

# The *Santidade de Jaguaripe* Revisited: Tupi Catholicism or Cannibalism?<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This essay seeks to review recent contributions to the analysis and interpretation of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*, a political and religious movement of indigenous origin that caused a great stir in the city of Salvador, Bahia in the 1580s. At the center of the debate are the interpretations of this phenomenon that have prevailed since the 1990s, and their acceptance or rejection by more recent investigations. The impressions presented here stand on the border between historiography and ethnology, and, in addition to providing an overview of the question, they are also intended to provide a reflection on the models for interpreting the contact between Europeans and indigenous peoples, especially in relation to the emergence of different forms of hybrid religiosity arising from the shock of the conquest and the subsequent Catholic evangelization.

## Keywords

*Santidade de Jaguaripe*, Bahia, Brazil, Portuguese Empire, Evangelization

## Resumo

Este ensaio busca passar em revista contribuições recentes para a análise e a interpretação da Santidade de Jaguaripe, movimento político e religioso de origem indígena que alvoroçou a Cidade da Bahia, Salvador, na década de 1580. No centro da reflexão, estão as interpretações que prevalecem sobre o fenômeno desde os anos 1990, e suas sobrevivências ou rejeições em investigações mais recentes. Situadas nas fronteiras entre contribuições historiográficas e etnológicas, as impressões apresentadas aqui buscam, para além de realizar um balanço sobre o estado da questão, contribuir para a reflexão sobre os modelos de interpretação do contato entre europeus e indígenas, sobretudo no que toca ao surgimento ou não de formas de religiosidade híbrida, saídas do choque da conquista e da catequese.

## Palavras-chave

Santidade de Jaguaripe, Bahia, Brasil, Império Português, Catequese

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## I.

The city of Salvador was founded in 1549 in the Bay of All Saints, growing in power and economic importance in the second half of the sixteenth century due to the activities of Portuguese institutions and the advance of the colonial frontier. The lands bordering the bay immediately proved suitable for agricultural production, particularly sugar cane. In addition to fertile land, two other features proved to be fundamental for the success of the Portuguese occupation. Firstly, the bay itself and the rivers that fed it not only provided fresh water to the plantations and powered the sugar cane mills, but they also served as a kind of inland sea, facilitating communication and the transportation of people and cargo to and from the port of Salvador (Schwartz 1986: 75-97). Secondly, this favorable environment had attracted indigenous people to the region long before the arrival of white people, so that the rapidly developing city was already supplied with another essential ingredient for the Portuguese colonial enterprise: people who could be enslaved and put to work on the plantations.

It was in such a scenario, around 1580, that a rebellious movement with a religious and political background, known as the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*, came into being. It had undeniable indigenous origins, but it also drew *mestiços*, Africans, and even white people to its ranks, attracting a great deal of attention among the colonial society of that time. Portuguese administrators and landowners, interested in guaranteeing political stability and maintaining control over the indigenous labor force, tried to take action to prevent its spread. The Jesuits, who were arguably co-responsible for the creation of the *Santidade* and who were by then already on a collision course with Portuguese colonizers, left some written records of its activities. And, later, during its first visit to Brazil in 1591-1595, the Portuguese Holy Office gathered together various testimonies about the *Santidade*, thus creating the largest volume of documentation regarding the movement.

Based on these documents, the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* has been the subject of numerous research projects throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This article seeks to review the contribution of the various authors and papers that have recently revisited the *Santidade*, without, however, neglecting the main features of the many earlier studies of this subject.

## II.

Studies on the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* have a fairly well-defined starting point. Like many subjects related to Brazilian historiography, the topic bears the hallmark of Capistrano de Abreu, who played a major role in the professionalization and institutionalization of this discipline and was responsible for the production of many historical articles and theses, along with a large number of archival discoveries and publications. In the introduction that he wrote for the publication *Confissões da Bahia* (1922), Capistrano noted that, in the text which was about to be published, there were reports of an interesting religious movement that had been active in Bahia in the 1580s. Supported only by confessions and denunciations (the inquisitorial processes would only be analyzed several decades later), Capistrano did not have much data with which to assemble his text. Even so, in the few paragraphs that he dedicated to the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*, Capistrano definitively left his mark on its interpretive tradition.

One of these marks was the link that he established between the *Santidade* and other similar phenomena previously described in the writings of missionaries and chroniclers from the sixteenth century. Based on the works of Jean de Léry, Manuel da Nóbrega, and Juan de Azpilcueta, Capistrano gave a brief description of what the *Santidades* meant for the Tupi. He stated that through their traveling and preaching, the *caraibas*, the “sorcerers or prophets” who led these movements, were responsible for maintaining the unity of belief among the indigenous people of the Brazilian coast, a phenomenon that had been witnessed by the first Europeans who wrote about them. Capistrano did not mean that there was any clear stability in the “traditional attitudes” of the indigenous people, nor that their beliefs and rites had remained undisturbed by the impact of colonization. Using examples from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as evidence that the natives of this region were accustomed to incorporating foreign elements into their reformulations of their myths of origin, Capistrano stated that the sixteenth-century indigenous people also “assimilated” the overseas novelties “without any aversion,” and that, furthermore, there was a penchant among them for “syncretism.” The historian used as evidence of his claims two or three passages that he drew from other manuscripts, while also describing the path followed by Antônio, the leader of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*, who, before becoming a *caraiiba*, had himself lived in a Jesuit mission on the island of Tinharé. Antônio’s preaching served as a testimony to the naturalness with which the natives of the Brazilian coast incorporated “Christian accessories onto the solidity of native foundations” (Abreu 1922: 25-26).

