo)

 2.3.363. Parrot (Loro or Hóro)

 2.3.364. Another Species of Parrots

 2.3.365. Partridges

 2.3.366. Abundance of Birds of Prey

 2.3.367. Water Ravens (Tarara)

 2.3.368. Ducks

 2.3.369. Southern Lapwing (Terortero or Lequeleque)

 2.3.370. Thrush (Tordo)

 2.3.371. Sparrows

 2.3.372. Devil’s Bird (Tabirei)

 2.3.373. Cobé

 2.3.374. Ichare

 2.3.375. Ineari

 2.3.376. Woodpecker.

 2.3.377. Sirapuki

 2.3.378. Honore

 2.3.379. Hummingbird

Chapter 4: Ancient Hunting Methods Still Used by the Indians

 2.4.380. Hunting During Floods

 - *The annual flooding of the rivers due to torrential downpours leads Indians to hunt through incredible procedures, unlike anything seen amongst Europe’s noblemen… Seeking refuge from the rising currents, all animals rush towards the nearest hill or island, just like in Noah’s time. Having agreed upon a specific date, the men prepare their canoes, particularly the smaller ones of two or three Indians, with which they speed through the waters by rowing with nothing but long branches. The day of the hunt, armed with arrows, dogs, horns, and drums, the Indians sail to the island on groups of 8 to 10 canoes. Upon arrival they surround the area, hiding underneath the land’s tall pastures. And so, once in position, the signal is given and chaos abounds: across all directions, drums are struck, horns are blown, hounds are released, and hunters roar as they pursue their prey. There is no escape, as even those deer who tried to swim away are chased by the hunters on the canoes; each striking his target with sticks or lassos. If all else fails, the hunters jump on the deer and wrestle it until one of them drowns under the flood… The animals never stood a chance: hunters, arrows, and hounds find their mark, regardless of the creature – tigers, swine, ostriches, anteaters, and deer alike fall prey to the chaotic clamor of the event. And so, the men sail back to the settlement with weeks-worth of supplies from another astounding hunt.*

