

‘Love of War’ and ‘Fierce Tigresses’: Statius, Lucan and Anchieta’s *De Gestis Mendi de Saa*

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INTRODUCTION

José de Anchieta’s Neo-Latin poem, *De Gestis Mendi de Saa* (Coimbra, 1563), can lay claim to being the first epic poem written in America.¹ Focusing on the deeds of Mem de Sá, third governor-general of Brazil, it depicts the cultural clash between the Indians and the Portuguese. Mem de Sá seeks to eradicate the evils he sees in Brazil, particularly the natives’ excessive warlike nature and anthropophagic customs, through the imposition of Christianity and, paradoxically, by means of considerable aggression. The story unfolds between December 1557 and March 1560, reaching a climax with the destruction of Fort Coligny, a French fortress in Guanabara Bay.

This article is concerned with the ways in which Anchieta’s image of the savage nature of the *Brasilles* draws on two Latin epic motifs: *belli amor*, ‘love of war’, and *immanes tigres*, ‘fierce tigresses’.² Previously, scholarly attention has almost exclusively focused on the overwhelming presence of Virgil and (to a lesser degree) Ovid in Anchieta’s hexameters.³ My aim is to enrich our portrait of Anchieta’s indebtedness to imperial Roman epic by discussing his more often overlooked reuse of material from Lucan’s *Civil War* and Statius’ *Thebaid* with regard to these two motifs.⁴ I will conclude by arguing that his use of Lucan and Statius was at least in part driven by his political reservations about the nature of the Portuguese war against the Indians and the crippling effect of violence on the perpetrator and victim. I will also explain how the widely held view that Brazilian cannibalism was based on a culture of vengeance has helped Anchieta subtly to hint at a kind of hidden cannibalism on the part of the Portuguese.

ANCHIETA’S LIFE

José de Anchieta⁵ was born in 1534 in San Cristóbal de La Laguna, on Tenerife, and sent to Portugal aged fourteen to attend Coimbra’s newly created Colégio das Artes. The college offered a secular education in the spirit of Renaissance Humanism and put a strong emphasis on the teaching of Greek and Latin. In 1551 he joined the Society of Jesus and in 1553 departed as a missionary to Brazil. A few months after his arrival he took part in the foundation of the College of São Paulo de Piratininga, where he taught Latin whilst learning the Old Tupi language, then the most widely spoken language on the coast of Brazil and adopted as a lingua franca by Amerindians and colonists alike.⁶ Anchieta lived in Brazil for the rest of his life, travelled throughout the east of the country and served as the Brazilian Jesuit Provincial from 1577 to 1588. His intellectual and literary achievement is of no little significance. He wrote the first Tupi grammar, as well as many poems, plays and letters in the native language, in Portuguese and Spanish, and in Latin.

The epic *De Gestis Mendi de Saa*, which in many ways can be seen as the pinnacle of his career, provides the context in which Anchieta reveals his view of the Indians by recourse to the *belli amor* (‘love of war’) and *immanes tigres* (‘fierce tigresses’) motifs. The epic is made up of approximately 3,000 lines and is prefaced by the *Epistola Nuncupatoria*, in which Anchieta congratulates Mem de Sá of his successes whilst reminding him that God is ultimately responsible for his victories over the sinful French and Indians.⁷ As we might expect, the poem’s structure and motifs draw heavily on Latin and even Homeric antecedents. Given their prominence in sixteenth-century curricula, Virgil and (to a lesser degree) Ovid are overwhelmingly present in Anchieta’s hexameters.⁸ A longer study could offer a survey of the presence of other sources, including Late-Antique or Neo-Latin poets.⁹ But the extreme brutality of Lucan’s *Civil War* and Statius’ *Thebaid* and their ambivalence in the treatment of epic *uirtus* make them crucial models for exaggerating the savagery of the Indians whilst questioning the heroism of the Portuguese.

BELLI AMOR

In his essay 'Of Cannibals', Montaigne expresses his admiration for the native Brazilians' bravery in war, highlighting the fact that their military prowess is not motivated by the desire to conquer enemy land or to acquire material goods. 'Their wars are throughout noble and generous', he argues, 'having [...] no other foundation than the sole jealousy of valour'.¹⁰ This aristocratic, 'generous' war, with no consideration of gain, is an act of pure expenditure, an unlimited offering of energy in which the warrior abandons himself to the frenzy of battle. The fact that he does so with no avarice or calculation guarantees the nobility of his deed, which in turn is the only way to obtain the non-material trophies of rank and glory.¹¹ However, in Anchieta's epic, this basic understanding of martial boldness, which runs through the epic tradition from the paradigmatic examples of Sarpedon (esp. *Il.* 12.310-28) and Achilles (e.g. *Il.* 1.152-7, 225-30, 9.320-7) in Homer to the self-sacrificing character of Sousa Andrade's Brazilian epos *O Guesa*, is projected onto the Indians as a form of perverted and senseless violence, by means of notable echoes from passages of classical epic in which valour is shown in its sombre facets. The excessive consumption of lives and material resources is a hallmark of war in Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* and most of all in Statius's *Thebaid*.¹² Characters are often pictured in the grip of rage or hatred, seemingly in thrall to their passion for violence. Bloodshed often seems an end in itself, as attempts at justifying war, far from redeeming the violence, sound morally warped or empty.

Virgil's Turnus constitutes a possible point of departure for the use of this motif in all later poets. Maddened by Allecto, 'lust of the sword rages in him, the accursed frenzy of war' (*Aen.* 7.461: *saeuit amor ferri et scelerata insania belli*),¹³ and Allecto herself tells Juno: *accendamque animos insani Martis amore* (*Aen.* 7.550: 'and [I] will kindle their minds with lust of maddening war'). Later on, at 8.327, the motif reappears when Evander tells Aeneas the myth of the golden age, which comes to an end with 'the frenzy of war, and the passion of gain' (*belli rabies et amor [...] habendi*).

