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References on Animal/Plant Stones in Old Literature

From A STUDY IN MAGIC AND RELIGION by J.G. FRAZER

[On Snake Pearls]

In ancient Gaul certain glass or paste beads attained great celebrity as amulets under the name of serpents' eggs; it was believed that serpents, coiling together in a wriggling, writhing mass, generated them from their slaver and shot them into the air from their hissing jaws. If a man was bold and dexterous enough to catch one of these eggs in his cloak before it touched the ground, he rode off on horseback with it at full speed, pursued by the whole pack of serpents, till he was saved by the interposition of a river, which the snakes could not pass. The proof of the egg being genuine was that if it were thrown into a stream it would float up against the current, even though it were hooped in gold. The Druids held these beads in high esteem; according to them, the precious objects could only be obtained on a certain day of the moon, and the peculiar virtue that resided in them was to secure success in law suits and free access to kings. Pliny knew of a Gaulish knight who was executed by the emperor Claudius for wearing one of these amulets. Under the name of Snake Stones (glain neidr) or Adder Stones the beads are still known in those parts of our own country where the Celtic population has lingered, with its immemorial superstitions, down to the present or recent times; and the old story of the origin of the beads from the slaver of serpents was believed by the modern peasantry of Cornwall, Wales, and Scotland as by the Druids of ancient Gaul. In Cornwall the time when the serpents united to fashion the beads was commonly said to be at or about Midsummer Eve; in Wales it was usually thought to be spring, especially the Eve of May Day, and even within recent years persons in the Principality have affirmed that they witnessed the great vernal congress of the snakes and saw the magic stone in the midst of the froth. The Welsh peasants believe the beads to possess medicinal virtues of many sorts and to be particularly efficacious for all maladies of the eyes. In Wales and Ireland the beads sometimes went by the name of the Magician's or Druid's Glass (Gleini na Droedh and Glaine nan Druidhe). Specimens of them may be seen in museums; some have been found in British barrows. They are of glass of various colours, green, blue, pink, red, brown, and so forth, some plain and some ribbed. Some are streaked with brilliant hues. The beads are perforated, and in the Highlands of Scotland the hole is explained by saying that when the bead has just been conflated by the serpents jointly, one of the reptiles sticks his tail through the still viscous glass. An Englishman who visited Scotland in 1699 found many of these beads in use throughout the country. They were hung from children's necks to protect them from whooping cough and other ailments. Snake Stones were, moreover, a charm to ensure prosperity in general and to repel evil spirits. When one of these priceless treasures was not on active service, the owner kept it in an iron box to guard it against fairies, who, as is well known, cannot abide iron.

From THE QUEST FOR THE MYSTERIOUS COCONUT PEARL by Haile

[On Coconut Pearls]

On my last voyage to the East Indies for purposes of study, I resolved to endeavour to find out something further about the cocos-pearl and if possible to solve the problem of its formation . . . The normal germination process of the coco-nut begins by an enlargement of the embryo, whereby the cotyledon commences to grow inwards to an absorbing organ (haustorium), and thereby comes to protrude outside the endosperm and into the central cavity. Simultaneously with this, the plumule grow out and, breaking through the membranous operculum of the germinating pore, it pushes its way out through the hard shell . . . Given that the germination, being in progress, is stopped by some cause or other, thus preventing the further development of the haustorium it is conceivable that the haustorium in this state might become encrusted by the influence of the coco-nut milk, and that from this the completely petrified cocos-pearl would gradually be formed . . . a coconut without germinating pores is a very great rarity, for which reason they are regarded by the Mohammedans as sacred. The 'klapa boeta' is a talisman (tjimat) par excellence . . . I finally succeeded in collecting eight unopened 'blind' coco-nuts from the East Indian Archipelago . . . The first 'boetas' which I opened produced nothing, but in the fifth I found a really beautiful pearl still attached to the kernel . . . The pearl was attached with the least trace of a stalk, being merely embedded in the endosperm and was quite easy to remove from the kernel. It lay exactly at the base of the nut, just under the spot where the germinating pores ought to have been . . . This discovery, in my opinion, warrants the inference that the cocos-pearl actually represents a calcified haustorium, which has been retained in the nut after the primary germination was checked, owing to the plumule not being able to get through the shell . . . although it still remains unexplained why the cocos-pearl consists almost entirely of calcium carbonate, while neither the cocos-kernel nor the coco-milk contains this carbonate.

