

SELECT DOCUMENTS  
ILLUSTRATING THE  
FOUR VOYAGES  
OF COLUMBUS  
VOLUME I

Cecil Jane



THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

# Select Documents illustrating the Four Voyages of Columbus

Including those contained in R. H. Major's  
Select Letters of Christopher Columbus  
Volume. I: The First and Second Voyages

Edited by  
CECIL JANE

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Founded in 1846, the Hakluyt Society seeks to advance knowledge and education by the publication of scholarly editions of primary records of voyages, travels and other geographical material. In partnership with Ashgate, and using print-on-demand and e-book technology, the Society has made re-available all 290 volumes comprised in Series I and Series II of its publications in both print and digital editions. For information about the Hakluyt Society visit [www.hakluyt.com](http://www.hakluyt.com).

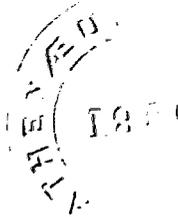
ISBN 13: 978-1-4094-1432-2 (hbk)

SELECT DOCUMENTS  
ILLUSTRATING THE  
FOUR VOYAGES OF  
COLUMBUS

INCLUDING THOSE CONTAINED IN R. H. MAJOR'S  
*SELECT LETTERS OF CHRISTOPHER  
COLUMBUS*

TRANSLATED AND EDITED  
WITH ADDITIONAL MATERIAL, AN  
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES  
BY  
CECIL JANE

VOL. I  
THE FIRST AND  
SECOND VOYAGES



LONDON  
PRINTED FOR THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY  
MCMXXX

## FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS.

---

*A Letter addressed to the noble Lord Raphael Sanchez, Treasurer to their most invincible Majesties, Ferdinand and Isabella, King and Queen of Spain, by Christopher Columbus, to whom our age is greatly indebted, treating of the islands of India recently discovered beyond the Ganges, to explore which he had been sent eight months before under the auspices and at the expense of their said Majesties.*

KNOWING that it will afford you pleasure to learn that I have brought my undertaking to a successful termination, I have decided upon writing you this letter to acquaint you with all the events which have occurred in my voyage, and the discoveries which have resulted from it. Thirty-three days after

---

### EPISTOLA CHRISTOFORI COLOM.

*Cui ætas nostra multum debet, de Insulis Indiæ supra Gangem nuper inventis, ad quas perquirendas, octavo antea mense, auspiciis et ære invictissimorum Ferdinandi ac Elizabeth Hispaniarum Regum, missus fuerat: ad magnificum Dominum Raphaelem Sanxis, eorumdem Serenissimorum Regum Thesaurarium, missa: quam generosus ac litteratus vir Leander de Cosco ab hispano idiomate in latinum convertit: tertio Kalendas Maii, MCCOXCIII, Pontificatus Alex. VI, anno I.*

QUONIAM susceptæ provinciæ rem perfectam me consecutum fuisse gratum tibi fore scio, has constitui exarare, quæ te uniuscujusque rei in hoc nostro itinere gestæ inventæque admoneant. Tricesimo tertio die postquam Gadibus discessi, in mare indicum perveni, ubi

B

my departure from Cadiz<sup>1</sup> I reached the Indian sea, where I discovered many islands, thickly peopled, of which I took possession without resistance in the name of our most illustrious Monarch, by public proclamation and with unfurled banners. To the first of these islands, which is called by the Indians Guanahani, I gave the name of the blessed Saviour (San Salvador), relying upon whose protection I had reached this as well as the other islands; to each of these I also gave a name, ordering that one should be called Santa Maria de la Concepcion,<sup>2</sup> another Fernandina,<sup>3</sup> the third Isabella,<sup>4</sup> the fourth Juana,<sup>5</sup> and so with all the rest respectively. As soon as we arrived at that, which as I have said was named Juana, I

---

plurimas insulas innumeris habitatas hominibus reperi, quarum omnium pro felicissimo Rege nostro, præconio celebrato, et vexillis extensis, contradicente nemine, possessionem accepi: primæque earum Divi Salvatoris nomen imposui, cujus fretus auxilio tam ad hanc quam ad ceteras alias pervenimus; eam vero Indi Guanahany vocant. Aliarum etiam unamquamque novo nomine nuncupavi: quippe aliam insulam Sanctæ Mariæ Conceptionis, aliam Fernandinam, aliam Isabelam, aliam Joannam, et sic de reliquis appellari jussi. Quamprimum in eam insulam (quam dudum Joannam vocari

