APPENDIX IV

HONORS GRANTED TO VASCO DA GAMA, 1499–1502

a. D. Manuel’s Royal Grant 24 December 1499 Promising to Give Vasco da Gama Possession of the Vila of Sines

We, the King, make known to all those who see this grant, that bearing in mind the merits of Vasco da Gama, fidalgo of our household, and of the many services that he has done for us in the discovery of the Indies, have decided to give, gift, and grant him the Vila of Sines, by sworn right and as heritable property, with its revenues and taxes, save God’s tithe on the sea and on the land, and with civil and criminal jurisdiction over it, and as it belongs to the Order of Santiago, before making out the grant-letter formally, we have first to render satisfaction for it to the said Order, once we have received dispensation from the Holy Father to be able to exchange it against another village in this kingdom pertaining to the Crown. And also, we have to render satisfaction to Dom Luís de Noronha, alcaide-mor of the said Vila for the said post of alcaide. However, it pleases us, and we promise him by this [decree] that if the said Dom Luís does wish to come to an agreement with us in order to leave the said alcaidaria, as soon as the said dispensation arrives to make the said exchange, we will order that the said Vasco da Gama be given his grant of the jurisdiction, lordship, and revenues of the said Vila, in the form and manner in which we are accustomed to give similar Vilas to other persons, and as for the said castle, whenever we come to an agreement with the said Dom Luís about it, or if he leaves it for any other reason, we will give it to the said Vasco da Gama, as his right, in the same way as the said Vila…. Written at Lisbon the xxiiij day of the month of December, by Joham da Fonseca, in the year one thousand, four hundred and ninety nine. The King.

Dom Manuel by Grace of God, King of Portugal and of the Algarves on either side of the sea in Africa, Lord of Guinea, and of the Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India. To those who see this letter of ours, make it known: that the discovery of the land of Guinea having begun in the year 1433 by my uncle the Infante Dom Henrique with the intention and desire that through the coast of the land of Guinea, India was to be found and discovered, which until now had never been known through there, not only with the intention that great fame and profit might follow to these Kingdoms from the riches that are therein, which were always possessed by the Moors, but so that the faith of Our Lord should be spread through more parts, and His Name be known. And afterwards, the King Dom Afonso, my uncle, and the King Dom João my cousin, wanting with the same desires to prosecute the said work, with a good number of deaths and expenses in their time, until the Rio do Infante was discovered in the year 1482, which is 1885 leagues from where they first began to discover. And we, with the same desire, wishing to accomplish the work of the said Infante and Kings, our predecessors, had begun, trusting that Vasco da Gama, fidalgo of our household, was such that in pursuit of our service and in order to carry out our order, he would take upon his own person the entire peril, and risk his own life, we sent him as Captain major of our fleet, sending with him Paulo da Gama his brother, and Nicolau Coelho, also a fidalgo of our household, in order to find the said India, in which voyage he served us in such a manner that whereas in all those years since the said discovery had commenced, and so many captains sent out, the said 1885 leagues had been discovered, he in this voyage alone discovered 1550 leagues, in addition to a great gold mine and many rich towns and cities, with a great trade, and finally he reached and discovered India, which all those writers who have given descriptions of the world rank higher in wealth than any other country, which from all time had been coveted by the Emperors and Kings of the world, and for the sake of which

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