In 1887 coconut pearls earned their first mention in Nature, in a letter from S.J. Hickson describing two such pearls he obtained in North Celebes after a particular search there. J.G.F. Riedel, formerly the Dutch Resident officer, at Menado [Sulawesi, Indonesia], in another letter to Nature in 1887 mentioned that he possessed fourteen coconut pearls, one of which he found himself in 1866 at Holontalo, North Celebes 'in the endosperm of the seed of the cocoanut.'

From NATURAL HISTORY LORE AND LEGEND by F. Edward Hulme

It was also held that if a hyaena made a circuit three times round any animal its victim lost all power of escape, and could not stir a foot. According to some ancient writers the animal had a stone called hyaenia in its eye, and this being placed under a man's tongue imparted to him the gift of prophecy.

. . . on the African coast, opposite Madagascar, vast herds of wild swine that are greatly esteemed by the natives of those parts, not only for their flesh, but more especially for a stone that is found often within them, which is "very sovereign against poison."

The ancient Romans believed in the existence of a crystalline stone which they called alectorious, as large as a bean, and to be found in the gizzard of a cock, though not by any means discoverable in every fowl cut open. This stone was held to have the wonderful property of rendering the human possessor of it invisible.

The talisman known as the raven-stone was held to confer on its holder invisibility . . .

The notion of stones of mystic virtue being found in diverse animals is a very common one in ancient and medieaval lore. We have already referred to the raven-stone, and many others were sought after. The interior of a fowl was said to yield a precious stone called alectorious; the chelidionous came from a swallow, geranites from a crane, and draconites from a dragon; while corvia was the name of the stone obtained from the crow . . . The swallow was believed by some people to have two of these precious stones stowed somewhere in its interior; one of these was a red one ,and cured insanity; while the other, a black one, brought good fortune.

Cranes, it was believed, bore stones with them when they were migrating, in order that they might not be swept out of their course by the wind.

Lily in his "Eupheus," declares that "the foule toade hath a faire stone in his head," an idea that Shakespeare has immortalized in the beautiful lines that remind us how:

"Sweet are the uses of adversity
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous
Yet wears a precious jewel in its head."

Tennant tells us that the Cingalese believe that the stomach of the cobra contains a stone of inestimable value, and this belief, absurd as we deem it, is really hardly more far-fetched than such a story as pearls being found in oyster-shells would appear to a man who heard it for the first time.

From CURIOUS CREATURES IN ZOOLOGY by John Ashton

Aristotle mentions that fish do not thrive in cold water, and he says that those which have a stone in their head, as the chromis, labrax, sciaena, and phragus, suffer most in the winter . . .

From THE SNAKES OF EUROPE by G.A. Boulenger

Indian snake-charmers profess to have a belief in the efficacy of snake-stones, or bezoar stones, as a remedy to be applied on the part bitten by a poisonous snake, a belief shared by the natives of many tropical countries. These stones, extracted from various reptiles, birds and mammals, are calcareous concretions from the stomach or bladder, sometimes composed of superphosphate of lime, sometimes phosphate or ammonia or magnesia. The value of a bezoar stone being supposed to increase with its size, the larger ones are sold in India at very high prices.

In many places a popular belief prevails that such stones are found in the heads of snakes . . . when this stone is allowed to stand in a glass of water and the water is drunk, it endows the drinker with surprising virility.

From THE SNAKES OF SOUTH AFRICA by F.W. FitzSimons

Snake stones for the cure of snake bite have, for centuries, been in great demand. They are regarded by millions of Indians with awe and reverence. To them it is blasphemy to doubt the efficacy of a Snake stone. Of all snake bite "cures" the Snake Stone is regarded as the most effective.

From MYTHICAL MONSTERS by Charles Gould

Pliny says their bite is not venomous, other authorities deny this. Pliny gives a long catalogue of medical and magical properties, which he ascribes to the skin, flesh bones, eyes, and teeth of the dragon, also a valuable stone in its head.

