

CAMÕES AS WORLD AUTHOR: COSMOPOLITAN MISREADINGS

Camões como autor mundial: lecturas erróneas cosmopolitas

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RESUMEN: Paulo Lemos Horta revisa la epopeya del poeta renacentista portugués Luis de Camões, *Os Lusíadas* (que celebra el descubrimiento de una ruta a la India por Vasco de Gama), a la luz de las sucesivas lecturas erróneas que convierten el texto en una obra de la literatura mundial. Desde principios del siglo XIX, los lectores románticos alemanes, atentos a los viajes de Camões por el estrecho de Hormuz y la India, percibieron (o leyeron en el poema) influencias persas e indias. Esto determinaría la posterior interpretación del poema por sus traductores ingleses, más tarde americanos. Centrándose en esta tradición, Horta explora cómo un poema nacional puede ser radicalmente transformado, o re-contextualizado, en un texto global, hasta el punto de ser leído casi en contra de sí mismo. Llevando la perspectiva romántica hasta su límite, su traductor victoriano Richard Francis Burton (el mismo que tradujo las *Mil y una noches*) habló sobre el «perfume de Oriente» de los *Lusíadas*: especuló que Camões había sido influenciado por la poesía persa y vio un paralelismo entre el genio del Cabo de Buena Esperanza de Camões, Adamastor, y el genio (*yinn*) de las *Mil y una noches*. El análisis de Horta subraya la insuficiencia de las lecturas que

insisten en el carácter sencillo del poema como una –o *la*– epopeya fundacional del imperialismo moderno europeo, y, en cambio, sugiere que la creativa lectura errónea que el Romanticismo hace de la epopeya (en un sentido bloomiano) puede haber abierto vías más propicias para la circulación de *Os Lusíadas* como un texto de la literatura mundial.

Palabras clave: Cosmopolitismo, Lectura Errónea, Imperialismo, Post-colonialismo, Romanticismo, Literatura Comparada, Epopeya, Camões, Richard Francis Burton, Schlegel.

ABSTRACT: Paulo Lemos Horta looks at Renaissance Portuguese poet Luis de Camões' epic *The Lusíads* (which celebrates Vasco da Gama's discovery of a route to India) in light of the successive misreadings that fashioned the text a work of world literature. Beginning in the 19th century, German Romantic readers, attentive to Camões's travels in the Hormuz straight and India discerned (or read into the poem) Persian and Indian influences. This would determine the later interpretation of the poem by its English, then American translators. Focusing on this tradition, Horta explores how a national poem can be radically transformed and re-contextualized into a global text, to the point of being read almost against itself. Taking the Romantic view to its limit, its Victorian translator Richard Francis Burton (the same who translated the *Thousand and One Nights*) talked about the *Lusíads*' 'perfume of the East': he speculated that Camões had been influenced by Persian poetry and saw a parallel between Camões's genius of the Cape of Good Hope, Adamastor, and the jinni of the *Thousand and One Nights*. Horta's analysis points to the insufficiency of readings of the poem that insist on the straightforward and unproblematic nature of the poem as –or *the*– foundational epic of modern European imperialism, and suggests instead that Romanticism's creative misreading of the epic (in a Bloomian sense) may have opened up more rewarding avenues for the circulation of *The Lusíads* as a text of world literature.

Key words: Cosmopolitanism, Misreading, World Literature, Imperialism, Post-Colonialism, Romanticism, Comparative Literature, Epic, Camões, Richard Francis Burton, Schlegel.

where an ocean inlet separates
Abyssinia from the Arabian waste...

there looms the Cape of Aromata...
the cape where Africa's coastline,
coming from the south, ends.

here, to this sea, whose waters rush
to enter through that inlet's mouth,
my hard luck brought me
and kept me for a time.
here in this far-off, harsh and desolate
part of the world it made me leave
a brief stretch of my already brief life,
determined to break it
into pieces scattered around the world

(Zenith, 2009, 153).

Written about his sojourn in the Cape Guardafui, in modern-day Somalia across the Gulf of Aden from Yemen, Luis Vaz de Camões' lament in his tenth canzone that his life has been broken «into pieces scattered around the world» speaks to both the appeal of his work beyond Portugal and the difficulty of contextualizing the influences that governed its production. Camões the voyager, as reclaimed by German Romantics and Victorian and American translators, remade the lyric and the epic in the shape of his experiences in India, the Arabian Sea and the Strait of Hormuz. The «perfume of the East» read into *The Lusiads* in its reception outside of Portugal, radically transforms and re-contextualizes the text. Spying a strong imprint of the experience of India, and perhaps the formative influence of exposure to Persian literature in the Gulf, German Romantics and British and American translators contributed a series of readings of Camões as a cosmopolitan that would establish his reputation as a world author. In the manner of the autobiographical lyric poetry of exile, *The Lusiads* emerges in these readings as a poem of Camões' voyages rather than da Gama's. Set against the wider context of possible influences, these readings perhaps interpret the national epic against itself. Alongside Portugal's anxieties regarding cultural difference, they stress a sense of the interpretive possibilities opened up by a consideration of Camões' journeys abroad. A poem about bringing the light of Christianity to India becomes a testament to Camões' sympathy for India's «pagan» cultures. In the manner of Blake's reading of Satan as the secret hero of *Paradise Lost*, Bacchus becomes a more sympathetic villain, or anti-hero. In place of da Gama's suspicion of Muslim nations and cultures, the epic might speak to Camões' more nuanced understanding and in some cases affinity for these same nations. Camões' empiricism, read or misread as cosmopolitan, distinguishes him as a world author.

