

Editor's Note:

Luís Vaz de Camões (c. 1524-1580), the famous Lisbon poet, composed *Os Lusíades* in 1572 to glorify the expedition and exploits of Vasco da Gama in the Indian Ocean. It is a lengthy and epic poem, consisting of ten cantos, the portion relating to mainland Southeast Asia limited to a portion of the last of these. Only this portion is reproduced below. The chief utility of this information for the historian is that it helps us to understand how much, by 1572, Portuguese at home knew about the region. Some information is of special interest, such as the reference to the Gwe.

The following translation was made in 1655 by Richard Fanshaw and printed in London for Humphrey Moseley at the Prince's Arms in St. Paul's Church-yard. According to the translator's preface, Fanshaw completed the translation on 1 May 1655 at Tankersley Park. The following text is derived from the British Library original (shelfmark g.11385). Other English translations include Vise Strangford's version of 1804 (n.p.: Carpenter, BL shelfmark B28.a.31), Edward Quillinan's version, with notes by John Adamson, of 1853 (n.p.: Edward Moxon, BL shelfmark x15/3449), William Julius Mickie's 1877 edition (London: George Bell & Sons, BL shelfmark W53/4181), and others in the twentieth century. As the first English translation, the one most late seventeenth and eighteenth century English travelers would have read, warrants special attention.

M.W.C.

THE LUSIAD, OR, PORTUGALS HISTORICALL POEM

Luís Vaz de Camões

Translated by Richard Fanshaw (1655)

Tenth Canto, STANZA. 1.

121.

GANGES, in which his Borderers dye lav'd;
Holding it as a certain principle
That (be they ne're such Sinners) they are sav'd,

Bath'd in those streams that flow from *Sacred Well*.
 The City CATHIGAN would not be wav'd,
 The fairest of BENGALA: who can tell
 The plenty of this *Province?* but *it's post*
 (Thou seest) is *Eastern*, turning the *South-Coast*.

122.

The *Realm* of ARRACAN, *That* of PEGU
 Behold, with *Monsters* first inhabited!
Monsters, which from a strange commixtion grew:
 Such ill effects oft *Solitude* hath bred.
Here (though a barb'rous misbegotten Crew)
 Into her way was erring *Nature* led
 By an invention rare, which a *Queen* fram'd,
 To cure the *Sin*, that is not to be nam'd.

123.

Behold the City of TAVAY, with which
 The *spatious* Empire of SIAN begins!
 TENASSERI! QUEDA: with pepper rich
 For which the praise she from all other wins!
 MALACCA see before, where ye shall pitch
 Your great *Emporium*, and your *Magazins*:
 The *Rendezvouz* of all that *Ocean* round
 For *Merchandizes* rich that *there* abound.

124.

From *this* ('tis said) the Waves impetuous course;
 Breaking a passage through, from *Main* to *main*,
 SAMATRA'S noble *Isle* of old did force,
 Which *then* a Neck of Land therewith did chain:
 That *this* was CHERSONESE till that divorce,
 And from the wealthy mines, that there remain,
 The Epithite of GOLDEN had annex:
Some think, it was the OPHYR in the *Text*.

125.

But, at that *Point* doth CINGAPUX appeare:
 Where the pincht *Streight* leaves *Ships* no room to play.
Heer the *Coast*, winding to the *Northern Beare*,
 Faces the fair AURORA all the way.
 See PAN, PATANE (ancient *Realms* that were)
 And long SYAN, which *These*, and *more*, obay!
 The copious *River* of MENAM behold,
 And the great Lake CHIAMAY from whence 'tis roll'd!

126.

In this vast *Tract* see an Infinitie
 Of *Names* and *Nations* to your WORLD unknown!
 LAOS, in *Land* and *men* That potent bee!
 AVAS, BRAINAS, in those long Hills o'rgrown!
 In yon far MOUNTAINS other *Nations* see
 (GUEOS they're call'd) and savage ev'ry one!
 They eat *Mans flesh*, and paint their *own* in knots
 With *fire*, as ye doe *Rooms* with *watring-pots*.

127.

The River MECON (which they Captain style
 Of *Waters*) see; CAMBOYA on his brink!
 He overflows the *Land* for many a mile:
 So many other *Rivers* doth he drink.
Set times he hath of *flowing* (like cool NYLE):
 The near Inhabitants *brutishly* think,
 That *pain* and *glory*, after this Life's end
 Ev'n the *brute Creatures* of each kind attend.

128.

Upon his soft and charitable Brim
 The wet and ship-wrackt SONG receive shall *Hee*
 Which in a lamentable plight shall swim
 From sholes and Quicksands of tempestuous *Sea*,
 (The dire effect of *Exile*) when on *Him*
 Is executed the unjust Decree:

Whose repercussive LYRE shall have the Fate
To be *renowned* more then *Fortunate*.

129.

Heer, (mark it!) runs the Coast that's call'd CHAMPA,
Whose Groves smell hot of *Calambuco* wood:
Heer CAUCHINCHINA, and heer AYNAM'S Bay;
Both *One* and t' *Other* little understood.
Heer the great *Empire* (famous for *large sway*,
And its vast *Wealth's* unfathomable Flood)
Of CHINA runs: calling *all this* her *Owne*
From *burning Cancer* to the *frozen Zone*.