From GENERAL HISTORY AND COLLECTION OF VOYAGES AND TRAVELS Vol.1, 2, 8, 11, 17 by Robert Kerr

[On Bamboo Pearls]

There are other canes, called cassan, which spread over the earth like grass, even to the extent of a mile, sending up branches from every knot; and in these canes they find certain stones of wonderful virtue, insomuch, that whoever carries one of these about him, cannot be wounded by an iron weapon; on which account, most of the men in that country carry such stones always about them.

They have also wild kine in this country, in the heads of which certain stones are found, which have the virtue to bring good fortune to merchants.

The rajah likewise delivered present for the king of Portugal, consisting of two gold bracelets set with precious stones, a sash or turban used by the Moors of cloth of silver two yards and a half long, two great pieces of fine Bengal cotton cloth, and a stone as large as a walnut taken from the head of an animal called bulgoldolf, which is exceedingly rare, and is said to be an antidote against all kinds of poison.

. . . the general went to court to take his leave of the king, from whom he received a letter for Queen Elizabeth, with a present of some fine bezoar stones. To the general he gave a handsome Java dagger, which is much esteemed there, a good bezoar stone, and some other things. After this the general took leave of the king, with many courteous expressions on both sides.

Bezoar, of which there are two kinds, one of which comes from the West Indies, called occidental, and the other from the East Indies, called oriental; which latter is worth double the price of the other. Both are of divers forms; some round, others oblong like the stones of dates, some like pigeons eggs; and others like the kidneys of a kid, and others again like chesnuts; but most are blunt at both ends, and not sharp. There is no less variety in the colours; some being light-red, others like the colour of honey, many of a dark ash-colour, but most of a waterish green. The East India or oriental bezoar consists of many coats, artificially compacted together like the coats of an onion, each inclosing the other, and all bright and shining, as if polished by art; when one coat is

broken off that immediately below being still brighter than the former. These several coats are of different thicknesses, in proportion to the size of the bezoars; and the larger is the stone so much the more is it in request. There is one sure way to make trial of bezoars: Take the exact weight of the stone, and then put it in water for four hours; then see that it is not cracked, and wipe it quite dry; and if it now weigh in the smallest degree heavier than before, you may be assured that it is not good. I have ascertained this many times at Bantam, having found many of them to turn out mere chalk, with a bit of stick in the middle, that weighed a Javan taile, or two English ounces. Most of the counterfeit bezoars come from Succadanea in Borneo. The true oriental bezoars come from Patane, Banjarmassen, Succadanea, Macasser, and the Isola das Vaccas at the entrance to Cambodia.

Macasser is an island not far from Celebes [Sulawesi, Indonesia], having abundance of bezoar stones, which are there to be had at reasonable rates. It has plenty of rice and other provisions; and as it has some junks which trade with Banda, nutmegs and mace are likewise to be procured there, but in no great quantity.

The negroes told us of a strange beast, which our interpreter called a carbuncle, which is said to be often seen, but only in the night. This animal is said to carry a stone in his forehead, wonderfully luminous, giving him light by which to feed in the night; and on hearing the slightest noise he presently conceals it with a skin or film naturally provided for the purpose.

Africa has been long famous for serpents, and there are such vast numbers of them in the neighbourhood of the Cape, that many of them have no names. Most of them are extremely venomous, and the colonists would suffer much more than they do from them, were it not that they have a specific remedy for their bites, not known in Europe. This remedy is the serpent-stone, allowed to be factitious, and is brought from India, where they are [supposedly] made by the bramins who have the secret of composing them, which they so carefully conceal, that no Europeans have hitherto been able to discover how they are made. The serpent-stone is about the size of a bean, white in the middle, but of a fine sky-blue on the outside. When a person is bitten by a serpent, this stone is applied to the wound, to which it soon sticks fast of itself, without the aid of any bandage or plaister. The part bitten begins immediately to swell and becomes inflamed. The stone also swells till it becomes full of the venom, and then drops off. It is then put into warm milk, where it soon purges itself from the venom, and resumes its natural colour, after which it is again applied to the wound, where it sticks as before, till a second time full, and so on till all the venom is extracted and the cure perfected.