In Capistrano de Abreu's interpretive outline—it would be absurd to say that he offers anything more than an outline—even the Catholic elements that were to be found in the colonial *Santidades* acquired this exterior quality. They are accessories, or appearances that have been placed around a “pagan” core. This idea combines well with his insistence on using the terms “scene setter” and “staging” to describe the leaders and the rituals promoted by these movements. It is not advisable to extrapolate what little Capistrano said, but what emerges from his brief comments is an idea of “syncretism” as a juxtaposition of elements of different origins without any evident integration between them. And, in the case of the *Santidades*, the elements originating from Christianity would be mere disguises, satellites placed around a well-preserved and active pagan core.

Thirty years after Capistrano, the historian José Calasans afforded continuity to some of these suggestions in his first study entirely dedicated to the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*, entitled *Fernão Cabral de Ataíde e a Santidade de Jaguaripe*. Focusing on the land and the slave owner that afforded shelter to the natives of the *Santidade*, this 1952 booklet followed Capistrano closely, elaborating slightly on the association between previous *Santidades* and the one that surfaced in Bahia in the 1580s. Calasans also followed the path of “religious syncretism,” or “Catholic-Pagan syncretism.” But, unlike Capistrano, who heard in the *Santidade* the echoes of an indigenous background and concluded that the white people were deluded by its Christian varnish, Calasans tended to give importance to the influences of the Catholic religion—“the influx from the outside” (Calasans 2011 [1952]: 21). This shift in interpretation was influenced by the Jesuit historian Serafim Leite, whose words Calasans repeated when depicting the *Santidades* as “corruptions” of Christianity (Calasans 2011 [1952]: 21; Leite 1938: II, 23). It is quite true that Calasans did not show the same contempt that can be detected in the Jesuit's writings, which treated the colonial *Santidades* as undesired and accidental outcomes of missionary activity; nor did he ignore its internal structure, going so far as to imagine the logic that governed the actions of its leaders—set in a belligerent and anti-colonial framework. However, his efforts to understand the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* on its own terms were minimal, and his focus was in fact on the landowner who gave them shelter. Calasans did not make any extensive use of the works of sixteenth-century chroniclers and missionaries, nor did he make use of the anthropologists who had already dealt with the *Santidades* before him (Métraux 1928; Nimuendajú 1987 [1914]), nor even of the Holy Office processes. Like Capistrano, Calasans stuck to the denunciations and confessions made to Heitor Furtado de Mendonça, who traveled through Bahia and Pernambuco between 1591 and 1595. The first analysis of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* to include all of these aspects only

appeared in 1995, when Ronaldo Vainfas, a historian closely involved with the Brazilian historiographical renewal of the 1980s, published *A heresia dos índios: catolicismo e rebeldia no Brasil colonial*.

Since its publication, *A heresia dos índios* has been a mandatory reference in other studies of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*. Its success is due, in part, to the pioneering nature of the work and the depth with which Vainfas covered the phenomenon. Nevertheless, the book's longevity is also explained by the fact that, despite the criticisms it has received along the way, the interpretive model that Vainfas offers of the *Santidade*—and in a broader sense of all the cultural clashes between Europeans and indigenous people—has not yet found a rival capable of displacing it completely.

In this brief essay, I will review some works and authors that have established a dialogue with *A heresia dos índios* in order to openly criticize it, to amend it, or even to situate themselves as its continuation. Due to the limits of space and the plurality of heirs that *A heresia dos índios* has spawned, and also due to the nature of the present discussion, I will prioritize some aspects that, in my view, are fundamental to the debate. These constraints of time and space, as well as the editorial and historiographical success of *A heresia dos índios*, which has influenced all analyses of the subject for the past twenty-five years, compel me to make certain choices.

### III.

Previously, I mentioned the pioneering spirit of *A heresia dos índios*. It is true that Ronaldo Vainfas followed several of the paths first revealed by Capistrano de Abreu and José Calasans, and that he dedicated his book to both of them. However, *A heresia dos índios* went beyond its predecessors, eliminating all vacillations between a façade of Christianity and a Christianity distorted by the accidents of a poorly executed conversion. In fact, Vainfas followed the route offered by syncretism as an explanatory key, exploring the coexistence of Tupi and Catholic elements in the colonial *Santidades*. But he gave special emphasis to the interactions between them, instead of merely observing their presence or juxtaposition. Following Carlos Fausto's suggestion that to call these movements syncretic meant nothing without examining Tupi prophetism, Vainfas engaged in an unprecedented exploration of sixteenth-century chronicles, Jesuit epistolography, and, finally, the inquisitorial processes created by Heitor Furtado de Mendonça (Vainfas 1995: 45; Fausto 1992).

