Chapter 10
The origins of the Manes, the fertility of the land, and the character of these heathen

The whole stock of Manes originated from Mandimansa. This is a term in the Mandinga language, whose meaning is mansa 'King', Mandim 'of Mandim.

Apparentley the King of Mandim takes his title from the kingdom of Mandim only, as a king may do from his chief kingdom. (a) (But) Mandimansa is the universal lord of all Ethiopia, according to the common tradition. His name is so respected that when any of his people hear it, they immediately behave with the same reverence, though expressed in their own way, as we do when we hear the Most Holy Name of the Son of God. And they are even more fervent in their reverence, though only to a mere mortal man, than we are to the true God. Mandimansa had two brothers younger than himself, Jalomansa and Telomansa. With these two he shared his great empire. To the first brother he gave the Province of the Souse, which has already been discussed; he gave him a bow made of cane (as a symbol of authority) to undertake the conquest which was entailed. As a result, the jurisdiction of the first brother extended as far as Mina. To the second brother, he gave the land between the Gambia River and the borders of the Moors. Mandimansa retained for himself the Mandingas, the Fulas, etc., and many other Provinces. All the peoples in this land of Ethiopia today are subjects of the descendants of Mandimansa.

The richness of the native lands of these heathen is such that one might spend one's days there comfortably, and the same is true of the other lands which have so far been mentioned. They have no lack of food-crops and cattle, and there are large numbers of wild beasts. In parts /f.75v/ there are gold-mines. One of the most famous and best-known of these is the one at the renowned town of Tumbo Cotum. I will mention that I heard about this one from a trader who is fond of collecting and recounting information, a man of wide experience who is very curious to learn about the districts he visits. He has lived a long time in Ethiopia. While he was trading in the

(a) He says that the kings who possess salt are greater than he is, although they are his subjects, for he eats from their hand. The salt comes to him from Gambia, Geiba and the Souse, etc. Now his arrows and bow of state are said to be made of pure gold.
Gambia River, he met a Mandinga merchant who had his hair so full of gold that when he shook his head the precious metal tinkled. The scholar was amazed. He engaged in conversation with the merchant, and as he knew the ways of the land, and had some theoretical knowledge of the language, he gradually learnt from the stranger what he wanted to know. He asked him where he came from, and he replied that he came from the renowned City of Gold. He asked him about the trade there. At this point the stranger told him what follows. "Since you wish to know, and since you have already gained some knowledge of the richness of the land from the indications of it you have seen hanging in my hair, I will tell you all about it in detail. Tumbo Cotum is the most important settlement of all those now possessed by the descendants of Mandimansa, and the richest in his whole great empire. Few people live there. The houses there, and the town itself, are only swept on Fridays; and the post of sweeper is held by a jagarefe who belongs to the family of the great emperor. The amount of gold thus collected is sent to the imperial household, after the jagarefe is paid, and after the inhabitants have been given their share."

This was the account the Mandinga gave, and he added that all the gold came from this town, and was shared out among the various provinces by the Mandinga merchants, the most important merchants in Guinea. Hence it is believed that all the gold of Mina comes from this place, and the gold of the Sousos, and the little gold which reaches this Province of Sierra Leone. The kings of Portugal have attempted to gain this trade, but have given up because of the great difficulties caused by the distance between the gold-producing land and the sea-ports. The same can be said regarding the

(b) It is common to carry gold in the hair, while dressed in an old shirt and breeches, because of robbers along the way, for instance in Farim Cabo, which is the frontier of the Soneques, who come to this district to attack all of Mandimansa's boats.