 2.4.381. Duck-Hunting Methods

 2.4.382. Gourd Duck-Hunting Method

 2.4.383. Deer-Hunting Method

 2.4.384. Gamos-Hunting Method

 2.4.385. Use of Natural Bat-Dung Glue for Hunting

Chapter 5: Fishes

A: Caimans

 2.5.386. Caiman Species: Catipana

 2.5.387. Caiman Species: Cadire or the Spanish Caiman

 2.5.388. Caiman Species: Cadireina

 2.5.389. Caiman Diet

 2.5.390. Caimans Burrow Themselves During the Summer

 2.5.391. (Caiman’s) Speed

 2.5.392. How Indians Trick Caimans in the Water

 2.5.393. How Caimans Eat their Prey Aboveground

 2.5.394. Caimans Sleep On the Riverbank Under the Sun

 2.5.395. Caimans, Enemies of Man

 2.5.396. Fake Tale About the Caiman’s Wail

 2.5.397. (Caimans) Going After Ducks and Dogs

 2.5.398. Dogs’ Inherent Fear against Caimans

 2.5.399. How Dogs Trick Caimans in order to Drink Water.

 2.5.400. How Dogs Trick Caimans in order to Cross Rivers

 2.5.401. How Dogs Trick Caimans in order to Chase their Hunt

 2.5.402. How Caimans Are Captured

 2.5.403. (Caiman’s) Eggs and Nest

 2.5.404. Power of the Caiman’s Odorous Fangs

 2.5.405. Caiman’s Resistance to Venoms

B: Some of the Major Fishes

 2.5.406. Piratinga or Chiaguanaina Catfish

 2.5.407. Amazon River Dolphin (Bufeo or hiboi)

 2.5.408. Pacu or Chaiy

 2.5.409. Fish Known as “Water Ostrich”

 2.5.410. Masena

C: Torpedo Fish

 2.5.411. Achenepi or Torpedo Fish

 2.5.412. (Torpedo Fish’s) Electric Shock to Humans

 2.5.413. (Torpedo Fish’s) Electric Shock to Animals

 2.5.414. Other Fish’s Reaction when Caught in the Same Net as the Torpedo Fish

 2.5.415. Failed Attempt of Lifting a Torpedo Fish off the Ground

 2.5.416. Indian Superstition: Menstruating Women can Lift the Fish without being Shocked

D: Other Minor Fishes

 2.5.417. Ray/Idino Fish

 2.5.418. Dubious Indian Opinion of the Ray Fish

 2.5.419. Ray as Harmful for Humans

 2.5.420. How the Ray is Eaten

 2.5.421. How the Ray Births Upon Being Captured.

 2.5.422. Piranha-Like Palometa or Orimo

 2.5.423. Eel-like Motiyo

 2.5.424. Eels

 2.5.425. Cacanepo, Fish of the Worms

 2.5.426. Pihóre

 2.5.427. Esáne

 - *The* Esáne *is the smallest of fishes; it is still unknown if they ever grow out of such a miniature size. The Indians can often watch them swimming in great groups, moving as dark clouds within the waters. By trapping the Esánes with grass baskets, the Indians are able to capture up to three sacks full of the fish in merely a couple of hours. Be them boiled and packed in leaves or simply fried, they are quite a delicious treat! Unfortunately, they are so small that in just a spoonful, one can find up to 50 specimens. To make them last, the Esánes are often toasted, grounded, and kept in pots, to be later enjoyed with a pastry made of maize flour.*

 2.5.428. Turtles

 2.5.429. Snails

 - *There are snails everywhere and at all times: be it during the beginning of the raining season or when the waters finally recede from the savannah and the land is full of mud. Snails in the Americas are much bigger than their European counterparts, they also carry a black, open shell. Often, the Indians would2 simply pick them off the ground and have them as a snack.*

 2.5.430. Worms

 2.5.431. Candiru or Toothpick Fish (Etenaripo)

Chapter 6: On the Various Fishing Methods

A: Forms Offered by Nature Itself

 2.6.432. First Fishing Form

 - *The Indians will always look for a chance to fish, especially if it doesn’t require any extra work. For example, during the summers, they observe as birds fly in the thousands to the once-flooded lands full of mud and fish. After letting the birds peck mercilessly at the helpless catch, the Indians drive them away so that they may easily pick the remaining, confused prey.*

 2.6.433. Second Fishing Form

 - *Another fishing form used by the Mojo Indians involves imitating the birds’ own methods: that is, upon finding a muddy lagoon, they stir the waters, stomping the earth and making a racket in hopes of uncovering the fish swallowed by the mud.*

 2.6.434. Third Fishing Form

 - *The Indian’s third method of fishing is only possible thanks to the sun’s scalding heat, which often stanches the rivers and forces fishes to the surface. Confused by the oxygen, the fish fall prey to the Indian’s tridents and clubs. The fish will only disappear until around sunset, only to then continue agonizing due to the season’s heat and fatigue.*

 2.6.435. Fourth Fishing Form

 - *A fourth fishing method was unique to Eder’s reduction, where a nearby stream had its mouth blocked by vegetation that, when dried and rotten, would infect and taint the waters red. Throughout a whole month, groups of Indians would go to the stream armed with their arrows, for wherever one looked, hordes of fish of all shapes and sizes would lay stunned on the riverbed. The greater the pollution, the more fishes would show up, reaching so far up as to reach the riverbank. As a result of these conditions, Indians who fished from such a stream returned home with more than a horse-load of creatures from merely a couple of hours of work. The fish that were not captured died under the grueling conditions resulting from the sun’s heat and the plant’s toxicity. So big was the count of remaining fish that Eder preferred to omit his calculations due to fears of being considered an exaggerated rhetorician instead of a trustworthy chronicler.*

