CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

The Lusiads

Luís de Camões · *1572* · *Richard Francis Burton*

The feats of Arms, and famed heroick Host, from the occidental Lusitanian strand: Burton's 1880 English of Camões, edited by Isabel Burton, sings Vasco da Gama's voyage in the key of a national epic. The hosted text joins both Gutenberg volumes, ten cantos complete.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a Christian nation's voyage be sung—as glory, as cost, and as a story the gods themselves debate?

"The feats of Arms, and famed heroick Host,"
Canto I, the opening stanza

The hosted English is Richard Francis Burton's, edited by Isabel Burton (PG #77660 and #77661 joined). William Julius Mickle's Lusiad was inspected and is not this text. Burton's spelling is marked: heroick, farèd, Portugueze in the argument, Taprobáne-land. The ten cantos follow the voyage, a council of the gods, Mozambique and Mombasa, storms, the Island of Love, and a view of future empire. Quote Burton, not Mickle. This is a nationalist epic of exploration and conquest; teach the voyage and also the imperial boast as a claim to be judged, not as the library's own voice. For older students.

KEY CHARACTERS

Vasco da Gama
The captain of the voyage the poem sings.

the Lusitanian host
The company from the western strand, whose feats are the announced subject.

Venus, Mars, and Bacchus
The gods who favor or oppose the navigation in the epic machinery.

the peoples of the African and Indian shores
Those whom the fleet meets, welcomes, and fights; not décor.

FEATS OF ARMS

> *"The feats of Arms, and famed heroick Host,"*
> Canto I

Grades 11–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

A Heroick Host

CANTO I, THE PROPOSITION

The poet will sing the feats of arms and the famed heroick host from the Lusitanian strand, who fared over waters never crossed, beyond the Taprobane-land, and reared a new throne.

- The opening is exact in Burton, including 'heroick Host' and 'occidental Lusitanian strand.'
- The two arguments before the first stanza are not the poem's first line; quote the verse.
- The gods will enter almost at once.

> *"The feats of Arms, and famed heroick Host,"*
> Canto I

02

Gods, and a Council

THE EARLY CANTOS

Heaven's court debates the voyage. Bacchus opposes, Venus and Mars favor. The epic machinery is pagan even as the cause is a Christian kingdom's.

- The mixed theology is the poem's manner, not a slip.
- The council is part of the action, not a decoration only.
- Burton's notes and arguments should not be quoted as Camões's verse.

03

Africa, and First Blood

MOZAMBIQUE, MOMBASA, AND THE RUN ON

The fleet meets welcome that turns, and a first military action. The eastern seas are already a trial of arms as well as of navigation.

- Place-names in this English include Mozambíque and Mombasah as printed.
- Teach the encounters as the poem gives them, and as a history of power, not as a simple adventure.
- Da Gama's company is a people on the move, not a lone hero only.

04

Storms, and the Old Man

THE MIDDLE CANTOS, INTO VOLUME II

The Cape, a prophetic warning, storms, and the long push into the Indian Ocean. Volume II of the Burton is in this file; do not stop at Canto V.

- The two Gutenberg volumes are joined here.
- A warning about the cost of empire belongs to the poem; do not skip it.
- The navigation remains the spine.

05

India, and a Vision of Empire

THE LATER CANTOS AND THE CLOSE

Landfall, the Island of Love, and a prophetic view of what Portugal will claim. The hosted text is complete in ten cantos.

- Flag the edition: Burton, edited by Isabel Burton, not Mickle (PG #32528 was inspected and not used).
- The close is a national boast; teach it as a claim to be judged.
- A complete ten-canto epic, for older students, of voyage, faith, and conquest.

A Voyage of Empire · National Glory · A Council of Gods · Faith and Conquest · A Cost to Be Judged

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. The hosted text is Richard Francis Burton's 1880 English, edited by Isabel Burton (Project Gutenberg #77660 and #77661 joined), complete in ten cantos. William Julius Mickle's Lusiad (PG #32528) was inspected and is not this text. The opening of Canto I is exact: "The feats of Arms, and famed heroick Host, / from occidental Lusitanian strand," Burton's spellings include heroick, farèd, and Taprobáne-land. Quote Burton, not Mickle.
2. This is a nationalist epic of exploration and conquest. Teach the voyage, and teach the imperial boast as a claim to be judged, not as the library's own voice. For older students.
3. Do not stop at the end of Volume I; both volumes are in this hosted file. Do not quote the arguments or the editor's notes as the poem.

Quotations are verbatim from the Richard Francis Burton, Project Gutenberg #77660 and #77661 (joined), the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/the-lusiads/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.