Theorists of world literature warn against cosmopolitan readings untethered from sufficient consideration of a text in its original historical

period and culture. The turn to world literature as an approach within comparative literature represents a fuller embrace of translation as a legitimate subject of scholarly inquiry, an embrace that cannot, in David Damrosch's caution, entail «the kind of ungrounded cosmopolitanism seen a century ago... a high-minded amateurism, a busman's holiday from any real engagement with the work's culture of origin» (2003, 289-290). Even as the generalist may differentiate her labor from that of the specialist, her task is to remain in dialogue with the latter. Damrosch touts as one of the advantages of this inclusiveness of translation a «greater openness in providing contextual information» (2003, 295). He is interested in the scholarly permutations of striking a balance between considerations of a work's original and foreign contexts as a text circulates between them (in an elliptical refraction, in his preferred geometric analogy). What he describes as an «active» and «scholarly» use of translation must take place in the context of collaborative ventures with specialists enabled by a «major improvement in the breadth of language study» (2003, 290). If the scholarly study of translation in world literature admits a cosmopolitan vantage point, for Damrosch it resembles less the nineteenth-century gentleman's «ungrounded» stance than what Bruce Robbins terms «a locally inflected» cosmopolitanism, entailing not an «ideal detachment» but «a reality of (re) attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance» (2003, 298). A cosmopolitan reading must be offered from a particular vantage point, with reference to its own contexts in receiving the foreign work.

Schlegel, Humboldt and Burton were nineteenth-century gentleman scholars and proponents of cosmopolitan readings of Camões, and it is reasonable to inquire if these were «ungrounded» in the author's context of sixteenth-century Portugal. In 1880 Burton even argued in *The Athenaeum* for the vital role of a class of amateur cosmopolitan readers who should endow a fund for translation. London was far behind Paris in supporting literary translation, for Burton a precondition for a truly cosmopolitan literature. The English translated less and, unlike the French, appeared content to rely on the imperial concerns of existing academic and government funds to determine which languages merited translation. Citing his own interest in translation from the Portuguese, Burton's scheme called for these English gentlemen to endow a fund to translate literature from *all* languages, in particular those *not of interest* to Britain's imperial concerns (in a reversal of what Edward Said might have expected). Burton's concern was that the British aristocracy was not cosmopolitan enough. He sought precisely «high-minded amateurism» and «ungrounded cosmopolitanism» in the form of a class of cosmopolitan readers untethered from the area specializations of the imperial administration, the Foreign Service and

the academy. The Athenaeum and other private clubs should foster such amateur cosmopolitans, if for no other reason than to fund Burton's own endeavors as a literary translator and to subscribe to his privately circulated texts.

Schlegel, Humboldt, and Burton nonetheless sought to contextualize Camões' work within sixteenth-century Portugal and with reference to the other cultural realms he inhabited. Camões had led a life scattered «into pieces... around the world» and, commencing with Schlegel, foreign commentators on Camões took it upon themselves to factor in these other realms of cultural experience. If they were careful to call for further contextualization of Camões, Schlegel and his successors also sought to theorize the transformative cognitive and imaginative effect of travel upon the sixteenth-century Portuguese voyager and poet. Beginning with Schlegel, foreign commentators on Camões became interested in the possibility that the experience of travel itself distinguished Camões among great writers and opened up his poetry to broader cultural horizons. To some extent they may have been attracted to cosmopolitanism as an «ideal detachment» for they sought to theorize the cognitive shock of Camões' experiences-to account for how he may have become less beholden to the conventions and generic expectations of his own culture and more permeable to the imprint of others. In speculating about the possible imprint of India and the Persian Gulf in Camões' poetry, Schlegel, Humboldt and Burton make associative leaps not sanctioned by the specialized knowledge of Portuguese or Persian poetry of their time, and in this respect display the «high-minded» amateur cosmopolitanism they court in their readers. Camões' epic spoke to the multiple attachments of his «scattered» life. The attempt of Schlegel and others to reveal and even corroborate these attachments, while not «ungrounded» *per se*, provide twenty-first century comparatists with tantalizing yet speculative misreadings to test in the form of hypotheses against new research.

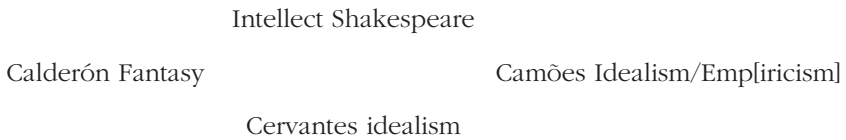
Empiricism and verisimilitude govern the claims Schlegel would make on behalf of the distinctive attributes of Camões as a world author. For Schlegel Camões' epic of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India was distinguished by being imprinted by the author's own experience, sixty years later, of the same route and destination. Since «Camões was a soldier and a knight» and «himself lived a part of his life in India», in Schlegel's emphasis «Everything in his poem ... is created out of the fullness of *his own perceptions, his experience*» (Cochrane 2001, 134). Schlegel makes strong claims on behalf of the empiricism of Camões' mapping of India, likely overstating and romanticizing the degree to which Camões' direct experience makes up his «India». Camões would have supplemented his portraits of Cochin, Goa,

Calicut and other coastal cities with which he had direct knowledge with hearsay and material from travelogues of India. Away from coastal areas he might have visited, where the landmarks cited appear more concrete, he would have improvised.