<sup>1</sup> A strange mistake has crept into the Latin versions of this letter; in all the editions of which it is stated that Cadiz was the point from which Columbus sailed on his first voyage. In the journal of that voyage, published by Mr. Navarrete, as well as in the accounts given by Don Fernando Columbus, and all other historians, it is distinctly said that he sailed from *Palos*, on the third of August. The question is important, not simply as affecting the correctness of the letter, but also the length of time in which the voyage was accomplished; for as Columbus reached the island of St. Salvador, or Guanahani, on the morning of the twelfth of October, it is apparent, that more than twice the number of days here mentioned, transpired between his leaving Spain and arriving at the West Indies. The mistake evidently consists in the word "Gadibus" having been by some circumstance, at which we can only guess, carelessly exchanged for Gomera, whence Columbus started, according to the journal, on the eighth of September, which leaves an interval exactly coinciding with the thirty-three days here mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> North Caico.    <sup>3</sup> Little Inagua.    <sup>4</sup> Great Inagua.    <sup>5</sup> Cuba.

proceeded along its coast a short distance westward, and found it to be so large and apparently without termination, that I could not suppose it to be an island, but the continental province of Cathay. Seeing, however, no towns or populous places on the sea coast, but only a few detached houses and cottages, with whose inhabitants I was unable to communicate, because they fled as soon as they saw us, I went further on, thinking that in my progress I should certainly find some city or village. At length, after proceeding a great way and finding that nothing new presented itself, and that the line of coast was leading us northwards (which I wished to avoid, because it was winter, and it was my intention to move southwards; and because moreover the winds were contrary), I resolved not to attempt any further progress, but rather to turn back and retrace my course to a certain bay that I had observed, and from which I afterwards dispatched two of our men to ascertain whether there were a king or any cities in that province. These men reconnoitred the country for three days, and found a most numerous population, and great numbers of houses, though small, and built without any regard to order: with

---

dixi) appulimus; juxta ejus litus occidentem versus aliquantulum processi, tamque eam magnam nullo reperto fine inveni, ut non insulam sed continentem Cathai provinciam esse crediderim; nulla tamen videns oppida, municipiave in maritimis sita confinibus, præter aliquos vicos et prædia rustica, cum quorum incolis loqui nequibam; quare simul ac nos videbant, surripiebant fugam. Progrediebar ultra, existimans aliquam me urbem villasve inventurum: denique videns quod longe admodum progressis nihil novi emergebat, et hujusmodi via nos ad septentrionem deferebat (quod ipse fugere exoptabam, terris etenim regnabat bruma), ad austrumque erat in voto contendere, nec minus venti flagitantibus succedebant; constitui alios non operiri successus: et sic retrocedens, ad portum quemdam, quem signaveram, sum reversus; unde duos homines ex nostris in terram missi, qui investigarent, esset ne Rex in ea provincia, urbesve aliquæ. Hi per tres dies ambularunt, inveneruntque innumeros populos et habitationes, parvas tamen et absque ullo

which information they returned to us. In the mean time I had learned from some Indians whom I had seized, that that country was certainly an island: and therefore I sailed towards the east, coasting to the distance of three hundred and twenty-two miles, which brought us to the extremity of it; from this point I saw lying eastwards another island, fifty-four miles distant from Juana, to which I gave the name of Española:<sup>6</sup> I went thither, and steered my course eastward as I had done at Juana, even to the distance of five hundred and sixty-four miles along the north coast.<sup>7</sup> This said island of Juana is exceedingly fertile, as indeed are all the others; it is surrounded with many bays, spacious, very secure, and surpassing any that I have ever seen; numerous large and healthful

---

regimine; quapropter redierunt. Interea ego jam intellexeram à quibusdam Indis, quos ibidem susceperam, quod hujusmodi provincia insula quidem erat: et sic perrexi orientem versus, ejus semper stringens litora, usque ad milliarum CCCXXII, ubi ipsius insulæ sunt extrema. Hinc aliam insulam ad orientem prospexi, distantem ab hac Joanna milliarum LIV, quam protinus Hispanam dixi, in eamque concessi, et direxi iter quasi per septentrionem, quemadmodum<sup>6</sup> in Joanna ad orientem, milliarum DLXIV. Quæ dicta Joanna et aliæ ibidem insulæ quam fertilissimæ existunt. Hæc multis atque tutissimis et latis, nec aliis quos unquam viderim comparandis portibus est circumdata: multi maximi et salubres hanc interfluunt

<sup>6</sup> Hispaniola, or San Domingo.