A fundamental advance provided by *A heresia dos índios* was its analysis of the *Santidade*'s rituals and the speeches of its leaders as recorded by the Holy Office. By examining the testimonies offering a glimpse of the group's hierarchies, the way they named and organized themselves, the rites of passage and the regular rituals that they celebrated, Vainfas produced an analysis that viewed the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* as a Tupi-Catholic amalgam, or—to use the expression that he himself employed to embody the idea—a “Tupinambá Catholicism.” Certainly, this argument is based on the information that the appointed leader of the *Santidade*, Antônio, had engaged in Jesuit catechesis before travelling to the backlands of Bahia and building his movement. In the hands of Antônio (or Tamandaré, for the indigenous people), the teachings of the missionaries were then merged with Tupi myths to give rise to a hybrid, amalgamated derivation, which was neither purely pagan nor purely Christian.

By following this path, Vainfas avoided the risk of interpreting the *Santidade* as a Catholic corruption in the Serafim Leite way of conceiving things. He did this by understanding the creation of this “Tupinambá Catholicism” as a two-way movement, albeit based on asymmetrical relations of power. In the genesis of this “compromise formation,” not only did the indigenous people assimilate elements of catechesis, but missionaries also played an active role in its development. In their efforts to translate and transmit the concepts of the Catholic faith, they ended up incorporating the native logic into their way of thinking, “Tupinizing” themselves and the doctrine that they preached. If Antônio and his *Santidade* had had “ambiguous,” “hybrid” identities, says Vainfas, then the Jesuit catechesis would also have been marked by this same blurring of boundaries.

Naturally, *A heresia dos índios* is a book traversed by the theoretical approaches that marked its time, a trait that was detected by those who wrote about the book, and which was also revealed by the author himself, transparent in indicating his influences. The idea of a “cultural compromise formation,” for example, owes as much to Carlo Ginzburg's *sabba* as it does to Serge Gruzinski's “idolatry” and “indigenous Christianity” (Ginzburg 1991; Gruzinski 1988). Vainfas drew his inspiration from both of these authors, regarding the *Santidade* as a unique configuration, born out of shocks and compromises between different cultural formations in contact with one another. Viewed from Vainfas's perspective, Antônio, his allies, and his followers would be the builders of a new phenomenon, an anti-colonial insurgency that derived from the scenario of a progressive domination by the white people. On the one hand, this explains Vainfas's refusal to follow Gruzinski in applying the concept of idolatry to scenarios that had occurred prior to the arrival of the white people,

because it was in this new environment that this concept would come to exist, even though it was filled with reprocessed components from the indigenous past. Above all, it explains why Vainfas adamantly refuted the understanding, defended by the anthropologist H el ene Clastres, an authority on the subject, that the myth and the search for the “Land without Evil” (central to his interpretation of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*) had emerged unscathed from the conquest of the Americas. *A heresia dos  ndios* even moves in the opposite direction, being based on the idea that, as a result of violent contact with white people, the indigenous myths were converted into a form of anti-colonial resistance. This is a fundamental shift: having been created amidst war and culture shock, the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*, instead of fulfilling its prophecies within the time proposed by the myths, redirected its energies towards opposing the catastrophe of the conquest, identifying its enemies as the white people—a characteristic that was shared with other less well-documented *Santidades*.

Vainfas considered that the indigenous people underwent acute transformations, being significantly affected by the wars promoted by the first governors-general of Brazil, the installation and advancement of the Jesuits’ missionary policy, and the brutal sequence of epidemiological outbreaks, all of which, taken together, destabilized the Tupinamb  society. One of the signs that indicated a gradual departure from a “native authenticity” was precisely the incorporation of various elements of Catholicism made by/into the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*. Nonetheless, in this analysis, the transformation of the colonial *Santidades* is far from being regarded as the degeneration of a primeval religion. Understanding this syncretism requires indigenous components to be taken into account, since they actively participated in the formulation of this unintended hybrid. This is what can be gleaned from certain passages, such as the one claiming that the metamorphosis of the “Land without Evil” came about through the action of “its prophets and shamans, and through ceremonies that reinforced the historical traditions of that culture”; or the one that states that this change took place “without harm to its originality or to the indigenous cognitive system” (Vainfas 1995: 46).

In other passages, the Jesuits do appear central to the development of the Bahian *Santidade*, together with the *carai ba*, Ant nio. For Vainfas, most of the “beliefs and cultural hybridities woven into Amerindian *Santidades*” would not have been generated either in the hinterland or in Jaguaripe, but in the Jesuit missions: “it seems,” he concludes, “to have been inside the mission itself that the exotic and surprising Tupinamb  Catholicism was elaborated” (Vainfas 1995: 117). At the time, Vainfas himself admitted the potentially heretical nature of this proposition.

## IV.

A book that follows Ronaldo Vainfas's ideas is *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*, by Alida Metcalf, published in 2005 and recently translated into Portuguese (Metcalf 2019). The connections between Metcalf and Vainfas can be traced back to the publication of *A heresia dos índios*. In the review that she wrote of the book in 1996, Alida Metcalf was already sympathetic to the idea that there was a significant distance between the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* and the other *Santidades* described by Europeans in the mid-sixteenth century (Staden, Thevet, Léry *et al.*). According to Metcalf, the main distinction made by Ronaldo Vainfas lay in the fact that the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* incorporated Christian elements, which proved that it was not a mere inertial manifestation of a previous Tupinambá religiosity. Moreover, another indication of this confluence of elements from diverse cultural origins emerged in the second characteristic that described the *Santidade de Jaguaripe's* novelty: the power of attraction that it exerted over non-indigenous people—Africans, *mestiços*, and even white people, whether they were born in Brazil or not (Metcalf 1996: 315).