In its descriptions of the topography, landmarks, and populations of India in the seventh and last cantos, Camões' epic invited empirical claims such as those of Schlegel. These passages give the impression of being informed by notes taken by Camões on his own journey. Cities are often described as if first sighted from the sea. The epic's reader is taken on a coasting voyage of India. On the west the Kingdom of Cambaya «where the gulf thrusts in deep, lies in full sight» (X. 21, 375; all *Lusiads* quotes from Bacon's 1950 translation are in the format Canto, stanza, page number). Notices of Malabar in the southwest and Canara in the south emphasize the imposing sight of the Western Ghats, for «at their feet there lies... Like a fringe along the coast, a stretch of strand, / which strives against the ocean's native hate» (VII. 22, 273). On the east coast the Portuguese are entreated to regard Chittagong in the province of Bengal «which has its seat / Where the coast south commences its retreat» (X. 121, 379). At Jagat they are to marvel at the violent flood tides that form where the sea meets the Mah River («With the flood-tide suddenly gigantic grown, / Whose ebb retreateth with so swift a flight!», X. 106, 375). This coastal mapping of India is punctuated by the sighting of landmarks: the «princely state» of the «fair, rich capital» of Calicut (VII. 22, 254); «the lofty towers of Chale» (X. 61, 364); the «proud palisade» at Bassein (X. 61, 364); «Colombo's high-built tower» (X. 52, 361) and Ceylon's Adam's Peak («the crag soars so high / It tops the clouds, or cheats the vision quite»; X. 136, 383). A sense of the immediacy of direct experience is conveyed by strong sense impressions: the «Eastern heat» of the Strait near Cochin (X. 13, 352), and the «hot bark of odorous cinnamon» at Ceylon (X. 51, 361). On the coast of India, a nymph promises the Portuguese in her summation of their future success, «I pass by a thousand cities there, / That only wait to be your lot and share» (X. 106, 375).

Schlegel's belief that Camões' narrative of da Gama's voyage to India possessed empirical value emboldened him to privilege the Portuguese poet in this respect with regard to Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Miguel de Cervantes, and, further, William Shakespeare. In a fragmentary notebook (1817-1820) Schlegel affiliated Camões with a Spanish poetic tradition in which romantic life prevails in reality. Yet Camões' perceived realism would have differentiated his work from that of Calderón and Cervantes: «In Camões, real external life [*das wirkliche ausser leben*] is conceived and expressed with the inner life's inspiration [*Begeisterung*]; in Cervantes,

the inner life beautifully shines through the annihilation of external life; in Calderón, external life is transformed by inner life» (v17: 428). The empiricism of Camões' own experience of da Gama's India in *The Lusiads* would have set the work apart from *Don Quixote* and *Life is a Dream* in which the realms of inner life and reality are conflated (see Cochrane 2001, 133). This distinction is emphasized in the second of two diagrams in which Schlegel juxtaposed Camões with Cervantes, Calderón, and Shakespeare in mapping out the mind's four faculties:



For Schlegel, only in Camões would idealism and empiricism combine to provide a model for historical (and literary) representation (see Cochrane 2001, 134).

In *Cosmos: A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe* (1845), Alexander Von Humboldt suggests that Schlegel overstated the realism of Camões' portrait of India. Humboldt's discussion of Camões nonetheless served to strongly corroborate Schlegel's broader claim about Camões' distinctiveness in reconciling the faculties of idealism and empiricism. For Humboldt objected not to the ascription of realism to Camões but to the attribution of it to Camões' life experience in India, rather than, as Humboldt would have it, to the poet's objective representation of a voyage at sea. Humboldt was unpersuaded by what he deemed the poem's indistinct evocation of tropical vegetation, which for him did not surpass conventional notices of «spices and other aromatic substances, together with useful products of commerce» (II, 426-7). The epic's only detailed description of flora and fauna, Humboldt emphasized, occurs in the episode of the magical island of love in the ninth and tenth cantos where nymphs reward the Portuguese for the successful expedition. There, he remarks dryly, the vegetation clearly belongs to the climate of Southern Europe (II, 426-7). Nonetheless, on the evidence of Camões' description of the sea voyage of da Gama alone, Humboldt claims *The Lusiads* as the work of literature that most successfully demonstrated «the power of stamping descriptions of nature with the impress of faithful individuality, which springs from actual observation». He claims Camões, «in the strictest sense of the word, a great sea-painter», inspired by sixteen years of observing «the phenomena of the ocean on the Indian and Chinese shores» (II, 425).

Camões' genius for transmuting empirical observation into poetry lay, for Humboldt, in his «inimitable descriptions of the never-ceasing connection

between the air and sea –between the varying form of the cloudy canopy, its meteorological processes, and the different conditions of the surface of the ocean» (II, 424). Humboldt privileges three examples. As da Gama's ship sets out on its voyage, Camões «describes this surface when, curled by gentle breezes, the short waves flash beneath the play of the reflected beams of light» (II, 424). «White wakes all over the great seas they trailed, / Where through the deep the sharp cutwaters plied, Cleaving the sacred wave» (X. 19, 17). Hoping to surpass previous European navigators and approaching the Cape of Good Hope, da Gama witnesses St. Elmo's fire: «And I have clearly seen that living light, / A holy thing, as mariners consent, / In time of storm with wicked winds at height, / And dark tornado making sad lament» (X. 18, 179). They then witness the emergence of a threatening waterspout:

I do not think that my sight cheated me,
For certainly I saw rise up in air
A smoke of fine and vaporous subtilty,
That whirled perpetual, as the wind might bear.