<sup>7</sup> Naverrete, the learned and industrious compiler of these original letters, in his translation of this first letter from the Latin into the Spanish language, has mistakenly attributed to the preposition "per" the sense of the Spanish word "hacia" (towards), a meaning which can under no circumstances be given to the word, but in this case renders the passage unintelligible. The editor has translated "per septentrionem" "along the north coast" of the island, such a rendering of the preposition being perfectly grammatical, while it gives to the whole sentence a meaning consistent with the course which Columbus in reality took. There are, moreover, two sentences in the immediate context of the original, where, when the sense of "towards" is intended to be expressed, it is unmistakably given by the words "versus" and "ad".

rivers intersect it, and it also contains many very lofty mountains. All these islands are very beautiful, and distinguished by a diversity of scenery; they are filled with a great variety of trees of immense height, and which I believe to retain their foliage in all seasons; for when I saw them they were as verdant and luxuriant as they usually are in Spain in the month of May,—some of them were blossoming, some bearing fruit, and all flourishing in the greatest perfection, according to their respective stages of growth, and the nature and quality of each: yet the islands are not so thickly wooded as to be impassable. The nightingale and various birds were singing in countless numbers, and that in November, the month in which I arrived there. There are besides in the same island of Juana seven or eight kinds of palm trees, which, like all the other trees, herbs, and fruits, considerably surpass ours in height and beauty. The pines also are very handsome, and there are very extensive fields and meadows, a variety of birds, different kinds of honey, and many sorts of metals, but no iron. In that island also which I have before said we named Española, there are mountains of very great size and beauty, vast plains, groves, and very fruitful fields, admirably adapted

---

fluvii: multi quoque et eminentissimi in ea sunt montes. Omnes hæ insulæ sunt pulcherrimæ, et variis distinctæ figuris, perviæ, et maximâ arborum varietate sidera lambentium plenæ, quas nunquam foliis privari credo: quippe vidi eas ita virentes atque decoras, ceu mense Maio in Hispania solent esse; quarum aliæ florentes, aliæ fructuosæ, aliæ in alio statu, secundum uniuscujusque qualitatem vigeant. Garriebat philomela, et alii passeris varii ac innumeri, mense Novembri, quo ipse per eas deambulabam. Sunt præterea in dicta insula Joanna septem vel octo palmarum genera, quæ proceritate et pulchritudine, quemadmodum ceteræ omnes arbores, herbæ fructusque, nostras facile exsuperant. Sunt et mirabiles pinus, agri, et prata vastissima, variæ aves, varia mella, variaque metalla, ferro excepto. In ea autem, quam Hispanam supra diximus nuncupari, maximi sunt montes ac pulchri, vasta rura, nemora, campi feracissimi, seri pascique et condendis ædificiis aptissimi:

for tillage, pasture, and habitation. The convenience and excellence of the harbours in this island, and the abundance of the rivers, so indispensable to the health of man, surpass anything that would be believed by one who had not seen it. The trees, herbage, and fruits of Española are very different from those of Juana, and moreover it abounds in various kinds of spices, gold, and other metals. The inhabitants of both sexes in this island, and in all the others which I have seen, or of which I have received information, go always naked as they were born, with the exception of some of the women, who use the covering of a leaf, or small bough, or an apron of cotton which they prepare for that purpose. None of them, as I have already said, are possessed of any iron, neither have they weapons, being unacquainted with, and indeed incompetent to use them, not from any deformity of body (for they are well-formed), but because they are timid and full of fear. They carry however in lieu of arms, canes dried in the sun, on the ends of which they fix heads of dried wood sharpened to a point, and even these they dare not use habitually; for it has often occurred when I have sent two or three