Lucan adopts the *belli amor* motif from the start of his epic with *si tantus amor belli tibi, Roma, nefandi* ('If your love of an abominable war is so great, Rome') at 1.21.¹⁴ The Scaeuia episode illustrates the propensity of Lucan's characters to kill or die in war.¹⁵ The idea formulated by Scaeuia at 6.245-6 is crucial: *Pompei uobis minor est causaeque senatus / quam mihi mortis amor* ('Your love of Pompey, of the Senate's cause, is less / than mine of death'). In Lucan, military *uirtus* is often treated as an absolute value, disconnected from other positive ethical connotations, and thus turns into a component of evil, as civil war deprives all courage and warlike deeds of any chance of justification.¹⁶ Hence the narrator's commentary on Scaeuia's attitude (6.147-8): 'eager for every wrong, he did not know / how great a crime is valour in a civil war'. *Amor belli* occurs in Statius¹⁷ in the *Achilleid* 1.412 (in relation to the Greek cities preparing for the Trojan expedition), and at least two variants emerge in *Achil.* 1.494, *bellare cupido*,¹⁸ and *Theb.* 4.260, *audaci Martis percussus amore* ('hit hard by a bold passion for war';¹⁹ cf. 7.703, *saeui Mauortis amore*). 'Love of death', on the other hand, is also present in the *Thebaid*, first at 7.137-8, *ferus omni in pectore saeuit / mortis amor caedisque* ('In every heart, savage lust / for murder and mayhem ran wild'). The expression occurs again in Menoecus' *deuotio*, when his grieving mother asks: 'Whence this love of death?' (10.804). If Menoecus' decision to die in order to bring safety and victory to Thebes finally appears to be a justifiable death, victory is only illusory:²⁰ the Argives retreat, but Thebes is completely exhausted, and Creon takes over to bring about another war in which the city is easily defeated.²¹

Virgil does not provide any instance of *mortis amor*, and although there is considerable variation in meaning and context when it comes to the actual use of both *mortis amor* and *belli amor* by Lucan and Statius, a common idea springs forth: that of a passionate relationship with death and/or destruction that helps create the sinister atmosphere that haunts the self-destructive societies they depict. The critique of war already present in Virgil acquires in Lucan and Statius a centrality it did not have in the *Aeneid*.

Belli amor appears in Anchieta at DG 213-15 in association with the idea of madness and Amerindian cannibalism:

[...] furit imis ira medullis
 Et belli vesanus amor carnisque cupido
 Humanae [...],

'wrath, mad love of war and desire for human flesh rage in their hearts'.

This is perhaps what one might expect of a colonial writer: the construction of a clearly defined barbarian as the epic enemy. However, Anchieta also employs the *belli amor* motif when he describes the Portuguese and this complicates the picture, producing the kind of ambivalence towards martial valour which is so prominent in Lucan and Statius. For example, Mem's son Fernão de Sá is sent to quell a native uprising in Espírito Santo (232ff.). The Indians are again pictured in the grip of a 'lust for abominable war' (319, *bellique cupido nefandi*). But the phrase *belli amor* occurs also at 369-70, this time referring to the white men inflamed to vengeance by Fernão de Sá's speech prior to the battle: *Belli flagrat intus inurens / Acer amor; iustus mediis dolor ossibus haeret* ('they are ablaze with passionate love of war burning inside; righteous indignation sits fast in their bones'), which responds to Fernão's own description, at 359, of God as *iustasque accensus in iras* (an obvious Virgilian echo). The rebellion is repressed but Fernão dies in the fighting (652ff.) and the episode narrating his *aristeia* and death features many instances of the *belli amor* motif. At 515, the commander and his troops 'rush in their love of war' (*Martis amore ruunt*), and a few lines later, at 534-6, 'they are ablaze with the eagerness either to destroy the cruel [enemy] cohorts in a deserved massacre, or to lose their lives by death in battle and preserve their fatherland by shedding their own blood' (*flagrat intus amor, vel caede cohortes / Perdere crudeles merita, vel funere vitam / Pugnando, patriamque suo servare cruore*).

For the Portuguese, this desire of heroic death in battle is consistently linked to an explicit moral justification, but the heroic impulse is far from unproblematic. Towards the end of the episode, when Fernão is left practically alone by his retreating companions, the poet apostrophises them: *quae uitae tanta cupido!* (576: 'why such a great lust for life?'), echoing Polynices in Stat. *Theb.* 3.370, *pro uitae foeda cupido* ('How vile is my lust for life'). Fernão's heroic *furor* blinds him to his troops' desertion (605-7): *vix denique sensit / Defecisse suos, mediosque delapsus in hostes / Caedis amore furens, palmaeque ardore supremae* ('maddened by love of slaughter and ardour for the highest prize, he has scarcely noticed that his men have gone and he has fallen amid foes'). His death is marked by a lion simile, which recalls that used for Turnus in Virg. *Aen.* 12.4-8 (esp. 8, *impavidus frangit telum et fremit ore cruento*, 'undaunted, [the lion] snaps the dart, roaring with blood-stained mouth' ≈ DG 638), and for Caesar in Lucan 1.205-12 (esp. 212, *per ferrum tanti securus uolneris exit*, 'ignoring / such a terrible wound he rushes onward, driving the weapon deeper' ≈ DG 639-40), and through them points to the lion simile used for Achilles in Homer *Il.* 20.164-73.²² The allusion to these ancient epic similes and characters teases out negative connotations of self-destruction. Here is Anchieta's passage (DG 635-41):

[...] ceu frendentem cum turba leonem
 Cingit, et infestat iaculis, ille improbus ira
 Rugit atrox, et torva tuens, hunc impetit aut hunc
 Impavidus laniatque artus ferus ore cruento;
 Illi instant, figuntque hastas per terga, per armos
 Certatim, donec confossus vulnere multo,
 Occumbit, laeditque immani corpore terram,

'even as when a throng surrounds a lion as it gnashes its teeth and attacks it with javelins, it roars wildly, reckless in its wrath; with a grim look in its eyes, it rushes headlong into one man or another and, undaunted, savagely lacerates their limbs with blood-stained mouth; they press on and vie in piercing its back and sides with their spears, until, transfixed by many a wound, it falls down and hits the ground with its huge body'.