It seemed the very substance of a cloud.
Little by little waxing, the thing grew
Till it was thicker than the mightiest mast.
Here it might thin or thicken out anew,
As it sucked up the sea with gulping vast.
With the rolling wave it undulated too.
On its head a dense cloud darkened, overcast,
That swelled apace and still more ponderous showed
For water it took up, a monstrous load...

But, after, having drunken its whole due,
It lifts the foot on the sea surface set,
And raining out of Heaven, fades from view

(v. 19-22, 179-180).

Humboldt admires the accuracy of the description, «how the cloud woven from fine vapour revolves in a circle, and, letting down a slender tube, thirstily, as it were, sucks up the water, and how when the black cloud is filled, the foot of the cone recedes, and flying upwards to the sky, gives back in its flight, as fresh water, that which it had drawn from the waves with a surging noise» (II, 425). In the poem this scientific description of the emergence of the waterspout precedes and foreshadows the magical manner of the appearance of Adamastor, the «genius of the Cape», to curse the Portuguese.

In the early nineteenth century Schlegel may have misread the extent of verisimilitude in *The Lusiads*' mappings of India, but his romantic misreading of the poem as a testament to Camões' travels transformed its critical reception in what Schlegel and Goethe would regard as world literature. Critical attention in the previous century had focused on the question of whether Camões' epic had fulfilled classical criteria, most controversially in its superimposition of a pagan mythology upon the narrative of da Gama's quest. Schlegel was unconcerned whether the assistance of Venus or opposition of Bacchus in da Gama's voyage was sufficiently Virgilian. Instead Schlegel directed the attention of future commentators to the question of how Camões' epic sought to reconcile of the fancy with which it idealizes da Gama's quest with the perceived empiricism of its geography, anthropology, and cosmology. The problem nineteenth-century commentators inherited was not that of demonstrating the poem's neoclassical credentials, but rather, that of squaring its idealism with its empiricism. If Schlegel had erred by overemphasizing Camões' experience of India as the basis for the poem's empiricism, subsequent commentators were left with the challenge of locating the source and corroborating the nature of its realism. Beyond emphasizing Camões' maritime experience, Humboldt directed readers of *The Lusiads* to consider the import of Camões' involvement as a soldier who had «fought in the Empire of Morocco, at the foot of Atlas, and on the Persian Gulf».

It is a challenge that was to be eagerly met by Richard Francis Burton, whose translation would be distinguished by an insistence on the possibility of non-European literary influence on Camões. Geographical knowledge of Arabia and the Persian Gulf was a personal obsession for Burton: he had originally justified his famous pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina with a plan (which he would have to abandon) to conclude his pilgrimage by crossing from Medina across the great waste to Muscat on the Omani coast. Burton's two-volume commentary (*Camoens: His Life and his Lusiads*) privileges Camões' travels in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf as one of the poet's three main areas of travel in the near East, alongside India and Mozambique (where Camões was imprisoned on his way back to Portugal). In a twenty-one page section of his geographical commentary Burton in effect sketches the outline of a new poem, discussing a constellation of stanzas re-ordered not in accordance with their original function in the narrative of da Gama's voyage but as pieces of the puzzle of Camões' likely trajectory in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf (II, 487-508). This in turn would lead Burton to radically re-contextualize and reinterpret Camões' poem with reference to the probability of a formative Persian influence in its composition. Burton scours Camões' epic to reconstruct the shape of a «series of campaigning

and coasting voyages in Arabia and Persia» which he pieces together from evidence the poet accompanied the expeditions of Dom Fernando de Menezes (1554-1555) and Dom Alvaro de Silveira (1560-1561).

Expeditions to the Persian Gulf would have departed during the north-east monsoon (October to May) and made the 150 mile trek to Socotra, «whose fame for her tart aloes wide is blown» (x. 136, 487). The vessels would then have made for the Cape of Aromata, noted in *The Lusíads* (x. 97) and famously the site of a sojourn the poet made the subject of his tenth Canzone. Camões would have then passed «Aden's arid kingdom... Where never yet was rain from Heaven known» (x. 99, 373). Entering the Red Sea and running up the Eastern coast of Arabia, Camões would have noticed «the length of the red coasts of Araby» (x. 50, 361) and observed the nomadic domains of the Bedouin («huge countries full of wanderers» (x. 100, 378). He would have remarked upon Jeddah, which he would describe as «that harbor, where the trade / of all the Red Sea flourishes apace» (ix. 3, 315). Mecca he would have known only from a port «removed in some degree» from the «famous» city (ix. 2), and Medina merely from «shameful» reputation (x. 50). Camões would have then become familiar with the Nabatean mountains, for he attributes this knowledge to da Gama: «And they went over waters Erythrean... Behind them lay the mountains Nabatean... and they sailed round those odorous coasts Sabean... and Arabia the blest to them was known/ Who left the Arabias of the Waste and the Stone» (iv. 63, 150). Burton finds the references to «these splendid ranges of granite, quartz and sandstone» evocative enough to persuade him that Camões «probably» saw them (492-493). Next on this route would have come Tor, of which Camões observes in *The Lusíads* «the lack is great of water sweet from fountains crystalline» (x. 99, 373) and then Suez (iv. 63, x. 98).