---

portuum in hac insula commoditas et præstantia, fluminum copia, salubritate admixta hominum, quod, nisi quis viderit, credulitatem superat. Hujus arbores, pascua et fructus multum ab illis Joannæ differunt. Hæc præterea Hispana diverso aromatis genere, auro metallisque abundat. Hujus quidem et omnium aliarum, quas ego vidi et quarum cognitionem habeo, incolæ utriusque sexûs nudi semper incedunt, quemadmodum eduntur in lucem; præter aliquas feminas, quæ folio frondeve aliqua aut bombycino velo pudenda operiunt quod ipsæ sibi ad id negotii parant. Carent hi omnes (ut supra dixi) quocumque genere ferri: carent et armis, utpote sibi ignotis, nec ad eas sunt apti, non propter corporis deformitatem (quum sint bene formati), sed quia sunt timidi ac pleni formidine; gestant tamen pro armis arundines sole perustas, in quarum radicibus hostile quoddam ligneum siccum et in mucronem attenuatum figunt, neque his audent jugiter uti: nam sæpe evenit, quum miserim duos vel tres homines ex meis ad aliquas villas, ut cum eorum

of my men to any of the villages to speak with the natives, that they have come out in a disorderly troop, and have fled in such haste at the approach of our men, that the fathers forsook their children and the children their fathers. This timidity did not arise from any loss or injury that they had received from us; for, on the contrary, I gave to all I approached whatever articles I had about me, such as cloth and many other things, taking nothing of theirs in return: but they are naturally timid and fearful. As soon however as they see that they are safe, and have laid aside all fear, they are very simple and honest, and exceedingly liberal with all they have; none of them refusing any thing he may possess when he is asked for it, but on the contrary inviting us to ask them. They exhibit great love towards all others in preference to themselves: they also give objects of great value for trifles, and content themselves with very little or nothing in return. I however forbade that these trifles and articles of no value (such as pieces of dishes, plates, and glass, keys, and leather straps) should be given to them, although if they could obtain them, they imagined themselves to be possessed of the most beautiful trinkets in the world. It even happened that a sailor

---

loquerentur incolis, exisse agmen glomeratum ex Indis, et ubi nostros appropinquare videbant, fugam celeriter arripuisse, desprensus à patre liberis, et è contra; et hoc non quod cuiquam eorum damnum aliquod vel injuria illata fuerit, immo ad quoscumque appuli, et quibuscum verbum facere potui, quidquid habebam sum elargitus pannum aliaque permulta, nulla mihi facta versura; sed sunt naturâ pavidi ac timidi. Ceterum ubi se cernunt tutos omni metu repulso, sunt admodum simplices ac bonæ fidei, et in omnibus quæ habent liberalissimi: roganti quod possidet inficiatur nemo, quin ipsi nos ad id poscendum invitant. Maximum erga omnes amorem præ se ferunt: dant quæque magna pro parvis, minima licet re nihilove contenti. Ego attamen prohibui, ne tam minima et nullius pretii hisce darentur, ut sunt lancis, paropsidum vitrique fragmenta: item clavi, lingulæ; quamquam si hoc poterant adipisci, videbatur eis pulcherrima mundi possidere jocalia. Accidit enim quemdam

received for a leather strap as much gold as was worth three golden nobles, and for things of more trifling value offered by our men, especially newly coined blancas, or any gold coins, the Indians would give whatever the seller required; as, for instance, an ounce and a half or two ounces of gold, or thirty or forty pounds of cotton, with which commodity they were already acquainted. Thus they bartered, like idiots, cotton and gold for fragments of bows, glasses, bottles, and jars; which I forbade as being unjust, and myself gave them many beautiful and acceptable articles which I had brought with me, taking nothing from them in return; I did this in order that I might the more easily conciliate them, that they might be led to become Christians, and be inclined to entertain a regard for the King and Queen, our Princes and all Spaniards, and that I might induce them to take an interest in seeking out, and collecting, and delivering to us such things as they possessed in abundance, but which we greatly needed. They practise no kind of idolatry, but have a firm belief that all strength and power, and indeed all good things, are in heaven, and that I had descended from thence with these ships and sailors, and under this impression was I received after they