Although the poem explicitly describes the build-up to Fernão's death as glorious and tries to justify it by constantly pointing to its loftier goals, the impression of excess is not entirely effaced. In the lion simile, the animal is *improbus* (DG 636),²³ an adjective that returns at 650, *torret sitis improba fauces* ('his throat is parched by insatiate thirst'), just before Fernão finally collapses. Mem de Sá had been criticised in Portugal for having exposed his son to such dangers,²⁴ so it is not surprising to find the whole episode omitted in the 1563 edition. In fact, in the poem Mem de Sá himself addresses his son just before the expedition, inciting him to face his mission courageously, regardless of the possibility of death (236-76). Some passages in his speech, such as at 252, 'if they [the colonists] have to save their lives by fleeing, disgraceful though it is', remind one of the 'beautiful death' observed by Vernant in the *Iliad*.²⁵ The close of the speech (269-74) is particularly impressive:

At si te finis primis manet ultimus annis,
 Florentemque tibi sunt ereptura iuventam
 Funera, et aeterni sic stat sententia Patris,
 Hinc immensa manet te gloria, honosque perennis
 Fata tua et caeli decus immortale sequetur;
 Et bene vita emitur vita praesente polorum,

'but if you are fated to meet your end at the start of your years, and death is to snatch away your flowering youth, this being the will of our eternal Father, on this account immense glory awaits you; an everlasting honour and the immortal dignity of heaven will come after your death; celestial life is bought cheap at the price of the present one'.

The simple presentation of Fernão's death in battle, I argue, would not necessarily be seen as disconcerting to such a degree as to demand excision from the text, but its association with traces of *belli amor*, of excessive martial valour, something which the text itself condemns through the portrayals of the Indians and whose problematic connotations are reinforced by echoes of grim passages of classical epic, particularly those with negative suggestions in Lucan and Statius, was perhaps too much for the already delicate political and emotional times in which the poem was first published. In fact, the lion simile we have just commented upon also bears some similarities with the tigress motif in Anchieta, most of all because *improbus* suggests insatiable hunger or rage. It draws attention to a relationship with another Virgilian simile, again about Turnus, but this time presenting him as a hungry wolf (*Aen.* 9.59-64):

ac ueluti pleno lupus insidiatus ouili
 cum fremit ad caulas uentos perpessus et imbris
 nocte super media; tuti sub matribus agni
 balatum exercent, ille asper et improbus ira
 saeuit in absentis; collecta fatigat edendi
 ex longo rabies et siccae sanguine fauces,

'And as when a wolf, lying in wait about a crowded fold, roars beside the pens at midnight, enduring winds and rains; safe beneath their mothers the lambs keep bleating; he, fierce and reckless in his wrath, rages against the prey beyond his reach, tormented by the long-gathering fury of famine, and by his dry, bloodless jaws'.

The intertext is clear: Virgil's *ille asper et improbus ira*, for instance, is reproduced by Anchieta's *ille improbus ira*, while DG 650, *torret sitis improba fauces*, is in a way a concise version of *Aeneid* 9.63-4, *collecta fatigat edendi / ex longo rabies et siccae sanguine fauces*.²⁶ In the next sections, we shall see further how Lucan, Statius and Anchieta rework this Virgilian model. For now, let us observe that, in Anchieta, the *belli amor* motif returns at DG 1817 and 1819, again with reference to Mem de Sá, when the Portuguese prepare for a new expedition against the native enemy. Finally, at 2513, we have *armorum ac Martis amore*, 'love of arms and war', as a consequence of Mem's speech (2493-510).

Although Anchieta recognises that the Brazilians are valiant warriors,²⁷ the poet is perhaps not

fully comfortable with the dubious aura of glory and madness of battle frenzy, so it is partly 'redeemed' by Fernão de Sá with the pedestrian justifications of Christianity and civilisation. However, a disturbing feeling of 'war for war's sake' — a love of war —, the madness of epic par excellence, pervades the episode and makes the Portuguese all too similar to their barbarian foes.

IMMANES TIGRES

The motif of *immanes tigres* is deeply connected to the first as it also opens up vistas to a critique of martial valour. The tigress in ancient poetry is often a metaphor for a maddened and/or dangerous/vengeful woman, as in Ovid *Met.* 6.636-7.²⁸ Big cats like the tiger and the lion are also a symbol of inveterate savagery and cruelty, as in Seneca (*Ep.* 85.8) and Aeschylus (*Ag.* 717-36). Whereas lions at times represent bravery, confidence, and warlike power (especially in the Homeric similes),²⁹ tigers, and in particular tigresses, are apparently associated only with morally reproachable attitudes or irrational impulses.³⁰ In this context, it is noteworthy that Anchieta employs comparisons with tigresses no less than seven times, all of them applied to the Brazilians, over and above other instances in which the simile's protagonists are lions, wolves or other wild animals.

Virgil mentions the tiger species four times, but only once in a simile, a very short and simple one, which pictures Turnus *immanem ueluti pecora inter inertia tigrim*, 'like a fierce tiger among the helpless herds' (9.730). It is also remarkable that Homer and Virgil, when employing wild-animal similes to illustrate heroic deeds, usually focus on the animals' strength and courage rather than on their hunger. Anchieta's insistent use of the tigress (maybe the best equivalent to be found in Latin to the South American jaguar) is based on the traditionally negative associations of this particular animal, and focuses instead on the animal's irrational violence and uncontrollable hunger, as in *DG* 1514-15, *saeva tigris, quam multa insania edendi / Collecta ex longo subigit*, 'a cruel tigress, subdued by a long-gathering mad excess of hunger'. Virgil's hungry-wolf simile in *Aeneid* 9 is the remotest origin of the comparison (esp. lines 63-4).