Burton speculates that Camões accompanied Menezes when he ran up the Eastern coast of Arabia for Hormuz in April 1555 and boldly proclaims, precisely where the record of Portuguese sources is least certain, «here our poet is minutely correct». There is no historical consensus that Camões sojourned to Hormuz in 1554-1555, yet as in his study of da Gama's voyage, Burton is not shy about revising the likely dates and itinerary when he believes his geographical knowledge trumps that of the travelogues he relies upon («I cannot accept the dates of a writer who makes the Armada ... cross from Africa to India in the height of the Monsoon-rains when, as the Persians say, the seas are shut», II: 390). Burton is persuaded of Camões' familiarity with the route along the Eastern coast of Arabia: «See how the coast runs on to barricade / That other Persian strait» (x. 100, 374). In Burton's emphasis, Camões appears to have known the strategic importance of Muscat

(X. 102), then subject to Hormuz, and of the Musandam peninsula jutting into the Hormuz strait: «There is Cape Asaborous, which today / Sailors call Mosandan, and here is found / The passage leading to the land-locked bay / 'Twixt Araby and Persia's plenteous ground» (X. 102, 374). Camões would have known well the shifting fortunes of Hormuz and Burton appreciates the irony with which Camões observes that the fantastic Salt Mountains of Hormuz at times four hundred feet high were «insufficient to pickle the dead» of the battles over the island («Nor can the mounts of salt within the land / Keep from corruption corpses in that war», X. 41, 359). The route home to Sindh would have afforded Camões inspiration for his contrast between the barrenness of Arabia and the abundance of Persia: «But now beyond those narrows let us fare / And lands for which Nature hath little care / Nor grants her wonted plenty manifold» (X. 105, 375).

All this imaginative geography, which serves to place Camões in a long winter sojourn on Hormuz Island in 1554-1555, is intended by Burton to establish the overlooked depth of appreciation the Portuguese poet expressed in *The Lusiads* for Persian culture: «Look on great Persia's empire, rich in fame / For ever in the field and on the steed, / Who deem the use of smelted bronze is shame, / And hands by swords uncalled shame indeed» (X. 103, 374). To this effect he quotes a near contemporary of Camões, the Italian voyager to the Persian Gulf, Varthema: «The Persians are the most cunning men in intellect... they are the best companions and the most liberal of any men that inhabit the Earth» (507). Burton praises Camões and Varthema for their «perspicacity where others pass blindfold». Burton seizes upon the opportunity to suggest Camões may have shared his own high opinion of the Persian people:

The Persian is [...] equally noble in physique and in the operation of the brain, called mind. He has produced a marvelous literature [...] His conversation is brilliant as a Parisian's. Almost every shopkeeper in Shiraz can tell a true from a forged verse of Ḥāfiz or Ferdausi (II, 506-507n).

Burton extrapolates from his own experience to suggest the ease with which Camões might have become acquainted with the poetry of Ḥāfiz, in vogue at the Persian court of Hormuz at the time he would have resided there, even if Camões have been only in the company of shopkeepers and merchants rather than courtiers.

Burton ventures that Camões experienced Persian culture by the age of thirty, still at a formative stage of his intellectual and literary formation, which would have likely coincided with the commencement of the composition of *The Lusiads*. The exhaustive evidence Burton presents of Camões' knowledge of Arabia and Persia is meant to support his bold claim

that what in *The Lusiads* is alien to the Virgilian and Homeric tradition of the epic can be attributed to this exposure to Persian culture on Hormuz Island. Burton ventures that the formal devices Camões deploys to reconcile the tension between fancy and reality are indebted to the imprint of exposure to a foreign culture. Burton had an overlooked interest in Persian poetry and Ḥāfīz: the Burton collection at the Huntington library preserves a slim holograph notebook of nine leaves of his translations from Ḥāfīz, and he included a verse from Ḥāfīz transformed into a quatrain in his own *Kasidab* (19). Burton makes the broad claim that in its possible debt to Ḥāfīz *The Lusiads* is epigrammatic in the manner of the Persian's poetry and hence deliberately at odds with the narrative conventions of Virgil and Homer. He invokes the hypothesis of Persian influence to explain the epic's deployment of personification – a device so crucial to the episode of «the genius of the cape» Camões, he speculates, is Persian-like in his attribution of animate qualities to inanimates, that is, in his use of *prosopopeia*.

Burton does not elaborate upon his hypothesis that it is the influence of Persian literature and its «quaintly epigrammatic form» on *The Lusiads* that «in parts renders the style uniquely un-European» (1881, I, 102-3). Possibly, by «epigrammatic» he means fragmentary, and seeks to redress the criticism that *The Lusiads* is too episodic and that not every episode forwards the plot in the manner it should in a classical epic. Alternatively, since he specifies Ḥāfīz, by «epigrammatic», he may refer to the poet's characteristic use of the *takballus* in the close of his ghazals. A note to Burton's translation of the lyric poetry of Camões likens the conclusive role of the last line of a ghazal to that of the rhyming couplet in a sonnet. In the ghazals of Ḥāfīz the *takballus* serves as the signature line, the moniker of the poet. Camões had inherited the *ottava rima* in which he composed his epic from Boccaccio and Ariosto, and perhaps Burton suggests that Camões, in emphasizing the last line of each rhyming octave in the manner of Ḥāfīz's *takballus*, deliberately emphasizes the unit of each octave at the expense of classical narrative causality and flow. By «epigrammatic» Burton may have also intended something more mundane, merely to register the likelihood that Camões may have absorbed lines of Ḥāfīz, Firdawsī and Sa'dī as they had become proverbs in the common parlance of shopkeepers and merchants under the influence of Persian culture from Hormuz to Muscat. For instance, his commentary spies an echo of Sa'dī's moral «You may stop a spring with your foot, but when it becomes a river an elephant shall not cross it» (Burton 646) in Bacchus' admonition in *The Lusiads*: «However weak may be this people's might, / Resistance to the uttermost ordain, / For, when the sun first rises, the sharp sight / Can look him in the face with little pain. / But, after he has risen, hot and bright, / If triumph o'er keen

eyes he shall attain, / They stay as blinded, just as you will stay, / Unless you cut their roots of growth away» (VIII. 50, 293).