 2.6.436. Fifth Fishing Form

 - *The last fishing procedure was the easiest and simplest of the ones used by locals: upon burning the savannah, the leftover ashes would be disseminated by the winds, with many of them falling and intoxicating the area’s lakes and streams. Lost and confused by the murky waters, the fishes could then be easily captured.*

B: Forms Invented by the Indians

 2.6.437. (Fishing) With Rods

 2.6.438. With Fish Hooks and Arrows

 2.6.439. Blocking the Lake’s Outlet with Bushes to Fish

 - *Sometimes, the Indians would construct weirs, fences, or dams that effectively blocked the entrance between a river and its source in the lagoon. The structures also had small openings leading to wicker baskets that trapped the fishes trying to leave the river. This procedure was particularly comfortable for the locals, as they only had to check their baskets once or twice per day, letting them fill while they worked or slept in town.*

 2.6.440. (Fishing) With Nets

 2.6.441. (Fishing) With the Plant Known as Gordolobo.

 2.6.442. (Fishing) With a “Wall” of Entwined Plants

 2.6.443. (Fishing) With Torches at Night

 2.6.444. (Fishing) With Yells and Screaming

Chapter 7: Snakes and Vipers

 2.7.445. Abundance of Snakes and Vipers

 2.7.446. Boa Called Camiti

 2.7.447. (Camiti) How does it Capture its Prey

 2.7.448. (Camiti) How they Sink Canoes

 2.7.449. Rattlesnake or Atacabuiri

 2.7.450. Two-headed Viper

 2.7.451. Another Distinguished Type of Snake

Chapter 8: Insects

A: Ants, Mosquitos, and Bats

 2.8.452. Ants

 2.8.453. Venomous Ants.

 2.8.454. (Ants) As Harmful Thieves.

 2.8.455. (Ants) Able to Bring Houses Down

 2.8.456. “Visitor” Ants

 2.8.457. Mosquitos

 2.8.458. Bats

 2.8.459. Abundance of Bats

 2.8.460. (Bats) How they Harm Humans.

 2.8.461. (Bats) How they Harm Cattle

B: Toads, Spiders, Scorpions, and Centipedes

 2.8.462. Abundance of Toads

 2.8.463. (Toads’) Two Inconveniences

 2.8.464. Spiders

 2.8.465. Scorpions

 2.8.466. Centipedes

C: Flys, Flea, and Worms

 2.8.467. Flies

 2.8.468. The Chigoe Flea or Jigger

 2.8.469. Worms

 2.8.470. Another Red Worm

D: Other Insects

 2.8.471. Tick or Itache

 2.8.472. Cockroach or Idipire

 2.8.473. Winchuka or Kissing Bug

 2.8.474. Hosetipo

 2.8.475. Wasps

Chapter 9: Types of Poisons and their Effects

A: Poison Used on Animals

 2.9.476. Materials and Methods of Preparation

 2.9.477. (Poison’s) Effect

 2.9.478. (Poison’s) Effect on the Tiger

 2.9.479. Second Type of Poison

 2.9.480. Experimenting with Poison and a Caiman’s Fang

B: Poison Used on Humans

 2.9.481. The Mure People Kill Thanks to a Pact with the Devil

 2.9.482. Example of an Indian Killed with the Pact.

 2.9.483. Example of a Missionary Killed with the Pact

 2.9.484. How they Prepare Natural Poison

 2.9.485. Uses of Natural Poison

 2.9.486. Examples of Uses of Natural Poisons

 2.9.487. Another Type of Poison

 2.9.488. Other Effects of Various Venoms

 Chapter 10: Ability of the Indians with Arrows, the Spear-Thrower, Blowgun, Horses, Spears, Lasso, and the Boleadoras (Libis).