The use of this kind of simile to portray the native Brazilians is intended to bring to the fore the Indians' association with cannibal practices and their ferocity in pointless and criminal wars. If we think of Mem de Sá as a sort of Portuguese Aeneas, none better than the Indian antagonists to play the role of Turnus. I would argue, however, that this use of animal similes is also inspired by the important model provided by Lucan and Statius. Both authors let these negative aspects of the animal simile acquire central importance, not only describing some characters in occasional passages, but also functioning as symbols for the entire narratives of internecine strife.

Despite his economy in the use of the specific word *tigris* (three instances), Lucan is certainly preoccupied with the idea of transformation of men into beasts, a process he presents in utterly pessimistic colours in various passages. Apart from the lion simile applied to Caesar in Book 1, in which he is presented as a maddened suicidal animal, and the bull simile describing Pompey at 2.601-7, Lucan offers the tigress simile in Caesar's speech at 1.327-32: 'And as the wild tigresses in the Hyrcanian forest / (...), fed deep on blood / of cattle slain, never cease from slaughter, / so too, Magnus, grown accustomed to licking Sulla's sword, / your thirst endures. Blood, once tasted, / never lets the defiled throat return to gentle ways'. Another essential animal simile at 4.237-42 describes Petreius' troops when (after fraternising with the Caesarean forces) they are enticed away from peace by the Pompeian zeal of their commander. They behave like wild beasts that grow tame in prison, but after tasting a little gore, return to 'their rabid frenzy' (440), 'hardly sparing the trembling keeper' (442). Lucan's sinister description is linguistically very close to the tigress simile employed by Caesar and the surrounding lines. For example, 4.238, *mansueuere ferae et uoltus posuere minaces*, responds to both 1.327, *ferae tigres numquam posuere furorem* (a line to which Anchieta alludes at *DG* 688 and 789), and 1.331-2, *nullus semel ore receptus / pollutas patitur sanguis mansuescere fauces*. In Book 4, the beasts had been taught to behave in a non-violent way (note the *magistro* at 4.242 and *hominem didicere pati* at 4.239). Likewise, in Book 1, Caesar presents Pompey as Sulla's pupil (*docilis Sullam [...] magistrum*, at 1.326, and *doceat [...] Sulla*, at 335). In Book 4, the wild

trainees turn against their teacher, just as in Caesar's speech Pompey has not learned Sulla's lesson of resigning his position of *dominus* (1.334-5).

The *Bellum Civile* gives enormous attention to this tigresses simile. It is a considerably elaborate comparison and entertains strong relationships with other important passages.³¹ It insinuates that the men to whom the similes are applied are reaching the frontier between the human and the non-human. That the madness of war in Lucan is central to Anchieta's poetic view, is brought into prominence by the fact that *DG* 2435, *Quis furor, o caecam quae tanta superbia mentem*, comes from Lucan 1.8, *quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri?*, and 7.95, *quis furor, o caeci*.

Stattius makes more mention of tigers than any other Roman epic poet. In the *Thebaid*,³² the unnatural and wicked character of the dispute between brothers that drives the war between Argos and Thebes is made evident by their father Oedipus's curse at 1.56-87 and fuels a treatment of human violence which emphasises the absurdity of war and the insanity of its actors. The corruption of epic *uirtus* we witness in the poem is underscored by the treatment given to some animal similes. It is noteworthy that one of the most striking parallels between Anchieta's poem and the *Thebaid* links a passage about the Indians' courage in war to one of Stattius's tigress comparisons (both *DG* 1611 and *Theb.* 12.171 end with *timor omnibus ingens*).³³

It is not by chance that Anchieta (*DG* 1857, *Hinc atque inde ferus belli horror. lamque feroces*) echoes a speech by Thiodamas in *Stat. Theb.* 8.323, *hinc atque inde feras; liceat, precor, ordine belli*. Earlier in the *Thebaid*, after he has massacred 49 of the 50 Thebans who ambushed him, Tydeus is compared to a lion struck dumb by its own excessive eating (2.675-81). The focus, rather than a celebratory reminder of the lion's power and fearlessness, highlights a sort of *fastidium* which evokes the overindulgence of human banqueters. The tigress simile at 10.288-92 similarly explores the feelings of a sated animal which regrets it has no more hunger. Here the *illustrandum* is Thiodamas, the leader of the night raid which results in the murder of many sleeping Thebans. The relevance of tigers is underscored by the fact that one of the night raiders, Dymas, wears a tigerskin. The passage is inspired, of course, by *Iliad* 10.³⁴ But in Homer, among other elements, Odysseus's cunning and humour, as well as Dolon's presumptuous attitude, bring to the fore other aspects of the episode. In contrast, Stattius's version concentrates on the *uoluptas / caedis inexhaustae*, 'delight in carnage unsated'³⁵ (*Theb.* 10.266-7), in Thiodamas' own words.

The debasement of heroic excellence in Stattius is best epitomised by Tydeus' cannibalism at the end of Book 8, when he gnaws at Melanippus's brains.³⁶ Earlier in the book, he had been compared to a tigress (474-5, 'like a tigress high on her first kill is wild to tear / through the whole herd'). At 9.15-16, Eteocles is indignant about Tydeus's act and again makes use of the tigress topos: 'You must think you're fighting Hyrcanian / tigers or going up against Libya's vicious lions'.

However, the very same Eteocles, when aroused by wrath at the beginning of the poem, is compared to a tigress who has attacked a group of hunters and brings human prey to feed her cubs (2.128-33). Tigers in *normal* conditions do not feed on human beings.³⁷ The special perversity of a war between brothers who, incidentally, are the product of an incestuous marriage, is aptly underscored by the presentation of animals in a relatively unnatural attitude and finds its perfect expression in the idea of cannibalism, the eating/destruction of its own kind. In this context, it is far more useful to highlight, in the traditional hunting scenes of the Homeric simile, the blind desire to kill in order to respond to an irrational and unlimited hunger, than to idealise the lion or boar and lend them noble human qualities such as courage or perseverance.