With regard to the attribution of animate qualities to inanimates, Burton appears to have spied an affinity between the deployment of the literary device in Camões' poem of the sea voyage and Ḥāfiẓ's own use of the device in a verse from the opening ghazal of his diwān: «This gloomy night, these grisly waves, these winds and whirlpools loud and dread: What reck they of our wretched plight who Safety's shore so lightly tread?» (Ḥāfiẓ, 18 *Kasidab*, 19). *The Lusiads* abounds in personifications of waves, winds and whirlpools, at times in the form of musings on how they might regard the fate of Portuguese heroes past and present (for instance, «That for long ages they should dominate / Waters that gaze on the sun rising red», 1.28; and «For whom yet Tagus grieves with sad lament», 1.14). Burton termed Camões' use of the device «Oriental-like» and then «Persian-like» in a manuscript revision. Burton's might be referring to the device of the *zaban-i hal* (*lisān al-hal* in Arabic), the «voice of the moment». In such instances, the literary device refers to a situation where the protagonists cannot speak, and the *zaban* or *lisān* is presented as «writing» or «speaking» (see Purjavādī 2007). Possibly Burton imagined the appearance of Adamastor, «the genius of the cape», at once the embodiment of a rock and a whirlpool, as fitting within this category. One of the functions of the «genius of the cape» in the poem as the voice of the moment is to mark, halfway through the epic and partway through da Gama's route to India, the moment in which da Gama's vessels are breaking the barrier of the unknown, venturing into waters uncharted by previous European navigators.

Burton would make a further specific suggestion of Middle Eastern influence to address the incongruity many commentators saw in the personification of the «genius of the cape» in the figure of Adamastor. «A cloud that darkened all the atmosphere» appears, and as da Gama wonders «what divine menace, mystery unknown, will the new sea and region make plain»,

a form appeared,
 High in the air, filled with prevailing might.
 The face was heavy, with a squalid beard.
 Misshaped he was but of enormous height.
 Hollow the eyes, and bad and to be feared
 The gesture, and the color earthen-white,
 And, thick with clay, the lank hair twisted hangs.
 And the mouth was black and full of yellow fangs...

I am that vast cape locked in secrecy,
 That Cape of Hurricanes your people call...
 I round out Africa's extremity
 In my hid headland, where the shore lines fall
 Away, toward the Antarctic Pole prolonged,
 Which your audacity had deeply wronged
 I was Earth's child, like those of ruthless might...
 I am Adamastor, and I fought the fight
 With him who rattles Vulcan's thunder brands...

(v. 39, 50, 51, 186-187).

Camões attributes to the «genius of the cape» the faculty of speech and the experience of love and loss. Adamastor appears before the Portuguese to curse them and prophesy the suffering their venture into his waters will bring future Portuguese travellers. In response to da Gama's question of his identity he tells the story of how a sea nymph he loved tricked him into his present state. «On a night [she] / appeared to me a long, long way before, / naked, alone, sweet grace» but when he took her in his arms he «found I had embraced a rugged mount, full of rough woods... I was unmanned and, dumb, still as a stock, / Became a rock joined to another rock» (X. 56, 189). Some commentators would complain that this episode violates the logic of classical metamorphosis and *prosopopeia*: How is Adamastor able to tell the tale of his metamorphosis into stone after the fact? Why does he still possess the gift of transubstantiation?

The genius of the cape, Burton answers, is perhaps best understood as Camões' adaptation of the jinn familiar from Muslim folklore. Voltaire had ridiculed the appearance of the genius of the cape as incongruous, mocking the image of a phantom rising from the sea depths, its head touching the heavens, winds, tempests, and thunder raging around it. Burton hears in the appearance of a black vapour towering high in the sky as «the water begins to break» a striking echo of the manner in which the jinni of the *Nights* tales emerges over the seas as an appalling giant materializing out of the condensation of the clouds. In the manner of a jinni, Adamastor appears out of thin air: a cloud emerges above the mast «huge and high», «blackening out completely the night sky», the «dark, invisible waters roared» and an «immense shape materialized in the night air, grotesque and of enormous stature». Burton might have had in mind the *Nights* tale of «The City of Brass» that offers the strong parallel of a giant misshapen jinni imprisoned in stone, who under questioning comparably explains his predicament as punishment for an unreciprocated love for a beautiful sea nymph. Burton's emphasis on Adamastor's jinn-like emergence in the form

of a vapor emphasizes the congruity of the episode following the similar phenomena of the threatening waterspout.