---

*navitam tantum auri pondus habuisse pro una ligula, quanti sunt tres aurei solidi, et sic alios pro aliis minoris pretii, præsertim pro blanquis novis, et quibusdam nummis aureis, pro quibus habendis dabant quicquid petebat venditor, puta unciam cum dimidia et duas auri: vel triginta et quadraginta bombycis pondo, quod ipsi jam noverant. Item arcuum, amphoræ, hydriæ, dolique fragmenta bombyci et auro tamquam bestię comparabant; quod quia iniquum sane erat, vetui, dedique eis multa pulchra et grata, quæ mecum tuleram, nullo interveniente præmio, ut eos mihi facilius conciliarerem, fierentque Christicolæ, et ut sint proni in amorem erga Regem, Reginam Principesque nostros, et universas gentes Hispaniæ, ac studeant perquirere et coacervare, eaque nobis tradere quibus ipsi affluunt et nos magnopere indigemus. Nullam hi norunt idololatriam, immo firmissimè credunt omnem vim, omnem potentiam, omnia denique bona esse in cœlo, meque inde cum his navibus et*

had thrown aside their fears. Nor are they slow or stupid, but of very clear understanding; and those men who have crossed to the neighbouring islands give an admirable description of everything they observed; but they never saw any people clothed, nor any ships like ours. On my arrival at that sea, I had taken some Indians by force from the first island that I came to, in order that they might learn our language, and communicate to us what they knew respecting the country; which plan succeeded excellently, and was a great advantage to us, for in a short time, either by gestures and signs, or by words, we were enabled to understand each other. These men are still travelling with me, and although they have been with us now a long time, they continue to entertain the idea that I have descended from heaven; and on our arrival at any new place they published this, crying out immediately with a loud voice to the other Indians, "Come, come and look upon beings of a celestial race": upon which both women and men, children and adults, young men and old, when they got rid of the fear they at first entertained, would come out in throngs, crowding the roads to see us,

---

nautis descendisse; atque hoc animo ibi fui susceptus postquam metum repulerant. Nee sunt segnes aut rudes, quin summi ac perspicacis ingenii; et homines, qui transfretant mare illud, non sine admiratione uniuersusque rei rationem reddunt; sed nunquam viderunt gentes vestitas, neque naves hujusmodi. Ego statim ac ad mare illud perueni, è prima insula quosdam Indos violenter arripui, qui ediscerent à nobis, et nos pariter docerent ea quorum ipsi in hisce partibus cognitionem habebant, et ex voto successit: nam brevi nos ipsos, et hi nos, tum gestu ac signis, tum verbis intellexerunt, magnoque nobis fuere emolumento. Veniunt modo mecum, tamen qui semper putant me desiluisse è cœlo, quamvis diu nobiscum versati fuerint, hodieque versentur, et hi erant primi, qui id quocumque appellebamus nunciabant, alii deinceps aliis elata voce dicentes, Venite, venite, et videbitis gentes æthereas. Quamobrem tam feminæ quam viri tam impuberes quam adulti, tam juvenes quam senes, deposita formidine paulo ante concepta, nos certatim visebant magna iter

C

some bringing food, others drink, with astonishing affection and kindness. Each of these islands has a great number of canoes, built of solid wood, narrow and not unlike our double-banked boats in length and shape, but swifter in their motion: they steer them only by the oar. These canoes are of various sizes, but the greater number are constructed with eighteen banks of oars, and with these they cross to the other islands, which are of countless number, to carry on traffic with the people. I saw some of these canoes that held as many as seventy-eight rowers. In all these islands there is no difference of physiognomy, of manners, or of language, but they all clearly understand each other, a circumstance very propitious for the realization of what I conceive to be the principal wish of our most serene King, namely, the conversion of these people to the holy faith of Christ, to which indeed, as far as I can judge, they are very favourable and well-disposed. I said before, that I went three hundred and twenty-two miles in a direct line from west to east, along the coast of the island of