There are also fountains of water so hot as to boil eggs. Three leagues from Angra there is a petrifying spring, which changes wood into stone; and there was formerly a tree having some of its roots in that water, which were stony and as hard as flint.

. . . and they have a large spider there, whose bite is so venomous, that I have seen from it some of the most shocking sights I ever saw in my life; and it certainly proves mortal, if proper remedies are not applied in time. I was once bit by one on the cheek whilst asleep, and presently after all that part of my face turned as black as ink. I was cured-by the application of a bluish kind of stone (the same, perhaps, they call the serpent-stone in the East Indies, and which is a composition.) The stone stuck for some time of itself on my face, and dropping off, was put into milk till it had digested the poison it had extracted, and then applied again till the pain abated, and I was soon afterwards well.

From HUDSON'S SNAKES, edited by Chad Arment

Among some North American tribes there also existed a belief in a serpent of enormous size that reposed at the bottom of some river or lake, and once every year rose to the surface showing a shining splendid stone on its head.

The same may be said of the monster serpent with a precious stone for a crown of the Iroquois and Algonquins; and the mighty Omnient, the serpent of the Hurons, bearing a horn on its head with which it was able to pierce through rocks and hills.

From THE BOOK OF SECRETS OF ALBERTUS MAGNUS, editors Michael Best and Fank H. Brightman

If thou wilt kindle the mind of any man to joys, and make his wit sharp

Take the stone which is called Selenites. It groweth in the bosom of a snail of India, called Tortoise, and there is of diverse kinds of it, of white, red, and purple color. Others says that it is green, and found in the parts of Persia. And also old Philosophers say, if it be tasted, it giveth knowledge of certain things to come. . .

If thou desire to obtain any thing from any man

Take the stone which is called Alectoria, and it is a stone of a Cock, and it is white as the Crystal, and it is drawn out of the Cock's gizzard, or maw, after that he hath been gelded more than four years, and it is of the greatness of a bean. It maketh the belly pleasant and steadfast, and, put under the tongue, it quencheth thirst . . .

If thou wilt be acceptable and pleasant

Take the stone which is called Chelidonium, and of it there is some black, and some somewhat red, and it is drawn out of the belly of Swallows . . . Evax saith that this stone maketh a man eloquent, acceptable and pleasant. The black stone is good against wild beasts, and wrath, and bringeth the business begun to an end . . .

If thou wilt overcome thy enemies

Take the stone which is called Draconites, from the Dragon's head. And if the stone be drawn out from him alive, it is good against all poisons, and he that beareth it on his left arm, shall overcome all his enemies.

From THE MAGIC OF JEWELS AND CHARMS by George Frederick Kunz

The fabled gem-bearing dragons of India were said to have sometimes fallen victims to the enchanter's art . . . Within the head were found gems of brilliant hue, some of these possessing the power of rendering the wearer invisible.

Persian records tell of a "royal stone" found in the head of the *ouren bad*, a kind of eagle; this preserved the wearer from the attacks of venomous reptiles.

The *mesticas* of the Malays represent a class of stones differing in important respects from the various types of bezoars. A principle distinction is that the *mesticas* are not supposed to owe their origin to pathological conditions in the organism wherein they occur, but rather to a super-abundance of the normal and healthy constituents of the animal or plant. It is probably due to this that the virtues of these particular concretions are rather talismanic than therapeutic, and that they are believed to endow the finder, or one who receives them by gift, with courage, immunity from injury, and also with cunning and shrewdness in the affairs of life. Especially by warriors are these stones highly valued, for they are supposed to protect the wearer from wounds; indeed, this belief sometimes went so far to lead the Malays to think that absolute invulnerability was conferred on one who carried several of them bound so closely to the skin . . .

To many stones was attributed the power of transmitting a certain remedial virtue to water or other liquid in which they are immersed . . .

. . . legend sought to account for the peculiar qualities of the bezoar by the tale that the animals in whose bodies the stones were formed had been bitten by serpents.