This Statian and Lucanian background is particularly evoked by Anchieta, most of whose animal similes focus on the inconsequential fury and insatiable hunger of the lion or tiger represented therein and are used to criticise the Indians' domestic wars and cannibalism in particular.

CANNIBALISM

When the colonists, sceptical about the laws Mem de Sá wants to impose on native Brazilians, try to convince him that the Indians are helplessly brutal, they ask (*DG* 961-3): 'Would a tigress give up living by the claw, or cruel lions stop ripping calves to shreds, wolves stop lacerating innocent sheep?' Earlier (918-27), an anonymous speech from the same perspective reveals the feelings of the white population towards the Indians in similar terms:

[...] Humanis desinat uti
 Carnibus in pastum Brasillica natio, saevas
 Extirpans animis iras diuturnaue bella?
 Scilicet is diris amor est, ea cura salutis
 Gentibus, horrendas semper committere pugnas,
 Irritare hostes bellis? Assueta propago
 Et laniare manu carnes, lacerisque cruentos,
 Qualiter Hyrcanae tigres, infigere morsus,
 Nunc tandem incipiat dediscere velle furorem,
 Et mites gestare animos mansuetaque corda?

'Would the Brazilian people give up making use of human flesh for eating, extirpate cruel wrath and constant wars from their minds? To be sure these dreadful tribes entertain this love, this attention to safety: always engage in horrible fights and provoke their foes to wars? A race accustomed to lacerating flesh with their hands and, like Hyrcanian tigresses, biting mangled flesh with gory teeth, would now finally begin to forget madness and display mild inclinations and tame hearts?'

The poet, however, seems more optimistic, supporting Mem de Sá's plans to civilise the natives. He echoes Lucan's *numquam posuere furorem* (1.327) at *DG* 688 and 789 but appropriately omits *numquam*: the Indians, in these two passages, do abandon their madness.

Cannibalism in the classical world is a practice relegated either to the distant past or to the culture of remote peoples who do not share the same values as the Greeks and Romans. It also appears in contexts of famine or other desperate situations, or as the pinnacle of crime, as in the myth of Atreus and Thyestes.³⁸ In the *Odyssey*, Polyphemus's anthropophagy is one of the characteristics which set him apart from the civilised world. Likewise, to Herodotus (4.106), of all human beings, the Scythian Man-eaters have the most savage customs. They ignore all laws and are totally deprived of any sense of justice. Anchieta himself, in a letter written in 1554, states that the Indians amongst whom he works live 'without laws or government'.³⁹ In *DG* 816-24, too, Anchieta clearly states that, before Mem's taking over the government, the Indians were unaware of laws and justice, and even 'broke the sacred laws of mother nature and the divine ordinances of God by consuming human bodies with their insane jaws' (822-4).

Sixteenth-century sources put enormous emphasis on the cannibalistic practices of Brazilian Indians,⁴⁰ and in doing so they rely on the European tradition of viewing anthropophagy as an utterly revolting and fearsome act, although they sometimes try to understand and in part exculpate this feature of the New World's culture, even using it as a foil for various forms of inexcusable European cannibalism (literally or metaphorically speaking).⁴¹ We do not know how many Brazilian tribes actually practiced cannibalism but the accounts of the death of Pedro Fernandes Sardinha, the first bishop of Brazil, have made the Caetes infamous. In 1562 Mem de Sá decreed that all Caetes should be enslaved and within five years the tribe was extinct, leading some scholars to suggest that accusations of customary anthropophagy may have been made up to depict native Brazilians as culturally inferior and thus justify their enslavement or acculturation.⁴² Rumours of cannibalism might also have been manipulated by the natives themselves to deter the Europeans from their imperialist project.⁴³

Most anthropologists believe that some Brazilian tribes really engaged in anthropophagic practices and are careful to distinguish between different customs among different peoples and the different meanings these practices acquired in different rituals. Among the Tupinamba, for

instance, it seems that cannibalism had a central role in a ritual linked to the native culture of war: the Indians normally ate a prisoner of war, who was well treated by his captors and could live among them for years before the ritual execution. Eating the defeated warrior's flesh implied absorbing his strength and honour. Apparently, the ritual killing and eating of an enemy's flesh was based on a logic of vengeance. The Jesuits explain in several different writings that avenging the murder of members of their own group was in fact the only reason why the Indians went to war and ate their foes.⁴⁴ However, it was not humiliating or horrifying for the captives to die in this way; on the contrary, it represented the recognition of one's martial valour.⁴⁵

There is a great wealth of data on the Indians in the Jesuit literature of sixteenth-century South America. Anchieta himself was one of the main authors responsible for an early ethnographic tradition in Brazil, his prose containing much objective information about the country's aboriginal peoples, including identification of those tribes which ate human flesh and their careful distinction from other groups. By contrast, the narrator in *De Gestis* lumps such groups together under the generic designation *Brasilles* and shows no sign of tolerance for the habits and beliefs he describes. The 'fierce tigresses' motif is thus unsurprisingly employed to give a derogatory tinge to Amerindian cannibalism in Anchieta's epic.

However, as with the *belli amor* motif, the *immanes tigres* idea also ends up becoming attached to the ones who were supposed to be the champions of civilisation. In a speech assigned by Anchieta to the Indian characters (*DG* 1619-25), they picture themselves as the deer while the Portuguese are the lions (although the Indians are obviously not satisfied with the role of victims and are ready to take a stand against the aggressors). The language employed by the natives echoes that used by the narrator for Fernão de Sá's lion simile (1622, *Et laniare feros velut ore fremente leones*, '[that they] should ferociously lacerate us like roaring lions!', should be compared to 635, *frendentem [...] leonem*, and 638, *laniatque artus ferus ore cruento*), a passage in which we have already seen elements of *belli amor* and *immanes tigres*. This point is now reinforced by the aboriginals' speech.

Another momentous passage comes shortly afterwards, at 1670-4, which shows the routed Indians either as lambs being chased by a lion or as bees expelled from the hive:

[...] huc illuc dispersi more vagantur
Aut ovium, quas ore leo frendente cruentus
Impetit, et timidus deserta per avia spargit;
Aut ut florilegae, quas extra alvearia fumus
Dispulit ater, apes [...].