---

*stipante caterva, aliis cibum, aliis potum afferentibus, maximo cum amore ac benevolentia incredibili. Habet unaquæque insula multas scaphas solidi ligni, etsi angustas, longitudine tamen ac forma nostris biremibus similes, cursu autem velociores: reguntur remis tantum modo. Harum quædam sunt magnæ, quædam parvæ, quædam in medio consistunt: plures tamen biremi qua remigent duodeviginti transtris majores, cum quibus in omnes illas insulas quæ innumeræ sunt trajicitur, cumque his suam mercaturam exercent, et inter eos commercia fiunt. Aliquas ego harum biremium seu scapharum vidi, quæ vehebant septuaginta et octoginta remiges. In omnibus his insulis nulla est diversitas inter gentis effigies, nulla in moribus atque loquela, quin omnes se intelligunt adinvicem, quæ res perutilis est ad id quod Serenissimum Regem nostrum exoptare præcipuè reor, scilicet eorum ad sanctam Christi fidem conversionem, cui quidem, quantum intelligere potui, facillimi sunt et proni. Dixi quemadmodum sum progressus antea insulam Joannam per rectum tramitem occassus in orientem miliar. cccxxii. Secundum quam viam et intervallum itineris possum dicere hanc Joannam esse ma-*

Juana;<sup>8</sup> judging by which voyage, and the length of the passage, I can assert that it is larger than England and Scotland united; for independent of the said three hundred and twenty-two miles, there are in the western part of the island two provinces which I did not visit; one of these is called by the Indians Anam, and its inhabitants are born with tails. These provinces extend to a hundred and fifty-three miles in length, as I have learnt from the Indians whom I have brought with me, and who are well acquainted with the country. But the extent of Española is greater than all Spain from Catalonia to Fontarabia, which is easily proved, because one of its four sides which I myself coasted in a direct line, from west to east, measures five hundred and forty miles. This island is to

---

jorem Anglia et Scotia simul: namque ultra dicta cccxxii miliaria in ea parte quæ ad occidentem prospectat duæ, quas non petii, supersunt provinciæ, quarum alteram Indi Anam vocant, cujus accolæ caudati nascuntur. Tenduntur in longitudinem ad miliaria CLIII, ut ab his quos veho mecum Indis percepi, qui omnes has callent insulas. Hispanæ vero ambitus major est tota Hispania a Cologna usque ad Fontem Rabidum; hincque facile arguitur, quod quartum ejus latus, quod ipse per rectam lineam occidentis in orientem trajecti, miliaria continet DLX. Hæc insula est affectanda, et affectata,

<sup>8</sup> Here a somewhat similar mistake to that which occurred in page four has been made by Navarrete, in his translation from the Latin; the accusative "insulam Joannam" comes after the neuter verb "progressus sum" without the intervention of a preposition; but it is evident from the sense that the missing word was intended to express that Columbus proceeded *along* the island; whereas Navarrete has translated it thus: "He dicho que anduve en recta direccion de poniente a oriente trescientas veinte y dos millas para llegar a la isla Juanna." *Anglice*. "I have said that I proceeded three hundred and twenty-two miles in a straight line from west to east *to arrive at* the island of Juana," a mode of proceeding which was in the first place geographically impossible, and in the next place would destroy the basis upon which Columbus founds his estimate of the size of the island, when compared with England and Scotland. There is no doubt that "per" is the preposition understood, while Mr. Navarrete has incautiously adopted "versus" instead of it.

be regarded with especial interest, and not to be slighted; for although as I have said I took possession of all these islands in the name of our invincible King, and the government of them is unreservedly committed to his said Majesty, yet there was one large town in Española of which especially I took possession, situated in a remarkably favourable spot, and in every way convenient for the purposes of gain and commerce. To this town I gave the name of Navidad del Señor, and ordered a fortress to be built there, which must by this time be completed, in which I left as many men as I thought necessary,<sup>9</sup> with all sorts of arms, and enough provisions for more than a year. I also left them one caravel, and skilful workmen both in ship-building and other arts, and engaged

---

*non spernenda, in qua, etsi aliarum omnium ut dixi pro invictissimo Rege nostro solemniter possessionem accepi, earumque imperium dicto Regi penitus committitur, in opportuniore tamen loco, atque omni lucro et commercio condecens, cujusdam magnæ villæ, cui Nativitatis Domini nomen dedimus, possessionem peculiariter accepi: ibique arcem quamdam erigere extemplo jussi, quæ modo jam debet esse peracta, in qua homines, qui necessarii sunt visi, cum omni armorum genere, et ultra annum victu opportuno reliqui; item quamdam caravelam, et pro aliis construendis tam in hac arte quam in ceteris peritos, ac ejusdem insulæ Regis erga nos benevolentiam et*