Metcalf herself reinforced the argument of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe's* novelty in “Millenarian Slaves?” This article largely corroborates Vainfas's argument that the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* should be seen as an original response, born from the brutality of colonial domination while standing against it. In its construction, the oppressed would have activated native elements as well as “syncretic beliefs, language, and rituals drawn from their immediate experience in colonial society” (Metcalf 1999: 1534). Still, Metcalf deviated from *A heresia dos índios* by proposing that the *Santidade* led by Antônio could be better explained as a millenarian movement instead of a syncretic derivation of the pre-contact indigenous messianism (although she did not exclude the influence of the “indigenous tradition”). Her analysis relied heavily on the demographics of the movement, which included a majority of enslaved natives among its followers. More importance should therefore be given to the dramatic conditions that the colonial yoke imposed on the natives, as well as on Africans and *mestiços*, whether they were enslaved or free. The *Santidade de Jaguaripe* would then be an “almost classic example” of a millenarian movement: it was a new creation, which had originated in a “bitter and painful present” and dreamed of a “radiant future wherein all evil will be erased” (Lanternari 1963 *apud* Metcalf 1999: 1532).

It was not, therefore, “a movement of Indians independent of the planters and Jesuits, and it was not a movement untouched by Christian evangelization” (Metcalf 1999: 1542). Supported by Vainfas, for whom missionary action was central to the creation of the



*Santidade*, Metcalf explores the Jesuit catechesis in search of the Jewish-Christian millenarian ideas that are present in its teachings. Here, again, the Jesuits assume a central role, insofar as they are responsible for shaping the common language that brought enslaved people from different origins together around a “shared vocabulary” (Metcalf 1999: 1547).

In the short biographical note that accompanied “Millenarian Slaves?” Metcalf announced that she was working on a research project on Jesuits and *mestiços* as “go-betweens” in sixteenth-century Brazil. This project led to *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*, a book published in 2005 that revisits the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* in its last two chapters. There are remarkable continuities between the article and the book. More interested in the role played by intermediaries in making the colonization of Brazil feasible, Metcalf reformulated the argument in these terms, although she did not abandon her concern with framing the *Santidade* as a millenarian movement and with identifying it as a religious response to a particular context of acute social crisis. Therefore, the idea that the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* catalyzed the marginal experiences of the early days of Brazil was maintained, as it would have brought together indigenous people who had strayed from their traditional ways of life: Africans uprooted by the transatlantic slave trade, and *mamelucos*—*mestiços* born from Portuguese fathers and native mothers—who, because of their “bicultural ambiguity” and “fluidity,” naturally occupied a prominent place among the go-betweens.

Therefore, the movement’s novel feature, created at the center of different influxes, remained: the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* continued to be an original response to the advance of the Portuguese conquest. But *Go-Betweens*, based on the argument that millenarian movements “invariably become political,” also sought to consider the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* in those terms, concluding that Antônio and other *Santidade* leaders from the second half of the sixteenth century were no longer anchored to traditional forms of socio-political organization. The opposition and resistance emanating from the new *Santidades* would therefore be fundamentally different from those offered by indigenous people in the first decades of their contacts with white people—a time when their main catalysts were the traditional leaders: the chief, the shaman, and the *caraiíba* (Metcalf 2005: 196).

According to this argument, Antônio was part of a new wave of leaders, a new type of representational go-betweens—that is, individuals who “through writings, drawings, mapmaking, and the oral tradition shaped on a large scale how Europeans and Native Americans viewed each other” (Metcalf 2005: 10). In their role, these new *caraiibas* reinterpreted the teachings of the Jesuits and the myths of Tupi origin to redefine identities and formulate alternatives both to the traditional way of life and to Portuguese colonization.

Their followers were not the same as in the early days, since they did not live in traditional villages, but in Jesuit missions, or else they were enslaved on sugar plantations.

The new leaders, formed in a new context and followed by subjects who lived in previously unheard-of oppressive situations, gave way to new forms of resistance and, in the end, to a “new kind of religion” (Metcalf 2005: 232-233).

## V.

Between “Millenarian Slaves?” (1999) and *Go-Betweens* (2005), another important work for the purposes explored here was defended as a thesis (2001) and later published as a book: *Religião como tradução: missionários, Tupi e “Tapuia” no Brasil Colonial*, by Cristina Pompa (2003).<sup>3</sup> Despite not directly dialoguing with each other, *Go-Betweens* and *Religião como tradução* follow, each in its own way, some of the fundamental arguments raised by Ronaldo Vainfas in *A heresia dos índios*. Like Metcalf, Pompa does not have the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* as her central object of analysis, since she focuses on the reciprocal translations that guided the dialogue between missionaries and indigenous people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the hinterlands of Northeastern Brazil (it is fair to say that in Metcalf’s book, the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* occupies much more space). However, despite the focus on indigenous people from the interior, the first part of *Religião como tradução* deals with the European presence on the Brazilian coast in the sixteenth century and the first missionary ventures, which were to prove essential in formulating the expectations of those who, in the following centuries, would go on to preach in the hinterland.