'scattered here and there they ramble, like faint-hearted sheep attacked and spread over remote deserts by a teeth-gnashing, blood-thirsty lion, or like flower-culling bees expelled from their hives by black smoke'.

This time, the simile is in the narrator-text and tellingly contains verbal parallels with both the Fernão de Sá episode and the Indians' speech just quoted: *ore leo frendente cruentus* scarcely needs any commentary.

Finally, another crucial episode is the one at 1871-87: the Portuguese and some Indian allies impose a crushing defeat on their enemy but in the aftermath of the battle the arm of one of the dead foes is cut off and disappears. Perhaps an Indian from the alliance forces has robbed it for use in one of the old native ceremonies. Mem de Sá addresses his men, threatening the unknown perpetrators with death, and the arm is mysteriously returned. In the following episodes we witness an escalation of violence: Anchieta narrates the destruction of 160 Indian villages in the Paraguaçu region, and his description of the Indians' despair, fear and humiliation is disturbing and moving, although these scenes are juxtaposed with a *Magnificat* celebrating de Sá's wondrous victory. This is not the only place where the narrator sympathises with the natives, and one may conclude that the poet wavered between a policy of enslavement/extermination and attempts to catechise/'civilise' the Brazilians.⁴⁶ However, after this last victory over the rebellious Indians and the assurance that they are now willing to submit to new cultural patterns, the narrative focuses on the most spectacular of all cannibalistic events

in Brazilian history: a flashback leads the reader to a long and detailed account of how the Caetes devoured bishop Sardinha (2108-295). Immediately after this intrusive digression, just when Mem de Sá is preparing his expedition against the Caetes, he has to turn his attention to the French in the south-east, and the poem comes to an end after the war against the *Galli*. The cannibalism issue seems unresolved.⁴⁷ Significantly, notwithstanding the fact that the opening *Epistola Nuncupatoria* thanks God for the abolition of anthropophagy in the country, the final hymn to Jesus that finishes the epic still has to pray for the future change of a 'nation whose ferocious entrails feed on human flesh' (*DG* 3051, *Natio, quae humana pascit fera viscera carne*).

The Jesuit sources, including Anchieta's own prose work, that document cannibalism amongst the Tupinamba make a very clear connection between anthropophagy and revenge. However, the *De Gestis* almost completely omits that explanation of Brazilian cannibalism, attributing it rather to an indefinite savage hunger.⁴⁸ Although the two motifs we have studied are frequently juxtaposed or mixed in the narrative, no passage bridges the logical gap between them and proceeds to conclusions like the one we find in Anchieta's first description of the Indians, in the letter of 1554 mentioned above, which clearly sees a connection between cannibalism and war: '[...] in this act [sc. eating human flesh] they demonstrate such pleasure and delight, so that they commonly travel more than 300 miles to [make] war'. Even less pronounced in the poem's treatment of Brazilian culture is the conclusion found in a 1549 account by Manoel da Nóbrega, one of the first Jesuits to arrive in the country:

They do not make war because of greed [...], but only because of hatred and vengeance, in such a manner that if by chance they meet [their enemy], they immediately begin to fight using a stick, a stone, or their teeth, and they eat lice and fleas and other such as these, all in order to avenge themselves of the evil that these cause to them [...].⁴⁹

In the *De Gestis*, the only passage which seemingly contains something to that effect is the speech pronounced by the Indians themselves at 1615-29, in which they urge each other to fight back and conclude: *Sic forsán non omnino moriemur inulti*, 'perhaps this way we won't die completely unavenged'. On the other hand, when it comes to the military action launched by the white men, the idea of vengeance is constantly referred to. A few examples should suffice: *DG* 761-2, *Fernandi vulnera dira / Ulturi*, 1586, *vindice Marte*, 1609, *gladio ultori*, all deal with the (apparently just) revenge taken on the barbarians for the crimes they committed against the Portuguese and the Christian religion. It looks as though the information about the vindictive motivation of cannibalism among the Indians, so conspicuous in many sixteenth-century sources, including Anchieta himself, had to be suppressed in the epic description of the Indians, but somehow crept into Anchieta's treatment of the Portuguese, especially Mem de Sá. If read in the light of contemporary sixteenth-century ethnographic literature and taken together with the subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) suggestions that the Portuguese are also in the grip of *belli amor* and can be *immanes tigres* too, this insistence on the theme of vengeance ends up hinting at some sort of hidden cannibalism on the part of the colonial forces. In this respect again Anchieta implicitly recalls the crime of Statius' Tydeus and follows Lucan, who also employs insinuations of cannibalism to deprecate the evil of civil war (especially at 2.122-4, where a soldier places Antonius' dripping head 'on the festive table'). Revenge is the link that connects war and cannibalism in various ethnographic accounts of Tupinamba culture. It is also a key concept in Anchieta's poetics, since it turns *belli amor* and *immanes tigres* into parts of a coherent symbolic arrangement which undermines Mem's pretensions to be civilisation's hero.