<sup>9</sup> There appears to be a doubt as to the exact number of men left by Columbus at Española, different accounts variously giving it as thirty-seven, thirty-eight, thirty-nine, and forty. There is, however, a list of their names included in one of the diplomatic documents printed in Navarrete's work, which makes the number amount to forty, independent of the governor Diego de Arana, and his two lieutenants Pedro Gutierrez and Rodrigo de Escobedo. All these men were Spaniards, with the exception of two; one an Irishman named William Ires, a native of Galway, and one an Englishman, whose name was given as Tallarte de Lajes, but whose native designation it is difficult to guess at. The document in question, was a proclamation to the effect that the heirs of those men should, on presenting at the office of public business at Seville, sufficient proof of their being the next of kin, receive payment in conformity with the royal order to that purpose, issued at Burgos, on the twentieth of December, 1507.

the favor and friendship of the King of the island in their behalf, to a degree that would not be believed, for these people are so amiable and friendly that even the King took a pride in calling me his brother. But supposing their feelings should become changed, and they should wish to injure those who have remained in the fortress, they could not do so, for they have no arms, they go naked, and are moreover too cowardly; so that those who hold the said fortress, can easily keep the whole island in check, without any pressing danger to themselves, provided they do not transgress the directions and regulations which I have given them. As far as I have learned, every man throughout these islands is united to but one wife, with the exception of the kings and princes, who are allowed to have twenty: the women seem to work more than the men. I could not clearly understand whether the people possess any private property, for I observed that one man had the charge of distributing various things to the rest, but especially meat and provisions and the like. I did not find, as some of us had expected, any cannibals amongst them, but on the contrary men of great deference and kindness. Neither are they black, like the Ethiopians: their hair is smooth and straight:

---

*familiaritatem incredibilem. Sunt enim gentes illæ amabiles admodum et benignæ, eo quod rex prædictus me fratrem suum dici gloriabatur. Et si animum revocarent et iis qui in arce manserunt nocere velint, nequeunt, quia armis carent, nudi incedunt, et nimium timidi: ideo dictam arcem tenentes dumtaxat possunt totam eam insulam nullo sibi imminente discrimine, dummodo leges quas dedimus ac regimen non excedant, facile detinere. In omnibus his insulis, ut intellexi, quisque uni tantum conjugii acquiescit, præter Principes aut Reges quibus viginti habere licet. Feminæ magis quam viri laborare videntur, nec bene potui intelligere an habeant bona propria; vidi enim, quod unus habebat aliis impartiri, præsertim dapes, obsonia et hujusmodi. Nullum apud eos monstrum reperi, ut plerique existimabant, sed homines magnæ reverentiæ atque benignos. Nec sunt nigri velut æthiopes: habent crines planos ac demissos; non degunt ubi radiorum solaris emicat calor:*

for they do not dwell where the rays of the sun strike most vividly,—and the sun has intense power there, the distance from the equinoctial line being, it appears, but six-and-twenty degrees. On the tops of the mountains the cold is very great, but the effect of this upon the Indians is lessened by their being accustomed to the climate, and by their frequently indulging in the use of very hot meats and drinks. Thus, as I have already said, I saw no cannibals, nor did I hear of any, except in a certain island called Charis,<sup>10</sup> which is the second from Española on the side towards India, where dwell a people who are considered by the neighbouring islanders as most ferocious: and these feed upon human flesh. The same people have many kinds of canoes, in which they cross to all the surrounding islands and rob and plunder wherever they can; they are not different from the other islanders, except that they wear their hair long, like women, and make use of the bows and javelins of cane, with sharpened spear-points fixed on the thickest end, which I have before described, and therefore they are looked upon as ferocious, and regarded by the other Indians with unbounded fear; but I think no more

---

*permagna namque hic est solis vehementia, propterea quod ab æquinoctiali linea distat (ut videtur) gradus sex et viginti. Ex montium cacuminibus maximum quoque viget frigus, sed id quidem moderant Indi tum loci consuetudine, tum rerum calidissimarum quibus frequenter et luxuriosè vescuntur præsidio. Itaque monstra aliqua non vidi, neque eorum alicubi habui cognitionem, excepta quadam insula Charis nuncupata, quæ secunda ex Hispana in Indiam transfretantibus existit, quam gens quædam, à finitimis habita ferocior, incolit: hi carne humana vescuntur. Habent prædicti biremium genera plurima, quibus in omnes indicas insulas trajiciunt, deprædant, surripiuntque quæcumque possunt. Nihil ab aliis differunt, nisi quod gerunt more femineo longos crines, utuntur arcubus et spiculis arundineis, fixis, ut diximus, in grossiori parte attenuatis hastilibus: ideoque habentur feroces; quare ceteri Indi inexhausto*