This does not mean that, in examining the coastal background that informed the hinterland experience, Pompa set the scene based naively on the works of authors who had previously dealt with this subject. On the contrary, in several passages, she proposed a revision of assertions that have long been considered valid by both ethnologists and historians alike. In one of these reviews, Cristina Pompa questioned the very premise that the migratory movements of the indigenous people in the sixteenth century had an exclusively religious basis, associated with the search for the “Land without Evil” or with an original indigenous messianism, both of which were linked to a scenario prior to the arrival of the Europeans. In revisiting the sources, Pompa finds no substance for such conclusions—in fact, she even questions the validity of treating the search for the “Land

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the restrictions on access to libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to consult the now out-of-print *Religião como tradução*. Hence the quotations made here refer directly to the thesis.

without Evil” as a given among the coastal Tupi from that period (Pompa 2001: 136 *ff.*). Furthermore, she declares that the records are not sufficient to characterize the *Santidades* of the sixteenth century as a kind of messianic preparation for migratory movements, as the influential anthropologist Alfred Métraux and others had previously argued. On the contrary, the “great ceremonies conducted by the *caraiíba*” would have the appearance of “periodic festivities of cosmic and social renewal,” which would end once the refoundation of the world, performed ritually as a community, was completed. In fact, when these festivities did come to an end, the prominence achieved by the prophet would evaporate, and he would then retreat to the solitude of the jungle and “his eternal wanderings” (Pompa 2001: 117, 181).

The return to the sources highlights a major issue. As we have seen, H el ene Clastres was Vainfas’s main target for assuming that the search for the “Land without Evil” had continued unaffected by the arrival of Europeans. Cristina Pompa, on the other hand, focused her criticisms mainly on Alfred M etraux, responsible, in her opinion, for the “original sin” of giving “forced treatment” to the colonial documentation and contemporary ethnographic data (collected from among the Apapocuva, Temb e, and Chiriguano in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) overlapping with the sources dealing with the Tupi of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Pompa 2001: 132-133). The projection of the present onto the past, anchored in the idea of immutability in native culture, would end up making it impossible to detect the interference of Europeans in the Amerindians’ messianic expressions. Thus, the migrations of indigenous people, supposedly led by prophets, tended to be seen as a “native cultural institution” whose existence did not depend on the colonial environment. Pompa argues that the “classic literature,” as well as other texts written at the time when she wrote her thesis, presented serious difficulties in seeing native cultures as “something in progress, in permanent dynamic tension between symbolic systems and historical contingencies” (Pompa 2001: 108).

Returning to the sources is the key to moving in another direction, and, in this sense, Pompa follows *A heresia dos  ndios* closely. When consulting these sources, for example, the author argues that it is inevitable to give some importance to the presence of white people, given that the records relating to the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* and other religious manifestations also deal with “the ill treatment of *Peros* [Portuguese], the wars between Portuguese and French involving indigenous groups, the fear of priests, epidemics, the loss of credibility of the great shamans in the face of evangelization, the presence of *mesti o* shamans” (Pompa 2001: 148-149). Following Vainfas, the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* that emerges from *Religi o como*

*tradução* is unthinkable outside the atrocious context to which it was linked. The same applies to the strategies conceived and choices made by the agents who were involved in it (Pompa 2001: 130-131).

Cristina Pompa continues along the path opened up by Ronaldo Vainfas by paying attention to the ritual dimension of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* in which symbols of different origins were activated and updated in a complex interplay of the symbolic universes brought into contact with each other. Like Alida Metcalf, Pompa also follows *A heresia dos índios* by claiming that the new movement effectively created a “new religion, reconciling multiple religious horizons: that of the Indians, that of black slaves, that of the *mamelucos*, that of the colonists” (Pompa 2001:110). While Vainfas occasionally linked the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* to the search for the “Land without Evil,” in accordance with the path followed by Hélène Clastres and Alfred Métraux, Pompa draws attention to his great contribution of considering the movement a “hybrid” and “fluid” formation, typical of the “colonial situation,” formulating an interpretation that lives up to its complexity by delivering a “web of three-dimensional meanings in which blacks, colonists, Jesuits, Tupi and inquisitors ‘made cultural alterities familiar’” (Pompa 2001: 130).

## VI.

In 2005, two years after the publication of *Religião como tradução* and in the same year that Metcalf published *Go-Betweens*, Renato Sztutman defended his thesis *O profeta e o principal: a ação política ameríndia e seus personagens*, later published in book form in 2012. In his research, Sztutman offers a dense treatment of what he calls indigenous political action by revisiting the ethnology of the twentieth century and, occasionally, sources from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In close dialogue with Pierre and Hélène Clastres, Sztutman is interested in demonstrating, above all, how the so-called “religious domain” paved the way for possible forms of political articulation among the indigenous people. This leads him to revise the definitions of the spheres of politics and religion, and compels him to revisit Clastres’s thesis, which understood the ancient Tupi prophetism as a kind of counterpower, initially formulated as a rejection of the political centralization around great warriors, but which would itself sometimes end up constituting another form of political condensation (Sztutman 2012: 54).