(c) It is said that the town of the woman who supplies the Hanes with medicines is the true land of gold, her dishes being cast in this metal, and everything else this great minister of hell employs. The idol in its niche of gold stands in the shade of a great poulan (cotton-tree). They offer gold to it. When the sacrifice is complete, they throw the metal into a very fast stream which runs at the entrance to the place.
strangers from the North, who got as far as launching on the lake which surrounds these people a boat furnished with the necessary provisions: they had brought the boat overland, in pre-fabricated wooden sections. The same might be said about Lodovico, who was killed by the Manes at Cape Mount, because they were jealous of the fortress which they (?) had on land, for the construction (?) of the boat) although they had earlier given him permission (to build it). He and his people went up that river for seven or eight days without catching sight of anyone, and then they returned. Those who have been there say that when the people (of the gold town) make their sacrifices, they throw large quantities of gold-dust into the water; and that the niche in which their idol stands is entirely of gold. /f.77/ This is what we know about the habits of these heathen. (d)

A doubt commonly expressed concerning the empire of Mandimansa, which ought to be answered, is this. It cannot be that such vast territory is subject to him, since many lands in it have no king, and the only rulers in these are those who have most power. To this my reply is that one cannot argue from a lapse in imperial authority, when others have seized power or are in rebellion, as we see happening in the States of Flanders. This is the reply to anyone who poses the question. Any other relevant point omitted here we shall deal with later.

Now let us speak of the character of these pagans. As it has so much in common with that of the natives, there is little to say. However inasmuch as there is some difference between them it will be best not to be silent about it. Their facial features are generally agreable. In build, they are tall and well-proportioned, though the women are slighter. Their faces are marked all over with scarifications, made by means of hot irons, giving a thousand pictures of lizards, fish, gazelle, monkeys, elephants and all other kinds of animals, insects and birds. A Mane with his sculptured

(d) All the dishes belonging to Mandimansa, this Emperor, are of gold.

The women wear such large gold massucos in their ears that in order not to tear their ears they support the rings with tapes.
face and his forehead arrow-marked looks like an olive with its top cut off and for this reason slaves from Mahe country are worth little. They pluck their eyelashes, in order to see better, as they claim. They pull out their front teeth, two above and two below, in order to swallow the antidote to poison: so subtle is the poison employed that the moment it touches the body, the jaws of the wounded man are locked and his teeth cannot be opened, hence the removal (of the teeth) is necessary. As soldiers, they are amazingly skilled in all military matters. They employ bows and arrows and spears. They introduced among the natives the use of the bow, and the whole art of employing poison. In the mechanical arts they practice more than one craft: they set most value on the craft of the blacksmith. In intelligence and mental agility they far surpass the natives.

They are not lacking in ability, and it is a mistake to suppose that it is lack of ability which inhibits them from putting to us their doubts on religious matters. They find our religion so reasonable that they call those true Christians who practice their faith most strictly 'Gods'. A king of theirs said about a certain priest: "The padre is God. Who can do what he does? He scorns all we love to do. How then can we become Christians?" No doubt all of them would be excellent Christians if they could only have, as well as the preaching of the Gospel, the good example of the hermits of these deserts. But some of these (i.e. the Portuguese), instead of being like St. Anthony, live worse lives than the heathen here, and they serve only to bring about the ruin of the new edifice of faith. They breathe foul air over the newest and most tender plants in the garden of this new church, and these, being most delicate grafts, lose their potential to grow and to rise upwards, and to produce true fruits. These

(e) King Farma. A most wise example. He wanted to make a display of himself, when his people were at hand. He appeared in a costume embroidered all over, wearing his crown or royal hat, and a torn black smock over the costume, and then said: "Who is there among you who is less than a servant? I am the king, etc". The example caused consternation.
(stunted plants) may be said to be rather like the ascetics of Guinea: when the Fathers come to gather them they find them bad and so leave them alone, even though they mimick (the Fathers).

Hence it comes about that if the Christians say to the heathen, "Tomorrow is a fast-day", they reply, "Will you be fasting?". They say this, because if the so-called Christians of this land invite them to help in violating a fast, the heathen come more rapidly than they do if invited to help in avoiding the sin. If it is to do something to offend God, no-one ever claims to be unwell or too busy! One of these false holy men came to see me one day. It was during Lent. He said to me: "Father, your reverence should not confess a certain Christian, because he 'keeps' a servant-girl". The Christian came to hear about this, he told the king, and the latter came to my house and said: "Father, A. told your reverence not to confess P. because he keeps a servant-girl; but he himself keeps many, so who taught him to play moralist?" And so on.