A: Use of Arrows, Spear-Thrower, and Blowgun

 2.10.489. Wooden Bow.

 2.10.490. Indian Expertise Shooting Arrows

 2.10.491. Bow and Shooting Method from Another Culture.

 2.10.492. Strategy Used by the Catururino Against the Portuguese.

 2.10.493. What is the Spear-Thrower/Atlatl

 2.10.494. Cane or Blowgun

B: Spears, Horses, Lasso, and Boleadoras (Libis)

 2.10.495. Use of Spears

 2.10.496. Indian Expertise and Love for Horses

 2.10.497. How they Tire and Hunt the Animals by Running

 2.10.498. How they Capture Animals with Rope

 2.10.499. How they Capture Tigers with Rope

 2.10.500. How they Capture Beehives and Humans with Rope.

 2.10.501. What are the Boleadoras (Libis)

 2.10.502. Incredible Indian Skill Shooting Firearms

Book 3

Chapter 1: Traits Look for in a Bride and Vice-versa

 3.1.503. Barbarian Conduct

 3.1. 504. Female Traits

 3.1.505. Male Traits

 3.1.506. Fickleness of Conjugal Decisions

 3.1.507. What Men and Women Contribute to the Marriage

Chapter 2: Forms of Celebrations

A: Morning Banquets and Ornaments for Males and Females

 3.2.508. Ornaments for Males

 3.2.509. Ornaments for Women.

 3.2.510. Banquets

 3.2.511. Dancing Attire

 3.2.512. Musicians and their Instruments

 3.2.513. The Base.

B: The Dance

 3.2.514. The Rest of the Attire.

 3.2.515. Kids’ Proclivity to Dancing

 3.2.516. Dance of the Women.

 3.2.517. Indians’ Proclivity to Dancing

 3.2.518. The Masked Devils (Ereone)

C: Superstitious Dance of the Caiman.

 3.2.519. The Dance of the Caiman.

 3.2.520. (The Dance’s) Description

 3.2.521. Fear of Women and Children to the Dance

 3.2.522. Other Sources of Entertainment.

D: Feast of the Epiphany, Easter Saturday, and the Ball Game

 3.2.523. Special Solemnity for the Feast of the Epiphany.

 3.2.524. Easter Saturday.

 3.2.525. Whether Indians Fight Amongst Themselves and How.

 3.2.526. Ball Game.

 3.2.527. Second Type of Ball Game.

Chapter 3

A: Forms of Dining

 3.3.528. Reference to Naturalists on the Pure Indian Ways

 3.3.529. Things and Warnings to Keep in Mind Before Eating with Them.

B: Indian Meals

 3.3.530. First Dish: Chicken, Ostrich, and Caiman Eggs

 3.3.531Second Dish: Caiman Tail

 3.3.532. Third Dish: Earthworms.

 3.3.533. Fourth Dish: Roasted Monkey.

 3.3.534. Fifth Dish: Roasted Duck

 3.3.535. Sixth Dish: Ant Abdomens

 3.3.536. Seventh Dish: Bats.

 3.3.537. Eight Dish: Fish.

 3.3.538. Ninth Dish: Beef Tripe.

 3.3.539. Tenth Dish: Jerky.

 3.3.540. Eleventh Dish: Meat Cuts Fried with Lard.

 3.3.541. Twelfth Dish: All Sorts of Insects

 3.3.542. Various Types of Common Bread

 3.3.543. How the Indians Conserve Meat and Fish.

Chapter 4: Beverages and Preparation Methods.