The shamans that emerge from *O profeta e o principal*, depending on the conditions, stop rejecting the concentration of power and become leaders themselves. Inspired by the

ethnology that dealt with Melanesia, Sztutman understands that the shamans and the warriors who were capable of concentrating large groups around themselves reached this condition through a process of magnification—collective and singular at the same time—as fractal people. This was achieved by the absorption and incorporation of “dangerous alterities” with which each of them dealt. In the case of warriors, this Otherness was constituted by human enemies; in the case of shamans, by non-humans and the supernatural (Sztutman 2012: 72-74).

In both scenarios, the appropriation of these alterities would be defined by the Tupi opening up to the Other, and this is one of the several ideas that Renato Sztutman draws from Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, arguably the most influential contemporary Brazilian anthropologist. For the Tupi, the constitutive notion of the group was defined less by a distinctive comparison with what was external to them and more by an “ontological incompleteness” that launched them towards the Other in search of its absorption, “where becoming and relationships prevailed over being and substance” (Viveiros de Castro 2020: 190-191). In the warrior’s path, this was done by preying on and devouring their enemies. These acts were connected with the refusal and overcoming of mortality, a central issue for the Tupi, although they were not the only ones capable of addressing it. The “pacification” of the Tupi of the Brazilian coast, through the advance of colonization, forced them to abandon cannibalism and their original warrior logic, which required the ritual destruction of their enemies in order to assimilate their qualities. The alternative path in search of getting closer to the gods and reaching immortality, which would be followed by indigenous people from then on, would be the one offered by the connections with the supernatural. In other words, this would occur through the process of absorbing the agency of the Other via the shamanic way—this Other being the white people, perceived from early on as possessing “the divine science of non-mortality, an attribute of the *mair* and the *karaiba*.” This explains, moreover, why the word “*caraíba*” became synonymous with “European,” in addition to characterizing the Tupinambá prophets and the “demiurges and cultural heroes, endowed with high shamanic science” (Viveiros de Castro 2020: 174 *ff.*).

For Sztutman, this shift from war to shamanism did not mean a profound change in the way things were, placing him in disagreement with those who emphasized the disruptive nature of colonization. Nor would it have forced the indigenous people to formulate new solutions, by confronting them with unprecedented situations. The shaman’s path would have been part of the pre-contact Amerindian arsenal, and choosing to follow it would have been more of a shift in emphasis, rather than an originality. This argument is in keeping with

others mentioned by Sztutman throughout his thesis, such as the one that understands the adoption of firearms as a catalyst of processes consistent with native logic, instead of something that provoked a revolutionary transformation (Sztutman 2012: 341; Viveiros de Castro 2020: 191-193), or the argument that sees the rise of women to religious leadership not as an interference caused by the introduction of the Marian cult into evangelical environments (Vainfas 1995: 116), but as the liberation of something that already existed in theory, and which had come up against the inflated male role fueled by the predominance of war (Sztutman 2012: 419, 502-503).

The thesis advanced by *O profeta e o principal* therefore insists on the “irreducibility of the indigenous world to the colonial world,” even in those contexts that “historians might describe as conducive to miscegenation,” such as the case of the Jesuit missions in Bahia or São Paulo where the natives sought refuge from the hardships of a colony in formation (Sztutman 2012: 174). It is not surprising, therefore, that, in adopting this line of thought, Sztutman ends up opposing Ronaldo Vainfas’s interpretation of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*. For Sztutman, the problematic issue does not lie exactly in the perception that white people and indigenous people appropriated elements of one another, or in the fact that these exchanges involved a complex game of reciprocal translation. What he refutes is that there necessarily arose a third way, a syncretic or *mestiço* world formed through the contact and the shaping of the previous two (Sztutman 2012: 177-178).

The appearance of alien elements in the midst of the rituals of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* would therefore have represented a fundamental value for the Tupi, namely the absorption of the Other. The effective adoption of alien signs, reinforced by the very frequency with which *mestiços* and even white people began to gravitate towards the church/*maloca* built in the lands of Fernão Cabral de Ataíde, would then serve as a validation of the power of those directly involved with the movement. In the perception of those who participated in *Santidades*, the displacement of the colonial society would take place not through the destruction and erasure of its features—its direct and simple denial—but by its being swallowed up. Thus, the traces of Catholic religiosity that were to be found in the rites witnessed in the hinterland, in Jaguaripe or in the dispersed nuclei in the sugar plantations would not be involuntary reinforcements of the same white society that the natives sought to destroy in a flagrant paradox, as Vainfas thought (1995: 109). For the Tupinambá, the extirpation of their enemies would instead involve their capture and incorporation, through what may be considered a cannibalistic process in a broader sense.