The toad-stone was not only an antidote for poisons, but was also thought to give warning of their presence by becoming very hot. To fully profit by this strange quality, the wearer of such a stone was advised to have it so set in a ring that it would touch the skin; in this way he would be sure to have timely notice, if any poisoned food or drink were offered to him.

The crab furnished the stone called the crab's-eye, because in form it resembled an eye . . .

The *lapis carpiensis* or carp-stone, a triangular mass, was taken from the jaws of the carp. It was smaller or larger according to the size of the fish . . .

The *chelonia* is said by Pliny to have been the eye of the Indian tortoise. The magicians asserted that this was the most marvellous of all "stones"; for if bathed in honey and then placed in the mouth, when the moon was either full or new, it conferred the power of divination, and this power lasted for one entire day.

As a companion piece to the 'cock-stone," the hen furnished a concretion possessing special virtues . . . it favored procreation and also nullified the effects of the Evil Eye, and it kept children from having bad dreams if placed beneath their heads when they were sleeping.

The Indians and Spaniards in South America made remedial use of a stone said to be obtained from the cayman or alligator . . . This was employed as a cure for various intermittent fevers.

Even the spider was supposed to produce a stone having remedial power, especially that variety called by the Germans *Kreuzspinne* ("cross-spider").

The "fretful porcupine" also contributed its stone . . . and was considered to be even superior to the bezoar as an antidote against poison.

The livers of certain animals provided concretions called haraczi by the Arabs; these were much used as remedies for epilepsy.

Besides this use as a remedy or antidote, the bezoar was credited with the powers of an elixir of life, for some of the Hindus employed it as a preservative of youth and vigor.

A peculiar bezoar is reported from Indrapura, India. This was said to have been found in the skull of a rhinoceros, and was of light weight and of a black hue, varying to pale red when held against the light; it was hard enough to cut glass.

. . . there is reason to believe that such animal concretions were used by these Indians in magic practices. The Quicha name is *illa*, and Holquin in his Quicha dictionary says that the natives believed that bezoars were luck-bringing stones.

The bezoars of Borneo are taken either from monkeys or porcupines.

The serpent-stone, called by Pliny *ovum anguinum*, or "serpent's eggs," is said to have been worn by the Druid priests as a badge of distinction. Pliny relates that he had seen one of them which was as large as a moderate-sized apple, its shell being a cartilaginous substance. It was supposed to be generated in midsummer out of the saliva and slime exuding from a knot of intertwined serpents. When the moisture had coagulated and formed into a sphere, this was tossed in the air by the hissing snakes . . .

The legendary serpent-stone is usually one taken from the reptile's head, but Welsh tradition tells of one extracted from the tail of a serpent by the hero Peredur...

The so-called "snake-stones," many specimens of which have been found in British barrows, bear in the Scottish Lowlands the designation "Adder Stones." They are also sometimes called adder-beads or serpent-stones.

Tabasheer is a variety of opal that is found in the joints of certain species of bamboo . . . it is originally a juice, which by evaporation changes into a mucilaginous state, then becomes a solid substance. It ranges from translucent to opaque in color, and is either white or bluish-white by reflected light, and pale yellow or slight sherry red by transmitted light.

Serpent-stones were supposed to exist in both ancient and medieval times, and the belief in their existence is widespread among many races of mankind.

[On Thunder-Stones or "Gigi-Gledek"]

The stone implements of various forms found in the shell-heaps of Brazil are called by the natives *Curiscos* or "lightning-stones." The Guaranis name them "stars fallen from heaven"; the Cajuas, "stones hurled by the thunder"; and the Coarados, "axe-stones." A high price is paid for these by the gold-seekers in Brazil, who believe that, by attraction, they show the presence of gold beneath the surface, just as the divining-rod is supposed to be affected by the presence of water or by hidden treasures.

. . . In Malacca they are called *batu gontur*, "lightning-stones," and in Sumatra we have the name anak-pitas, "child of the lightning." In the island of Nias, near Sumatra, they are worn as amulets on the head or attached to the sword.

From THE GARUDA PURANA, translated by A Board of Scholars

Chapter 69

Suta said:

Pearls are found in lordly elephants, clouds, wild boars, shells, fishes, cobras, oysters and the bamboos. Pearls in oysters are more abundant.