 3.4.544. Chicha or Eronético.

 3.4.545. Homoréco

 3.4.546. (How to Prepare) Chicha or Eronético

 3.4.547. Ways of Drinking Chicha

 3.4.548. Sugarcane Juice (Guarapo)

 3.4.549. Curative Qualities of Chicha

Chapter 5: Indian Skill for Manual Labors

 3.5.550. Indians Can Easily Copy Anything

 3.5.551. Distinguished Indian Memory and Senses

 3.5.552. Their Handwork with Bird Feathers

 3.5.553. Indian Sculptors Copying European Artworks

 3.5.554. Blacksmiths and Gunsmiths.

 3.5.555. Smelters.

 3.5.556. Painters.

 3.5.557. Weavers.

 3.5.558. Musicians.

 3.5.559. Skills Tracking Lost Animals

 3.5.560. Brushes and Other Things

Chapter 6: On Indian Laziness

 3.6.561. How Great is Indian Idleness

 3.6.562. The Indian’s One True Joy in this World: Spend the Whole Day Laying Down

 3.6.563. Some Examples of Laziness

 3.6.564. (Indians) Enjoy Having Servants

 3.6.565. Neglect to their Clothes and Horses

 3.6.566. Loads They Carry

 3.6.567. Many Get Hurt Because of their Laziness.

 3.6.568. Many Die Because of their Laziness.

Chapter 7: Common Diseases, Medicine, Diet, and Lack of Healthcare

 3.7.569. Indians Are Not Exposed to as Many Diseases as Europeans

 3.7.570. Negligence to their Own Health.

 3.7.571. Origin behind the Main Diseases

 3.7.572. Unfortunate Construction of a New Hospital

 3.7.573. Carelessness Using Medicines

 3.7.574. They Frequently Expose Themselves to Deathly Risks

Chapter 8: On Births

 3.8.575. Indian Women Are More Sterile than their European Counterparts

 3.8.576. Medicinal Root Used by the Itonama People

 3.8.577. Men Are Afraid of Menstruating Women.

 3.8.578. Pregnant Women and Midwives Do Not Know When They Should Give Birth.

 3.8.579. What Do the Chiriguano Do After the Birth?

 3.8.580. Birth of “Monsters”

 3.8.581. Lack of Attention or Care to Infants.

 3.8.582. Time Allotted to Breastfeeding.

 3.8.583. Lack of Attention When Teaching Children How to Walk.

 3.8.584. They Often Try to Have Abortions.

Chapter 9: Common Female Responsibilities

 3.9.585. Idleness of Women

 3.9.586. Ordinary Tasks.

Chapter 10: Indian Conformity with Poverty

 3.10.587. The Few Things Human Beings Need

 3.10.588. Material Equality Amongst Indians

 3.10.589. Mutable Interest Over Anything.

 3.10.590. Mutable Interest Over Anything, even if Detrimental

Chapter 11: State, Regimen, and Organization of the Reductions and Converted Indians

A: Construction and Goods of Houses and Temples

 3.11.591. Previous Authors on the Topic

 3.11.592. Description of the Houses.

 3.11.593. Number of Families Per House; Distance Between Houses

 3.11.594. Description of the Temples.

 3.11.595. Origin of Economic Resources for Construction

B: Indian Political Organization

 3.11.596. Indians Can Hardly Implement Some Sort of Organization.

 3.11.597. Hygiene with their Garments, Bodies, and Homes.

 3.11.598. How Missionaries Denounce Offenders

 3.11.599. Rebuttal – Claims that Missionaries Should Not be the Ones Denouncing Offenders

 3.11.600. Rebuttal – An Indian Should Serve as Judge.

 3.11.601. Rebuttal – A Spaniard Should Hold the Authority.

 3.11.602. Rebuttal – Are Indians Forbidden to Interact with Spaniards?

 3.11.603. Rebuttal – Reductions Have Brought No Benefits to the King.

C: Indian Religious Organization

 3.11.604. Festivities, Especially the Feast of Corpus Christi

 3.11.605. Easter Week.

 3.11.606. Successfully-Introduced Christian Customs.

Chapter 12: Whether the Indians Had Any Previous Semblance of a Creator, the Deluge, the Creation of the World, or the Immortality of the Soul.

 3.12.607. Weak Indications of Intelligence in Indians.

 3.12.608. (Indians’) Overarching Tranquility

 3.12.609. Divine Providence and the Indians.

 3.12.610. Amongst Them There is No Notion of a Creator.

 3.12.611. Amongst Them There is No Notion of Genesis.

 3.12.612. On the Immortality of the Soul

 3.12.613. On the First Principles Available to Human Reasoning.