This proposal ends up changing our way of understanding the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*. In exploring Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's argument, namely that "being like white people—and being white people—was a desired value in the indigenous symbolic market" (Viveiros de Castro 2020: 193), the path of analysis suggested by Sztutman would lead to another meaning being found for the integration of Christian cosmology into the indigenous prophetic discourse, the adoption of clothing and objects of worship, or even the organization of the movement into popes, saints, and bishops. They would not be a disfigurement of the Tupinambá way, but, in fact, a strong indication that this way of being—this native "machinery"—was still in full operation. Christian elements, therefore, would not have harmed the Amerindian authenticity. This authenticity would still be there and it would constitute the main driving force behind the actions taken, and the very core of indigenous "being."

Interestingly, and perhaps unexpectedly, this perspective echoes the introduction that Capistrano wrote for the publication of the *Confissões da Bahia*. Although, for Sztutman the "native foundation" would have remained intact by willingly swallowing up the "Christian accessories," seeing in them a way of accessing the supernatural.

## VII.

Over the past decade, some researchers have sought to incorporate Sztutman's contributions into historiography. In a 2017 article, for example, Almir Diniz de Carvalho Júnior relied on them to probe indigenous conceptions about baptisms, the adoption of Christian names, and the very construction of corporealities and individualities, based on records made by missionaries who traveled to Maranhão and Grão-Pará between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Carvalho Júnior understands that the route developed by Sztutman helps us to understand the actions of the "colonial indigenous' on the way to becoming Christians" (Carvalho Júnior 2017:49). That is to say, the actions of those indigenous people who, in one way or another, had already witnessed the interference of the colonial world, as was the case with those who directly felt the weakening of native war as a matrix of indigenous life.

It is important to note that Carvalho Júnior makes no mention of Sztutman's condemnation of the perspective of cultural miscegenation, which he himself had previously explored (Carvalho Júnior 2005) and which still prevails in studies on the culture shock experienced in interactions between indigenous people and Europeans. This is partly

explained by the fact that, in this article, Carvalho Júnior was interested in contacts in which the native and alien perspectives remained relatively identifiable. However, other investigations that have ventured into more nebulous contexts (such as the case of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*) have shown how challenging it can be to incorporate these ideas into historical research and to manage the dissonances derived from them.

One of these investigations is Carlos Henrique Cruz's dissertation, *Inquéritos nativos: os pajés frente à Inquisição*, defended in 2013. His interpretation recognizes the hybridism of colonial shamans in the way suggested by Sztutman. In other words, not as a miscegenation forged in contact with white people, but as a result of the native's tendency to hybridize through the absorption of alterities. However, Cruz also tries to protect and reiterate part of the argument of *A heresia dos índios*. Faced with Sztutman's assessment that the book supposes an inevitable destruction of the indigenous perspective and the creation of a "mameluco and lacerated world," Cruz argues that Sztutman fails to perceive the "complexity of Vainfas's analysis," which gave equal treatment to, and was supported by, an "interaction of both Amerindian wills and cultural structures, as well as Christian and colonial ones" (Cruz 2013: 90). Sztutman's formulation, however, is based precisely on the refusal to understand these interactions as producing syncretisms or miscegenations.

Despite drawing closer to Sztutman, since his dissertation deals with the actions of eighteenth-century Amazon shamans and sorcerers, Cruz's analysis appears to lead him towards the subject of crossovers and cultural exchanges in which the native element itself does not appear to be any more relevant than others. The combination of European concepts of devils and sorcery with the "invisible war" inherited from the native system, such as it was carried out by the shamans, seems to indicate that different influxes permeated the conceptions that the operators of the supernatural made of their own abilities and occupations. In the dissertation's conclusion, he recognizes the "colonial situation" as inducing "hybridities," "miscegenations," and "cultural exchanges and translations"—although not in a mandatory way—and he ultimately depicts the colony as a "world in formation," which echoes the creation of a third group, rejected by Renato Sztutman (Cruz 2013: 207).

Another recent investigation, this one specifically dedicated to the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*, resulted in Jamille Santos's dissertation, *Ecos da liberdade: profetismo indígena e protagonismo tupinambá na Bahia quincentista*, defended in 2015 and published in 2019. Santos is less conciliatory and actively rejects Vainfas's interpretation, considering that his choice of miscegenation as an analytical key ends up annihilating what was indigenous about the Bahian



*Santidades*, emptying them of their “meaning of a historical struggle and the survival of indigenous ethnic groups” (Santos 2019: 33). Like Sztutman, her denial of the *mestiço* way also became a search for “indigenous political action.” However, in the end, her notion of political action is different from the one offered by the anthropologist and does not lead to the perception of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* as the magnification of its *caraiíba*. Instead, she proposes a conscientious and bellicose understanding of the *Santidades* as an appropriation of other “cultural elements,” which results in a reconfiguration of “cosmologies, social organization and worldview in an attempt to understand and overcome colonial domination” (Santos 2019: 32-33, 95).

Moving away from one of the most stimulating arguments provided by Sztutman, Santos’s return to inquisitorial sources, which are always elusive about the nature of indigenous agency, does not lead to any great advances in the perception of what she understands as conscientious appropriation. In the end, *Ecos da liberdade* ends up delivering an interpretation that, on several occasions, comes very close to that of the author that she so vigorously refutes. This is evident, for example, in her idea of the *Santidades* as an inversion of colonial society in the form of resistance, which is not very far removed from Vainfas’s “insurgent idolatry” (Santos 2019: 216-223; Vainfas 1995: 31-33, 69, 227-229). But it is also found in her understanding that the native myths were reformulated in a belligerent manner in the face of violent conquest (Santos 2019: 209-210; Vainfas 1995: 105 ff). In other passages, colonial Brazil also appears as a scenario of “fluidity” and “permeability between cultures” (Santos 2019: 68) in which religiosities of different origins are intertwined “in a synthesis of different elements, characterized by cultural hybridism” (Santos 2019: 81).