They are enemies of all secrecy. They can conceal only their hatred. They are unhurried in their actions and staid. They have nothing of the Hebrew in them. Their behaviour is a continuous pretence, giving nothing away. They are completely two-faced, a race with double hearts. They conduct themselves towards strangers with such cunning that the only way to know what they are after is to take the exact opposite of what they say. They have so little interest in good faith and common truth that it would seem that these virtues have not yet penetrated to these parts. Only the who are poor live among them in security. When they travel they often behave even more badly. They are the inventors of poisoning in all its forms. They administer poison in tobacco, in cola, in water and in wine,

(f) Ascetics of Guinea, to whom cannot be applied the words of Isaiah, 11 (verse 8) "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp", since asps and basilisks are never challenged by these: labours, penitence, fasts, love of Christ. Holy men do not live in these deserts, so serpents have power over them: "They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain" (verse 9). No can the further words of Isaiah be applied to them: "Dust shall be the serpent's meat" (65, verse 25). The serpent's dust is the support of the good man! This refers to the custom of these savage nations who used to bring up their children on coarse food, without giving them treats or cossetting them. So the poets imagine Hercules was brought up by his tutor, who gave him tiger milk and lion's marrow, and refused him any more delicate titbits, in order to make him fierce and brave, etc.
carrying the poison behind their finger-nails; they put it on knives, which they bury, leaving the dangerous part of the blade sticking up above ground. They are extraordinarily envious and self-seeking. The person who is the most generous is considered by them the best, whether he be black or white. None of the heathen in Guinea can take a man for what he is, rather they measure him by what he possesses. The more you give them, the more they think of you, that's all there is to it. They keep their eyes on your gifts. João Loucão, a native of Chaves, a gentleman, said to King Farma when Brother Francisco Pereira, the brother of Pedro Álvares, sent him a measure of wine, a gift always appreciated by the savage: \(g\) "King, wash your head, God will give you great rewards." The ignorant king replied: "And what will He give me if I wash my head?". The Portuguese was astonished at the limited illumination of the tyrant, and so he noted the reply, in order to tell me about it.

Their love of gain /f.78/ leads them to blame their witches for deaths, and to invent a great number of tyrannical practices, as already stated. \(h\) It leads them not only to steal goods from ships which run aground on beaches, but also to kill the crews, as happened in this Province in 1609. It leads them to pretend to have wars against each other, solely to see if as a result they can get some benefit out of us, since they claim that they abandon their vengeance for this reason, as happened in 1612 with the Casses. Those who understand these farces laugh at them, for what they most want on these occasions when they revile each other is to learn our views. As they are all in fact one party, in this way they measure our attitude towards them. It is necessary to be cautious and to avoid putting oneself in the hands of such a people, for they are very clever at squeezing one dry. When there are serious

\(g\) Father Francisco Xavier would give nothing to catechumens, so that the bonzos would not be given the opportunity to say that people were converted to Christianity by bribes.

\(h\) In all this they are different from that Pythagorean pagan who, having bought shoes on credit, was bringing the money the next day to the man he owed when he was told on the way that the shoemaker had died. Overjoyed, he returned home with the money, but then he was assailed by scruples. So he hurries to the home of the dead shoemaker and leaves the money there, saying: "Tibi vivit qui aliis defunctus est", that is, "Money, you have an owner". At home Tobias heard the bleating of the kid and said: "Nunquid ablatus est?". It is stolen property, woman. What belongs to others cries out, however well hidden.
motives for war and they have to fight, because of popular pressure and to
avoid public scandal, they visit each other by night and eat together,
although in daytime they seem like (competing) wolves. And thus they
say that they are lions who never sleep at night! When one thinks that
something has been settled with them, it has not even started. They say
of themselves that they are like the fire in a pile of rubbish, which seems
to be dead yet continues to smoulder.

They are very punctilious, and they particularly pride themselves on
being so where the succession to the throne is concerned, since they will
not consent to admit other than legitimate sons of free parents. If a
woman in childbirth mentions the name of a slave, these people are so
blinded by hatred of this bad blood that they kill the child, in order to
prevent it from inheriting under any circumstances. This is the reason why
Fançrafare, our friend, the brother of Farma, was excluded from the throne,
as he was the son of a slave woman; and so he has been wandering around
for many years in foreign lands, suffering great hardships, and distressed
in his person.