Burton, persuaded by Camões' stated high opinion of the Persians in Canto X, argues that the poet as a voyager to the Middle East had a differentiated understanding of the diverse peoples da Gama gathered under the rubric of «mouros». Burton's commentary counter-intuitively revisits apparent instances of the clash of Christian and Muslim civilizations in the epic to suggest that Camões was more nuanced than da Gama in puzzling out these encounters. What *The Lusiads* presents as the consequence of a religious divide, Burton reveals as a series of cross-cultural misunderstandings. *The Lusiads* mentions that some of da Gama's first West African Muslim interlocutors *initially* mistook the Portuguese for Turks, and Burton proposes the hypothesis that the conflict that defined this encounter resulted from their continuing to do so (contrary to da Gama's perception in the poem). At another moment Burton suggests conflict ensues because the Portuguese had misrecognized the Muslim populations with which they came into contact. Via a series of inventive readings, re-contextualized via Camões' affinity for Persian but not other Muslim cultures, Burton's commentary renders the poem more sympathetic to Muslim and other non-Christian cultures. In this light the poem's narratives of the *reconquista* and the evangelization of pagan lands appear as nothing more than nods to the conventions of Camões' time, which is how Burton interprets them. Referencing the role of inquisitors in approving and possibly editing the poem, Burton hints that the entire apparatus of conversion narratives in the poem may have been superimposed upon the epic «by the priestly hand».

In this Romantic reading influenced by Schlegel, *The Lusiads* becomes a poem about Camões' thrill in encountering other cultures. Camões' worldly experience would justify cosmopolitan misreadings of *The Lusiads*. Burton's commentary on *The Lusiads* represents, alongside his «Terminal Essay» to the *1001 Nights*, his most sustained statement of the cognitive effect of travel. Burton claims the epic is a poem of *Reiselust*, of the horizon-broadening effects of the discovery of the unknown. Camões voyaged, in Burton's emphasis, in his youth, still in the formative stages of the development as an author. Camões would have been able to encounter Persian poetry early enough in his conception of *The Lusiads* for this influence to account for its foreignness within the Homeric and Virgilian tradition. The cultural boundaries of his artistic sensibility would have been porous and permeable enough for him to have been possibly influenced further by Hindu mythology. A Hindu conception of «celestial marriage», Burton speculates, may have influenced Camões in composing the famous episode of the «Isle of Love» in Cantos IX and X. Such glosses make evident

the scope of the misreadings enabled by his cosmopolitan hypothesis of the cognitive imprint of encounter with foreign cultures.

Though penned in 1950, the translation by Leonard Bacon (1887-1954) was produced under the sway of the worldly gentlemen misreadings of the poem in the previous century. Bacon was first inspired to translate Camões' epic upon encountering Adamastor's curse of the Portuguese in John Fiske's *The Discovery of America* (1902), prefaced by Fiske's observation that Camões «represents the Genius of the Cape as appearing to the storm-tossed mariners in cloud-like shape, like the Jinni that the Fisherman of the Arabian tale released from a casket» (see Monteiro 2003, 151n). Bacon's translation, recognized by Jacques Barzun and George Monteiro as the definitive modern version, completes the process of the poem's metamorphosis in world letters from representative national epic to exemplary worldly poem. *Exotisme* governs the claim of distinction Bacon makes on behalf of *The Lusíads*:

Everything was astonishing and incomparably strange [...] The longer one dwells with Camões the more one learns to admire his realistic veracity, the brilliant birds levying tribute on the green nutmeg, the threads of the trimurti on the Brahmin's bosom, the Zamorin chewing his betel, the Borneo trees dripping camphor, the violent flames, presumably of the Mountain of Ternate, and the slim smokes above the volcanoes of Sumatra (it has been acutely inferred from the contrast that he must have seen both), the blue breech-clouds of the African shore, the polyandrous marriages of Malabar, the crease of the Malay, an the assegai of the Moor (XXVIII-XXIX).

For Bacon it is fitting that the *Oxford English Dictionary* credited Ben Jonson with the first usage of «exotic» nineteen years after the death of Camões, for «as Camões saw, it seems to me, he helped to make Europe see» (XXIX). A Pulitzer-Prize winning poet and retired professor of Spanish literature, Bacon proclaimed himself an amateur scholar of Camões, not having the scholarship «at this fingers' ends» and relying on «such fact» as he could find «at third, fourth, or fifth hand» in «a wilderness of frequently brilliant guess-work» (XXX-XXXI).

Contrary to scholarly opinion, Bacon disputes the notion that Camões had the notion of «stringing *his* episodes on the thread of Gama's marvelous voyage» as part of his original plan (XXV). Nor does he pretend da Gama to be of the stature of Aeneas. This affords him the freedom like Burton, upon whose commentary he relies, to reconfigure the poem as a guide to Camões' own experience as «the first highly imaginative European to visit the Tropics and the Orient» (XXVIII). Bacon vividly imagines Camões in

1547 being sent to Ceuta across from Gibraltar on the African coast, a place so dangerous in his emphasis that the strongest of the Portuguese paid a tax to avoid being drafted there. He is persuaded some real experience of horsemen surrounding and spearing a lion inspired the simile of the lion of Ceuta in *The Lusiads*. The «perilous sea-faring» in the route to Goa circa 1553, in turn, would have inspired the account of the storm off the Cape of Good Hope and «the genius of the cape» Adamastor (XVII). «If we had no direct evidence that he had gone on such an expedition», Bacon demurs on the subject of Hormuz echoing Burton, «we could still infer it from the *minute* account in *The Lusiads* of the Coast of the Persian Gulf» (XIX). Bacon is sympathetic where fact contradicts Camões' report of the lifelong flight of the birds of Paradise on the Island of Ternate (which he would have visited in 1556), reasoning that «he may have touched there on some official voyage, that he saw the radiant plumage of the dead birds there, or elsewhere, and that he repeated the traveler's tale about them» (XXI).