The arguments proposed by Carlos Cruz and Jamille Santos do not seem to achieve their objectives, partly because Sztutman is not interested in the result of colonial interactions, or whether or not they created a “third way.” These mattered only insofar as they showed the way in which “indigenous people took over Christianity and other aspects of the West to redefine the meaning of their existence, to produce singular and collective subjects” (Sztutman 2012: 486). In applying Sztutman’s ideas to an investigation of the transformations that took place in colonial environments, their interpretation would necessarily have to be changed to account for when and how the “native machinery” eventually stopped operating—if it ever stopped operating—or if (and how) this machinery remained when the indigenous people were gradually submerged in the records under other designations (Almeida 2008).

But there are other major issues at stake here. Sztutman announces that his method starts with a search for the contextualization of the ancient Tupi, placing the investigation “in history” and relying on primary and secondary sources. Later, he places the investigation “outside” it. This second phase, in which we find the potential controversy of his approach, tries to take advantage of recent ethnographies about Amazonian peoples in order to reveal “common principles with the reality of the ancient Tupi” (Sztutman 2021: 120-122). The proposal is naturally a risky one, and, as we saw earlier with Cristina Pompa, the overlapping of modern and contemporary materials is generally a problematic maneuver. This does not mean that recent ethnological research cannot contribute to the reexamination of colonial sources: there is a lot of *Araweté*, for example, in “*O mármore e a murta*,” which received an excellent reception among historians (Viveiros de Castro 1986, 2020; Almeida 2017; Santos 2017; cf. Agnolin 2005). In the end, what matters is the return to the sources in order to evaluate the hypotheses. In this sense, it is significant that Sztutman does not reexamine the records relating to the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*, and instead bases his argument on what was stated by Ronaldo Vainfas and Ronald Raminelli (1996)—to a lesser extent—and on what he has extracted from other “times and spaces.”

He does not return to the sources simply because he does not consider it necessary to do so, and the material obtained indirectly seems suitable for receiving a treatment that is derived from other analyses. After all, for the author, taking advantage of twentieth-century ethnology would also be a way of circumventing the fixation that historians have with written records and contexts, which would ultimately render them unable to fulfill the well-intentioned desire of recognizing indigenous agency. As he says, and with good reason, “it is not enough to claim that they are agents of their own destiny, it is necessary to understand what this agency means.” The point is that much of the research undertaken under the scope of what is known as New Indigenous History, which is careful to avoid regarding integrated or assimilated indigenous people as “less Indian” (Monteiro 2001: 4-5), ends up exploring different paths of access to historical change, necessarily including the agency of the indigenous people and, at the same time, rejecting the inevitability of their extermination (Almeida 2003; Carvalho Júnior 2005; Garcia 2009).

The openness to the Other as a fundamental trait of the Tupi is well accepted, as indicated by the frequent references to Viveiros de Castro in the historiography. The central issue—and here the considerations of Cristina Pompa delve deep into the occupational vices of historians—seems to be one of examining the individuals and groups that were involved in particular cases by returning to the records. In the case of the *Santidades*, the positions

occupied by the *caraibas* and their personal trajectories are still fundamental, as Capistrano de Abreu pointed out almost 100 years ago. With regard to Antônio and the *Santidade de Jaguaripe*, specifically, some questions may still remain unanswered in the absence of any fresh evidence. For example, we may never know for certain the conditions of his passage through the Jesuit mission in Tinharé. Nor the reasons that caused Antônio to disappear from the records, only to reappear again in the rumors originating from the hinterland, which caused unrest among the masters but enthusiasm among the enslaved and those under Jesuit control. In any case, many of those who participated in his movement were indigenous people inserted in a colonial environment of exploitation that had been violently imposed upon them for decades. Hence Alida Metcalf's understanding of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* as a new phenomenon, and of its *caraíba*, interestingly, as a go-between—albeit still indigenous—capable of communicating with the different groups that were forced to live together in Bahia.

Capturing Otherness was a delicate process for the Tupi. For the warrior who tried to put it into practice, the absorption of the Other was followed by a period of instability in which he needed to prove himself capable of taming the alterity that lay within him. The same was true for shamans, who tamed “non-human or extraordinary beings” by becoming familiar with them. In both cases, failure would result in the shamans and warriors being subjected by the forces that they sought to dominate and, consequently, transformed into enemies of their own group (Sztutman 2012: 91, 431). This image of an inner cosmic struggle—or, to complicate things, a cosmic struggle in which the subjects are dissolved into a pre-individual state (Sztutman 2012: 388)—may be a good way of illustrating the reinterpretation of the *Santidade de Jaguaripe* offered by the route of shamanic magnification. Sztutman's argument has already made a move towards devouring Vainfas's *mestiço* way. Now it is time to wait and see if it survives this attack.

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