All of them are generally very clean, as stated above. They are very
polite and discreet, in their own way. They are never boring in their
conversation, which is always conducted most courteously. One never sees
a Mané spit in public, or cough up phlegm. But some of them are given to
the disgusting habit of swallowing lice from their hair. No-one can
surpass them in pretences and dissimulation. On this subject, I will relate
a famous trick that Tora, our great friend, played on the French when he was
still a pagan. The savage had a difference with an uncle of the king who
today possesses Sierra Leone, by name Sacena, and he asked the French to
help him against his adversary. They gave him their word that they would
do this. As a sign of \( f.78\) gratitude he gave them a gold bracelet.
In return he asked them to use their guns to half the enemy canoes and
disperse them, if they appeared. But they did the opposite, by taking aim
at two of Tora's canoes and killing those in them. The savage remembered
this treachery. A few years later the French returned. The king brought
slaves to his town of Papel and placed them on the beaches in fetters,
telling them to cry out and pretend that they were being offered for sale.
But instead of doing this, they fidgeted with their ropes and bonds. Tora
went to them and touched their eyes with red malaguetas, which are a kind
of pepper, making them utter such wailings that the French were persuaded
that they were offered for sale. The strangers landed, their captain
accompanying them. The men in ambush came bounding out of the forest and
attacked the enemy, taking the captain prisoner. They seized so much loot
that the bracelets \( \text{sic} \) were compensated for, and they gained more than
they could have got from Sacena.  

No-one harms them without having to pay for it. The natives of Guinea regularly and commonly say that the whites are like flies: despite the danger of falling in, they are always attracted by honey.

There have occurred some striking incidents involving Portuguese: if they had not been warned, some of them would have had a shorter span of life. But however much the chimes of the tongue peal out of tune, however many the grievances of our people against the heathen, since the latter are above all lovers of gain, as long as there are things to be given them they forget all. And so they say: "Kill my father, but give me money". I was talking one day with one of the Mane. he was angry with a Greek for having spoken rudely to him, and he told me that he had spoken with the emperor about a way in which he could take vengeance on the foreigner. This made me smile, because all this talk was bluff, intended to make the quarrel known, so that someone would tell the other party about it, in the hope that he would then pay up. The Mane then said to me: "Father, A. is very rude to me and gives me little; but Simão Vaz was rude and gave me a lot". All this arises because they are narrow-minded and weak, like all those who lack illumination and the knowledge of true nobility.

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(i) Thus they take great offence without reason. In the time of Farma, his (?) family) seized a ship and killed the crew. It happened that later the treachery was avenged. Farma said that it served them right and that fathers should not lament for sons who had learnt what it was to sing with someone else's money. And Mabare, Farma's wife, who knew only of the treachery, and was in labour, burst apart. For Compita, King of the Logos, who tried to kill Bartolomeu André, see chapter 15.

(j) Alexander.

(k) Red cola, the long malagueta, is the sign given by executors for debts between individuals. When kings make a display of themselves their possessions and show themselves to their people in public, over their damask smocks they throw a common native one.
They say that the tongue reveals the man. They therefore esteem greatly those who say little, and they say that much speech hinders counsel. They think more highly of a kind word than of a large gift, and they say: "What is the use of my receiving a great deal from you if I do not gain your goodwill and your satisfaction?" They call this 'seeking harmony', a thing very necessary in Guinea, where the savages see everything in terms of Yes or No, so that you often have to face them with an appearance of goodwill and a smile on your lips – even when you are laughing at them inwardly. Those who are prodigal with words, and therefore give little thought to what they say, they esteem little. They especially dislike chatterboxes, and similarly they dislike those who are given to drinking more than is necessary. As collectors of alms for brotherhoods, there are no better, although this is done by the humbler among them. No collector will miss an opportunity, once he has overcome his timidity, whether he be high-born or humble. Such are all those who only remember you when you benefit them or when they seek something from you. So much for their character. Other aspect may be found in the chapter which discusses the same subject in relation to the (native) heathen of this Province, etc.

(1) But they are fluent in our way of speech, for they lie copiously and pride themselves on legacies of vice; yet when we mention our (religious) truths, they call them lies.