Bacon accurately gauged the nature of the poem's worldly appeal to mid-twentieth century American readers, stressing Camões' discovery of «the pleasure of the exotic», while cutting down to size the Virgilian stature of its hero: «he is not Aeneas who made Rome. The idea is quite different. Portugal made Gama-Portugal that with so little did so much» (XIX, XXVI). His defensiveness regarding the Virgilian aspirations of *The Lusiads* as a national epic would be born out by remarks in otherwise favorable notices of the poem and the translation. In an epic nationalism «is a downright drawback unless the country whose merits are praised has «made good» to such an extent as to give its national history a world significance» Yale University's Thomas Bergin would complain, «when Camões describes the Portuguese as a race so valiant as to terrify even the elements or prophesies that Lisbon will be another Rome we can only smile tenderly» (1950, 31). The poet Dudley Fitts with more historical foresight entreated the American reader not to «disparage» or «sneer» at the poem's national sentiment because it is «so out of key with the sadly reduced Portugal of today», countering that «England was once like Portugal at its height; and we too may have had our moment» (1950, 9). Bacon's wager on Camões' worldly experience, in the fashion of Schlegel, Humboldt and Burton, would prove successful. The *Times Literary Supplement* singled out a realism borne out of experience as the «notable reason» for readers of Marlowe, Milton and Melville to seek out *The Lusiads*: «While Camões exultingly deploys all the mythology of the ancient world, he comes with his immediate and veracious tale of adventure into the world of his sea-faring countrymen. Geographical poetry can seldom have been finer» (1951, 168).

The worldly quality Bacon lends to his American version of *The Lusiads* suggests that the translation that seeks to capture the foreign resonance of a text as a work of world literature performs a distinct function from that of a translation that seeks to capture the qualities and contexts that led the text to be canonized within the national tradition, as in this case, as the national epic. The terms of this opposition –translating with an eye to foreign resonance versus translating with the goal of communicating the national quality of a text– do not match those of the «foreignizing» and «domesticating» strategies familiar from translation theory. Bacon’s forgotten translation poses peculiar questions of the fate of the forgotten epic, *The Lusiads*, which is seldom taught in the Anglo-American academy outside of the specialist circles of Luso-Brazilian studies. Bacon is the most accomplished poet to have attempted a translation of Camões’ epic into English, having brought to the work the verve and wit of his original satirical poetry that earned him the Pulitzer Prize in 1940 for the *Sunderland Capture*. No other translation into English before or since comparably conveys some of the accomplishment of the original as a work of poetry. Yet his worldly translation is out of print and attention to his reliance on Burton’s commentary is unlikely to reverse its obscurity. Commissions of new translations of the work are unlikely to privilege cosmopolitan misreadings of the poem’s contexts at the expense of its established national canonical credentials.

And yet there is the intriguing possibility that in their misreadings Schlegel, Burton and Bacon might be asking productive questions of *The Lusiads*. Camões may have been culturally informed by his experiences in India and the Persian Gulf. Misreading *The Lusiads* as worldly might lend insight into the poem itself and not merely into its appeal to Montesquieu, Milton or Melville. *The Lusiads* in the commentaries by Schlegel, Humboldt, Burton and Bacon attests to the creative power of cosmopolitan misreadings to transform a national text into world literature. Schlegel and Burton may have misread, in a literal and Bloomian sense, Camões’ investment in non-Western cultures, yet these misreadings endure, opening up new avenues of research. Portuguese scholars who puzzle out the legacy of a post-imperial Camões with an eye to the possible cross-cultural resonance of his work build upon the insights of Schlegel and Burton, as the insights into the text afforded by its circulation abroad are refracted back into debates in the source culture. In Portuguese studies, «post-imperial» readings of *The Lusiads* credit Burton with suggesting neglected cross-cultural parallels that twenty-first century scholars might better corroborate. Michael Murrin relies on Burton in his essay «First Encounter: the Christian-Hindu Confusion when the Portuguese Reached India». Burton’s commentary to Camões’ lyric poetry, while not systematic in a modern academic manner, senses

the influence of Sufism and asks more cross-cultural questions than does David Quint in an influential reading of Camões that denies the possibility of non-Western influence.

As a caveat, Burton's *Lusiads* demonstrates the interpretative risks as well as the possibilities of emphasizing foreign contexts at the expense of the national. In his treatment, the epic is fundamentally sympathetic to the non-Western cultures that da Gama ostensibly would have set out to transform through conversion. Cross-cultural misunderstanding, rather than hatred, governs the relations of the Portuguese voyagers and their interlocutors along the coasts of Africa and India. Camões' cross-cultural curiosity would have led him to sympathetically garb the giant of classical lore Adamastor in the supernaturalism of the jinn of Islamic folklore. It is not the pagan apparatus of the epic that is in tension with its alleged Christian message—rather it is the message that is itself likely to be the product of the interpolation of Catholic censors and scribes and foreign to Camões' original intentions. The picture that emerges from Burton's translation and commentary draws upon the interpretations of German Romantics and enabled the twentieth-century American translation by Leonard Bacon. Yet it is also imprinted by Burton's positive and negative cosmopolitan biases. It is idiosyncratic to the point of constituting an original work from the vantage point of specialists in Portuguese literature. David Damrosch cautions against reading the foreign contexts of a national work of literature at the expense of its contextualization in the canon of the nation. The circulation of *The Lusiads* as a work of world literature demonstrates that sometimes the foreign resonance of a work may be tangential, and perhaps even run contrary, to its illumination in its original context.

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