Only these are valued as gems and only these and not the other ones can be bored through entirely--say the experts.

Pearls found in bamboos, elephants, whales, and wild boars are usually devoid of lustre though reputed to be auspicious.

One of the eight varieties of pearls as the experts say those obtained from shells and temples of elephants are the poorest in quality.

Pearls found in shells have the same colour as the central portion of shells. They have big angles and weigh about a pala. Pearls from the temple of elephants have a slight yellowish colour without lustre.

The well-known conch (of Vishnu) rendered yellow by its clash with Sarnga (the bow of Vishnu) and elephants of good breeds are the sources of yellowish circular pearls devoid of lustre.

Small light pearls are found in the mouths of the Pathina fish that usually frequent the middle of the vast ocean. They have the same colour as their back.

Pearls obtained from the curved teeth of wild boars having the same colour as their source are very rare and are prized like the Divine Boar (Vishnu).

Pearls found in the joints of bamboos resembling the hail stone in colour are very rare since these bamboos grow only in those places which noble virtuous men frequent and not in wild forests or public places.

Pearls found from the hoods of cobras are perfectly round like fish and have brilliant colour and lustre like a sword frequently sharpened and polished.

Only meritorious persons will have access to the cobra-pearl. Then they can get other gems of great brilliance, wealth, kingdom and grow brilliant.

The man possessing cobra-pearl should invite persons well-versed in sacred rites and perform Raksavidhana (Protection rites) during an auspicious hour and place it on the top of the mansion. Then the whole sky will be enveloped by rainbearing clouds hanging low. Sounds of thunder will be heard as resonant as the sound of drums. Flashes of lightning will illuminate the quarters.

He who has a cobra pearl in his treasury is never harassed by serpents, evil demons, foul diseases and defects of evil associations.

The Pearl with cloud as its origin rarely comes to the earth. Gods take it away from the sky. By the lustre it emits all round it illuminate the quarters. No one can gaze at its dazzling brilliance as no one can gaze at the disc of the sun.

The pearl outshines the brilliance of fire, moon, stars and planets. It is equally brilliant in the day as in the night enveloped by pitch darkness.

I am sure that the whole earth surrounded by four oceans overflowing with waters sparkling like gems is not an adequate price for this pearl even if the earth, the most beautiful of all worlds, is filled with gold.

Even if an indigent man were to obtain it as a result of his previous merits he will enjoy unrivalled lordship as long as the pearl remains in his possession.

It is capable of bestowing good fortune not only upon the meritorious king but also upon the subjects a well. It is capable of dispelling evil thousands of yojanas all round.

From ACOSTA ON THE BEZOAR STONE--A note to Pseudodoxia Epidemica, Book III, chapter 23

From *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, Lib. 4, Chap. 42 (in the 1604 London edition, translated by Edward Grimston, *The Naturall and Morall Historie of The East and West Indies*, pp. 323-326).

Of the Bezaars stone. Chap. 42.

The Bezaars stone is found in all these beasts before mentioned [i.e., "Vicugnes and Tarugnes" (chap. 40) and "Pacos, Guanacos, and Indian Muttons" (chap. 41)], which are proper to Peru, whereof some Authors of our time have written whole bookes, which they may reade that desire to have a more particular knowledge. For the present subject it shall be sufficient to say, that this stone which they call Bezaar, is found in the stomacke and belly of this beast, somtimes one alone, sometimes two, three, and foure. They are very different in forme, greatnesse and colour, for that some are small like filberds, & lesse; others like walnuts; some like pigeons egges, and others as bigge as a hens egge: and I have seene some as bigge as an orange; in forme some are round, others in fashion like to lentils, and many other formes. For their colour, som are black, some white, some grey, darke greene, and others, as if they had beene gilded. It is no certaine rule to judge the best and most fine by the colour or forme. All these stones are made and fashioned of divers films and skins one upon another. In the province of Xaura and other provinces of Peru, they find these stones in divers kinds of beasts, both wild and tame, as in the Guanacos, Pacos, Vicugnes, and Tarugues, some adde an other kind, which they say are wilde goates, which the Indians call Cypris. These other kindes of beastes are very well knowen in Peru,

whereof wee have alerady discoursed. The Guanacos or country sheepe, or Pacos, have commonly the lesser stones, and blacke, neither are they so much approved for the use of Physicke. They draw the greatest Bezaar stones from the Vicugnes, and they are grey, or white, or of a darke greene, which are helde for the better. They esteeme those of the Tarugues for the most excellent, whereof there are some reasonable bigge: they are commonly white, inclining to grey; and they have the filmes commonly bigger and thicker than the rest.