It is my contention that Anchieta had Lucan and Statius in mind when he wrote his epic poem, and was certainly influenced by their depiction of fratricidal war as a criminal process, in which killing the other means destroying one's own self, and the engagement in violence, even if aimed at eliminating the evil the characters see in their opponents, leads them to turn into the very same evil they want to defeat. Anchieta was aware of the dire consequences of certain colonial policies in Brazil and of the brutal behaviour of some of the Europeans who settled in South America or explored the region. In his *Report on Brazil and its Captaincies*, written in 1584, he states:

They [i.e. the Indians] are naturally inclined to kill but they are not cruel; because ordinarily they do not torture their enemies, since, if they don't kill them in battle, they afterwards treat them well and are satisfied with breaking their heads with a club, which is an easy death [...]. If they are at times cruel, it is because of the example of the Portuguese and French.⁵⁰

In the *Epistola Nuncupatoria*, Anchieta advises Mem de Sá not to pay much attention to the glories acquired on account of his earthly deeds, and to focus instead on true glory, the spiritual one (DG 51-60). Anchieta even suggests that many victors in war have been condemned to the punishments of hell (53-4: *Invenies quantos mors obruit atra triumphos, / Tartarei foedas sub Phlegethontis aquas*) on account of their haughtiness. The passage draws a clear contrast between mundane and heavenly glory, between the *fortia facta ducum* ('brave deeds of generals') and the *uirtus* which comes from God. These cautionary words (at the *exordium* of the very epic discourse which proposes to extol Mem de Sá's military victories) are perhaps an anticipation of the subtle criticism of the excesses in which the governor and his allies indulge throughout the narrative. This advice and criticism are underscored by the intelligent reuse of ancient epic motifs, especially those epitomised by the notions of 'love of war' and 'fierce tigresses' as elaborated by Lucan and Statius. These motifs serve the purpose of casting the Indians as a primitive, brutal, almost inhuman lot, but also present us with an image of the colonial forces riddled with negative connotations which are difficult to ignore.

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¹ For other Latin-American epics written in Latin from the sixteenth century onwards, see Laird (2014).

² These motifs appear *ipsis litteris* and in numerous variants. All translations of Anchieta's *De Gestis* are my own. As regards other texts quoted in the article, I have used translations by various authors (see below), but have sometimes slightly adapted them.

³ See e.g. Lestringant (1987: 239-42), Pinho (1998), Osório (2000: 689-95), Torrão (2000), Araujo (2003: 230-47), Arias-Schreiber Barba (2011: 55-82).

⁴ Rodríguez-Pantoja (2005) is one of the few exceptions who considers the influence of Lucan and Statius on the work.

⁵ For Anchieta's biography, see e.g. Hamilton (1943), Fonda (1972: 134-6), Navarro (1997: xi-xxx), Bartíková (1999), Arias-Schreiber Barba (2011: 5 n. 5).

⁶ Forsyth (1985: 22-3), Rodríguez-Alcalá & Nunes (2008: 27-8).

⁷ We have two sources for the text of *De Gestis*, the Coimbra 1563 edition and a photographic reproduction of the now-lost Algorta manuscript, probably a seventeenth-century copy of an exemplar once kept in the Brazilian archives of the Society of Jesus. These two versions are the basis for Cardoso's critical edition (Cardoso 1986), from which my quotations come. Cf. Cardoso (1958: 6) and Barbosa (2006: 277-8, 430). Cardoso numbers the lines of the whole poem continuously, so that the first line of Book 2, for instance, is numbered 810.

⁸ The *Monumenta Paedagogica Societatis Jesu* (Rodeles et al. 1901) collect the most important documents on the Jesuits' educational work before the first version of the *Ratio studiorum* (1586) — for which see Pachtler (1887) and Farrell (1970) — and reveal the extent to which different ancient authors were recommended in the curricula. Whilst Virgil and Ovid are mentioned repeatedly, Lucan appears several times (pp. 172, 177, 181, 188, 190, 293, 436). Statius is referred to only once (p. 293). One can gauge the impact of particular authors in Anchieta's times from influential humanist educational treatises such as Piccolomini's *The Education of Boys* (1450), which indicates that Lucan and Statius 'should not be overlooked' (trans. Kallendorf 2002: 69), and Guarino's *A Program of Teaching and Learning* (1459), which strongly praises Lucan and recommends Statius (trans. Kallendorf 2002: 287). The curriculum at the Colégio das Artes included Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Persius, Juvenal and Seneca (Arias-Schreiber Barba 2011: 5 n. 7).

⁹ For the influence of Claudian and other fourth or fifth-century epic poets on Anchieta, see Arias-Schreiber Barba (2011: 9, 11, 60-2, 80-1), who also points out (p. 56 with n. 89 and further bibliography) the revival of Neo-Latin epic in Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

¹⁰ 'Des Cannibales' (*Essais* 1.31). Translation by Cotton (1877: 260). For the use of classical models in the assessment of native American martial exploits by sixteenth-century Spanish literature (including Ercilla's epic *La Araucana*), see Lupher (2003: 297-314). Cf. Quint (1993: 157-85). On Montaigne's 'Des Cannibales', see e.g. Lestringant (1997: 141-64; 2006: 166-9), Quint (1998: 75-101).

¹¹ Cf. Bataille (1988: 71): 'Glory, the consequence of a superiority, is itself something different from an ability to take another's place and seize his possessions: It expresses a movement of senseless frenzy, of measureless expenditure of energy, which the fervor of combat presupposes. Combat is glorious in that it is always beyond calculation at some moment. But the meaning of warfare and glory is poorly grasped if it is not related in part to the acquisition of

rank through a reckless expenditure of vital resources'.

¹² Coffee (2009).

¹³ All translations of Virgil come from Fairclough (1918). Quotations of the Latin text are taken from Mynors (1969).

¹⁴ Housman's text (1927). All translations of Lucan are by Braund (1992). On 'love of war' in Lucan, see also *Bellum Civile* 2.323-5 ('So speaking, / he applies fierce goads of wrath and rouses the young man's / ardour to excessive love of civil war').

¹⁵ The poet identifies this tendency both in Roman figures and in warlike barbarian peoples. See Rutz (1960), Leigh (1997: 158-90) and Sklenář (2003: 45-58).

¹⁶ Rutz (1960: 474). Cf. Fantham (1995).

¹⁷ For the madness of war in Statius, see esp. Hershkowitz (1998: ch. 6), Lovatt (2001: 103). See Masterson (2005: 300) for Statius's 'conflicted relationship to heroism'.

¹⁸ Quotations of Statius are taken from Garrod (1906).

¹⁹ All translations of Statius are by Joyce (2008), except where otherwise stated.

²⁰ Pace Vessey (1971).

