Chapter 11

The numbers of the heathen, and their various names and languages

The number of the Manes might be said to be well-nigh infinite. Of those that live in this province no exact estimate can be given, because of the intermingling between this nation and the natives. If we limit the estimate to the true Manes, then they are few in number, so few that it seems that the race is on the way to extinction. Those today found in the Province may number 1.

We call the Manes by various names, corresponding to the various tribes. Some are called Queis, and these are the most noble. Others are called Accare, others Acbaran, others again Aperme. The Queis are in possession of (the lands of) the Boulons and Casses, with (the support of) a whole variety of soldiers with different names, such as the Bombos, Cubales, and Kerefos, although the family (?) of Queis) is itself more limited (in extent). Except the Bombos, these all came in the party led by Balunca or Jelonfa, /f.79v/ the father of Filamangue. Accare (family ?) is in possession of Serra Leoa with (the support of) their Colas and Borgos, etc. And Bangues ... Farma ... garbled Acbaran (family) with their Canes, Randacousas, Taras, Tangas, and Coras, to whose family the king belongs. Aperme is (a family) of little consequence: we do not know of any conquered group which they brought. Tora was of this stock, since Aperme means half-slave, half-free. These are the kinds of people who today inhabit this Province.

As regards language, each has a very different one and they are as varying as the races. The Queis have their own language, and so on. The same applies to the soldiers. Apart from these commonly-used names, the Manes bear the cruel and hateful name of Sumbas, which means 'eater of human flesh'. If this name given to the soldiers, while they are such, is a fitting one it is not because they eat human flesh in their native lands where, as I have stated, there is abundance of foodstuffs. But this practice is a military regulation, and they are most careful to observe it. In my view, it was their most powerful weapon of war, which spread terror and made their victory easier. What army, however large and strong, can fail to behave in a cowardly fashion when it learns about and witnesses such a novel and inhumane spectacle? A Sumba would seize a baby from its mother's breasts and before her eyes cut its throat, then by tearing out its guts and stuffing it with rice, and laying it in burning coals as if it were a pot, yes, I repeat, in burning coals, he would obtain two dishes,
the rice, cooked within the belly of the child as in a pot, and the roast meat. What dire cruelty, what tyranny! The original Sumbas were not content to eat this extraordinary meal themselves; they also recruited eating-companions, because they wished to have soldiers of spirit. Thus they made those they conquered eat flesh, and those who refused when invited they killed as a punishment. It was their normal custom to take those who were fattest, even if they were the kings or lords of the conquered people. If he made a good meal, that was enough. The malice of these savages reached such a height that if they happened to take any of the women who had been captured for themselves, when the fancy struck them they would send them to bath and on their return kill them and have them cooked.

One must add that all this was a long time ago, and much has happened since. Still, I will mention two or three incidents which have occurred in this Province and which are frightening. The first involves Sambalate the Cruel, (a) son of Feran Messera, whom I will describe in his turn. It seems that Sambalate acquired a taste for human flesh even when in /f.o/ his mother's womb, at which time that he passed into the power of Farma, to whom he was presented by his father as a mark of the great affection Messera felt for his slave, on account of what he had received from Farma, as will be described later. Sambalate was born in this Province. When he was old enough to have two wives, a native brought his daughter. The Sumba accepted her and thanked him for his present. At a later date, this poor father-in-law came to see his son-in-law, but he was drawn there more because he missed his daughter. What would Sambalate do to mark the occasion of this visit? He devised a cruel dish, the most cruel that had been heard of up to that time. He killed the wife and served her to her own father when he came to see her. When the banquet, which had been entirely at the expense of the father-in-law, was concluded, the man asked his Sumba son-in-law to let him see his daughter. Sambalate replied: "A fine time to ask this! After you have just eaten her, how can you ask me to let you see her?" The native was overwhelmed by the reply and left completely heartbroken. Sambalate's cruelty was so much the cause of envy on the part of others that once, when a pagan was killed in the country of Farma, Mundufare, his brother, who was present, asked the king for permission to eat the raw heart of the dead man, so that he would be given the name of Sambalate. The king replied that he would if Mundufare

(a) Sambalate, King of M acosse, and married, so rumour says.
would add three blacks ( ? to the meal). This is what happened, and I was personally acquainted with the gentleman. This business occurred in 1601 and he died of small-pox in 1612. It did him no good to eat a human heart.

A heathen of this Province was judged and found guilty of being a witch. He was taken before the king so badly cut to pieces that the king was astonished. He was asked why they had been so cruel to a living man and they replied: "Father, we were just taking our portions". To punish them for their cruelty the king forbade them to eat the man. Here in this Serra the king gave me a Dutch child, to whom his vassals had fed the flesh of the child's compatriots they had killed, and the child was to die (too), the hair having come away from a large part of his head. At the present time they are much given to bragging about which parts of the body are tastiest, and they say these are the palms of the hand, the soles of the feet and certain other parts. When they discuss the matter they do so with great gusto, openly pointing to those parts of the body which would make a delicacy. Nor do they blush to indicate those persons who seem to them most suitable for the stew-pot, indeed they treat human flesh as we treat the meat of /f.80v/ cows, sheep, etc. And they eat great quantities of it today. At Cape Lopo Gonçalves(b) beyond Mina and Calabar, there are slaughter-houses for human flesh and the trade in flesh is so common that the heathen peoples of these parts sell each other. Sometimes the traders who go to and fro in their canoes, if they happen to seize some of the heathen and have no other use for them, take them to be dismembered at these slaughter-houses. (Another atrocity is this.) The young shoots of palm-trees were used as cabbage by the Sumbas, thus killing the trees and causing destruction in the districts they conquered, since these trees are

(b) Cape Lopo, Calabar. At Calabar there are slaughter-houses in which anyone whom the heathen or the Portuguese do not want for the (slave) trade is killed: they only want the best, and when the sellers become tired, they kill and sell those rejected. This can be observed. Here they greatly value the horns of animals, such as cows and sheep.
of the greatest importance to Ethiopia. This practice is detested by all sections of the heathen, and it is because of the natural detestation it arouses that the Sumbas keep it as it were buried, and keep various other ( ? practices). Here they are called Manis, but in other parts (of Africa) Jacas, as I will explain in due course.

Tora loved the Portuguese much. He had entrusted his famous Island of Caracore, today the Island of St. Peter, to a native governor. This man dishonoured the servant-girl of a certain Portuguese. When Tora learnt of this, he called the governor and asked him why he had ill-treated a possession of his guests. The poor governor let slip these words without thinking: "These Sumbas always have to show they are our masters!" Word reached Tora, who concealed his feelings, but called his grandees and prepared a banquet, during which he purposed to kill ( ? and eat) the governor. (But) the guests pleaded so strongly that he spared the man's life, and he was deprived only of his post and his liberty, as the penalty for his offence. Yet however much they deprecate the custom nominally, however much they try to convince us of this, they retain the evil practice of (cannibal) feasting. And those who have lost the habit have done so less through their own moral will than out of shame, the shame having developed as a result of their commercial contacts with the Portuguese.

The Randacousas (c) are especially partial to this dish (of human flesh) and in order to obtain it they penetrate into the forest to attack those who go there to work, for instance, to cut down palm nuts. If anyone dies without an heir, they dig him up to eat him, stinking though the body may be. They fight with spears and always travel in the vanguard, being supplanted only when the war-fences have been erected ( ?) /f.81/