They finde the Bezaar stone equally in both male and female. All beasts that ingender it, chaw the cuid, and commonly feede upon the snow and rockes. The Indians reporte & teach by tradition from their fathers and Antients, that in the Province of Xaura, and in other provinces of Peru, there are many herbs and venomous beasts, which poison the water and the pastures where they eate and drinke, and where they breathe: amidst which venomous hearbs there is one very well knowne of the Vicugne, by a naturall instinct, and of other beasts that ingender the Bezaar stone, which eate this hearb, and by meanes thereof they preserve themselves from the poisoned waters and pastures: and they say, that of this hearb the stone is compoude in the stomacke, whence it drawes all the vertue against poyson and other wonderfull effects. This is the opinion & tradition of the Indians, discovered by men of great experience in the kingdome of Peru, which agrees with reason, and with that which Plinie reports^l of the mountaine goates, which are nourished and fed upon poison without suffering any harme. The Indians being demaunded, why the sheepe, kine, goates, and calves, such as are in Castille, have not the Bezaar stone, seeing that they feede on the same rockes: their answer is, That they beleeeve not, that those beasts of Castille eate of that hearbe, or that they have found the Bezaar stone in stags and falow diere. This seemes to agree with our knowledge, for that in new Spaine they find the Bezaar stone, although there be no Vicugnes, Pacos, Tarugues, nor Guanacos, but only stags, in some of which they finde these stones.

The principall vertue of the Bezaar stone is against poison and venomous diseases, although there bee heerein divers opinions, some hold it for a mockerie, others for a miracle. Howsoever it be, it is most certaine that it is of a great operation, when it is applied in time, & convenient in a maner, as hearbes, and to persons capable and disposed: for there is no medicine that doth alwaies cure infallibly. In Spaine and Italie, we have seene admirable effects of this stone, against the Taverdette, which is a kind of plague, but not so much as in Peru. They do apply it beaten and put into some liquor, which may make it fit for the cure of melancholy, the falling sickenes, pestilent feavers, & many other diseases. Some take it in wine, others in vineger, with water Dezahac, of Leangue de beufe, borrage and other sortes, as the Phisitians and Apoticaries can tell. The Bezaar stone hath no proper savour, as Rasis the Arabian doth testifie. Wee have seene notable trialls, and there is no doubt but the Author of this universall world, hath given great vertues to this stone. The Bezaar stones which comes from the East Indies, have the first place of account, they are of an olive colour, the second are those of Peru, and the third those of New Spaine. Since that these stones were in request, they say, the Indians have made artificall ones; and many when they see these stones greater then the orddinarie, they take them to be false and counterfait: triall and experience is the best mistres to know them. One thing is worthy admiration, that they grow and are fashioned upon very strange things, as upon the tagge of a point, upon a pinne, or a peece of wood, which they finde in the centre of this stone, and yet do they not hold it false, for that the beast might swallow it, and the stone thicken upon it, and growes one upon another, and so it increaseth. I did see in Peru, two stones fashioned upon Pignons of Castille, which made us to wonder much, for that in all Peru, we had not seene any pines or Pignons of Castille, if they were not brought from Spaine, which seemes to me very extraordinary. This little may suffice touching the Bezaars stone. They bring other phisicall stones from the Indies, as the stone of Hyiada, or of Rate, the bloud stone, the stones of milke, and of the sea. Those which they call Cornerinal, for the heart, whereof there is no neede to speake, having nothing common with the subject of beastes, whereof we have intreated: which gives us to understand how the great Master and Author of all, hath

imparted his benefites and wonderfull secrets, to all partes of the world; for the which he is to be glorified for ever.

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