

Classic Poetry Series

José Basílio da Gama
- poems -

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José Basílio da Gama(10 April 1740 - 31 July 1795)

José Basílio da Gama was a Brazilian-born Portuguese poet and member of the Society of Jesus, famous for the epic poem *O Uruguai*. He wrote under pen name Termindo Sipílio. He is patron of the 4th chair of the Brazilian Academy of Letters.

Biography

José Basílio da Gama was born in 1740, in the city of São José do Rio das Mortes (whose name was later changed to Tiradentes), in Minas Gerais, to Manuel da Costa Villas-Boas and Quitéria Inácia da Gama. Jose Basilio da Gama was an important Brazilian poet of the Colonial Period (1500-1822). He completed his Jesuit novitiate in 1759, the same year the order was expelled from Brazil. Leaving Brazil for Rome, he pursued education in Italy and Portugal, where he was influenced by Italian neoclas-sicism. When he returned to Brazil in 1767, he was sent by the Inquisition to Portugal to face possible deportation to Angola. He received a pardon by composing a wedding poem for the daughter of a local minister, the marques de Pombal.

He is best known for his masterpiece epic poem, *O Uruguai*, an account of the Portuguese-Spanish war against the Jesuit-controlled reservation Indians of the Uruguay River basin. Through this narrative poem composed in blank verse, Gama expresses sentiment against the conquerors, a sentiment he also expressed earlier in a sonnet dedicated to the Peruvian Tupac Amaru. In *O Uruguai*, Gama also shows appreciation for the natural Brazilian environment and presents an idealistic view of Indian life and customs. The poem is a forerunner of the romantic nationalism that later developed in 19th-century Brazilian literature.

Jose Basilio da Gama belonged to a group of Brazilian writers known as the Arcadians. These writers also included Claudio Manuel da Costa (1729-89) and Tomas Antonio Gonzaga (1744-1810), among others. The Arcadians are remembered for their lyric and epic poems and were highly involved in the "Minas Conspiracy" ("Con-jura[^]ao Mineira"), a liberation movement to free Brazil from Portuguese rule. Gama, along with several other Brazilian poets (including Gonzaga, who wrote the pastoral love poem *Marilia de Dirceu*, and Friar Jose de Santa Ritta Durao, who wrote the epic *Caramuru*, or *Sea Dragon*, celebrating the discovery of Bahia), also joined a writers' academy in the mining town of Minas Gerais in Brazil. This academy and its poets were responsible for introducing to Brazil many new ideas that had arisen in France, some of them revolutionary,

and for influencing the work of future writers such as Jose Gon^alves de Magalhaes (1811-82) and Antonio Gon^alves Dias (1823-64).

During his last years, Basílio lived happily, becoming a member of the Sciences Academy of Lisbon. He died July 31, 1795, in Portugal.

A Morte De Lindóia

José Basílio da Gama

À Nau Serpente

José Basílio da Gama

A Resignação

José Basílio da Gama

A Uma Senhora

José Basílio da Gama

A Uma Senhora Que O Autor Conheceu No Rio De Janeiro Viu Depois Na Europa

José Basílio da Gama

A Una Señora Natural De Rio De Janeiro, Donde A La Sazón Se Hallaba El Autor

José Basílio da Gama

Ao Marquês De Pombal I

José Basílio da Gama

Ao Marquês De Pombal II

José Basílio da Gama

José

José Basílio da Gama

Muerte De Lindoya

José Basílio da Gama

O Uruguai

José Basílio da Gama