²¹ See also 12.679, *mortis amore superbae*. It would take too long to list all the instances of the motif but let us mention the variants *caedis amor* at *Theb.* 2.612 (also in *Sil.* 5.245, *Ov. Met.* 4.503, 13.768) and *ferri amor* in Lucan 1.355 and *Stat. Achil.* 2.107 (also in *Sil.* 14.182). One might also like to highlight *Sil.* 1.272, *bellaque sumpta uiro belli maioris amore* (Duff's 1934 text). Cf. *Val. Fl.* 6.156, *nec Martis amor* (Mozley's 1936 edition). Ovid also has an important variant: at *Met.* 3.705, *pugnaeque adsumit amorem* (Tarrant's 2004 text), in a war-horse simile, is employed to describe Pentheus' rage against the Bacchants. The Theban context, reminiscent of civil war, is in itself relevant to the enrichment of this motif (cf. Braund 2006).

²² Cf. also *Val. Fl.* 3.587-9. For the self-destructive facets of this particular Homeric comparison, see Clarke (1995).

²³ See *OLD* p. 852, s.v. *improbus*, esp. 2.a, 'morally unsound', 4.a, 'shameless, greedy' (sometimes used of animals), and 5.a, 'immoderate'.

²⁴ Cardoso (1986: 68).

²⁵ Precisely the kind of death which awaits Fernão, of whom the poet himself says: *multo distillat sanguine, et artus / Intingit pulchros*, 'he sheds much blood and soaks his beautiful limbs' (653-4). See Vernant (1982). Cf. Kaltner (2007).

²⁶ We see the same motif elaborated in *Aen.* 2.355-60 and 10.723-8, two hungry-animal similes, the former applied to Aeneas and other Trojans, the latter to Mezentius.

²⁷ See esp. *DG* 1565-73 with Frèches (1974: 238).

²⁸ Specifically, the *tigris orba*, i.e. deprived of her offspring, is a paradigm of uncontrollable emotions. Take e.g. *Plin. HN* 8.66, [Sen.?] *Herc. O.* 241-2 (Deianira), *Juv.* 6.270. It is with the lion that the image of the bereaved cat finds its first expression in classical literature: *Hom. Il.* 18.318-22.

²⁹ Scott (1974: 58-62).

³⁰ See MacGregor, JR. (1989: 215). More on tigresses in ancient literature in Rolim de Moura (forthcoming).

³¹ Rolim de Moura (forthcoming).

³² For the *Thebaid* as 'an examination of impiety', see Butler (2006: 134).

³³ The phrase suggests a revision of the Virgilian model at *Georg.* 3.244 (*amor omnibus idem*).

³⁴ Homer too emphasises the brutal aspects of Diomedes and Ulysses' nocturnal adventure, and a certain animalisation of the characters is not altogether absent from the *Doloneia*. See the special head gear used by the two Greek heroes (257-71) and Dolon's weasel-skin helmet (at 335 and 458). Though Nisus and Euryalus in *Aeneid* 9 are also excessively bloodthirsty (see esp. 354, *nimia caede atque cupidine ferri*), their violence is partly redeemed by their love and the poet's sympathetic words at 446-9.

³⁵ Trans. Mozley (1928).

³⁶ See Ganiban (2007: 123-7). It goes without saying that images of cannibalism in a civil-war context are found in Lucan too, e.g. 1.330-1 (see above), 2.122-4 (see below), 3.349-50, 7.822, 10.279-81.

³⁷ But see Boorer & Warner (1979: 112-13).

³⁸ *BNP* 2.1051-2, s.v. 'Cannibalism' [Fritz Graf]. See also Ennius' *Euhemerus* 88-92 Warmington (= Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.13.2).

³⁹ Translation by Forsyth (1983: 155).

⁴⁰ For example, Manoel da Nóbrega's letters (1540-1560), Hans Staden's *Warhaftig Historia und Beschreibung eyner Landtschafft der Wilden* (1557), André Thevet's *Les Singularitez de la France Antarctique* (1557), Jean de Léry's *Histoire d'un Voyage Faict en la Terre du Brésil* (1578), Gabriel Soares de Souza's *Tratado Descritivo do Brasil* (1587). See Fernandes (1952), Forsyth (1983 and 1985), Lestringant (1997: 67-139), Monteiro (2000), Martel (2006), Braham (2012: 27).

⁴¹ See e.g. Montaigne's 'Of Cannibals' (trans. Cotton 1877: 249-66) and Jean de Léry's *Histoire d'un Voyage* (ed. Gaffarel 1880: 56-8).

⁴² See esp. Arens (1979), duly refuted by Forsyth (1983 and 1985) and Lestringant (1997: 16-17).

⁴³ Martel (2006).

⁴⁴ Curiously, among the first images of cannibalism in Greek literature, we find Hom. *Il.* 22.346-8 (Achilles expressing his wish to cut up and eat Hector's body) and 24.212-14 (Hecuba's desire to eat Achilles' liver), both passages in which the idea of revenge is central. Cf. Hom. *Il.* 4.34-6 (Richardson 1993, p. 141).

⁴⁵ See Forsyth (1983: 163). For a full discussion of Tupinamba anthropophagic rituals and their meaning, Fernandes (1952).

⁴⁶ For Anchieta's conflicted view of the Indians in *De Gestis*, see now Moniz (2014).

⁴⁷ Resistance to narrative closure in Lucan's *Civil War* and Ercilla's *La Araucana* is the subject of Quint (1993: 147-51, 159-68). For 'the inconclusive conclusion' of Statius' *Thebaid*, see Joyce (2008: xxxi, with further bibliography).

⁴⁸ *DG* 1098-100 constitutes an exception: the passage seems not only to associate cannibalism with the desire to absorb the enemy's honour together with his flesh but also alludes to a well-known Tupinamba name-changing ritual — for which see Fernandes (1952: 177-84) — connected with human sacrifice. Cf. Frèches (1974: 234), Forsyth (1983: 161), Cardoso (1986: 266).

⁴⁹ Trans. Forsyth (1983: 151).

⁵⁰ Trans. Forsyth (1983: 161).