<sup>10</sup> Query Carib, the Indian name of Porto Rico.

of them than of the rest. These are the men who form unions with certain women, who dwell alone in the island Matenin,<sup>11</sup> which lies next to Española on the side towards India; these latter employ themselves in no labour suitable to their own sex, for they use bows and javelins as I have already described their paramours as doing, and for defensive armour have plates of brass, of which metal they possess great abundance. They assure me that there is another island larger than Española, whose inhabitants have no hair, and which abounds in gold more than any of the rest. I bring with me individuals of this island and of the others that I have seen, who are proofs of the facts which I state. Finally, to compress into few words the entire summary of my voyage and speedy return, and of the advantages derivable therefrom, I promise, that with a little assistance afforded me by our most invincible sovereigns, I will procure them as much gold as they need, as great a quantity of spices, of cotton, and of mastic (which is only found in Chios), and as many men for the service of the navy as their Majesties may require. I promise also rhubarb and other sorts of drugs,

---

*metu plectuntur: sed hos ego nihil facio plus quam alios. Hi sunt qui coeunt cum quibusdam feminis, quæ solæ insulam Mathenim primam ex Hispana in Indiam trajicientibus inhabitant. Hæ autem feminæ nullum sui sexûs opus exercent: utuntur enim arcubus et spiculis, sicuti de earum conjugibus dixi, muniunt sese laminis æneis, quarum maxima apud eas copia existit. Aliam mihi insulam affirmant suprädicta Hispana majorem; ejus incolæ carent pilis auroque inter alias potissimum exuberat. Hujus insulæ et aliarum, quas vidi, homines mecum porto, qui horum quæ dixi testimonium perhibent. Denique ut nostri discessûs et ceteris reversionis compendium ac emolumentum brevibus astringam, hoc polliceor, me nostris Regibus invictissimis, parvo eorum fultum auxilio, tantum auri daturum, quantum eis fuerit opus, tantum vero aromatum, bombycis, masticis, quæ apud Chium dumtaxat invenitur, tamque ligni aloes, tantum servorum hydrophilatorum, quantum eorum*

<sup>11</sup> One of the Virgin Islands—which, is uncertain.

which I am persuaded the men whom I have left in the aforesaid fortress have found already and will continue to find ; for I myself have tarried no where longer than I was compelled to do by the winds, except in the city of Navidad, while I provided for the building of the fortress, and took the necessary precautions for the perfect security of the men I left there. Although all I have related may appear to be wonderful and unheard of, yet the results of my voyage would have been more astonishing if I had had at my disposal such ships as I required. But these great and marvellous results are not to be attributed to any merit of mine, but to the holy Christian faith, and to the piety and religion of our Sovereigns ; for that which the unaided intellect of man could not compass, the spirit of God has granted to human exertions, for God is wont to hear the prayers of his servants who love his precepts even to the performance of apparent impossibilities. Thus it has happened to me in the present instance, who have accomplished a task to which the powers of mortal men had never hitherto attained ; for if there have been those who have anywhere written or spoken of these islands, they have done so with doubts and conjectures, and no one has ever asserted that he has seen them, on which account their writings have been looked upon

---

*majestas voluerit exigere : item reubarbarum et aliorum aromatum genera, quæ ii quos in dicta arce reliqui, jam invenisse atque inventuros existimo : quandoquidem ego nullibi magis sum moratus (nisi quantum me coegerunt venti) præterquam in villa Nativitatis, dum arcem condere, et tuta omnia esse providi. Quæ etsi maxima et inaudita sunt multo tamen majora forent, si naves mihi, ut ratio exigit, subvenissent. Verum multum ac mirabile hoc nec nostris meritis correspondens, sed sanctæ christianæ fidei, nostrorumque regum pietati ac religioni, quia, quod humanus consequi non poterat intellectus, id humanis concessit divinus. Solet enim Deus servos, quique sua præcepta diligunt, etiam in impossibilibus exaudire, ut nobis in præsentia contigit, qui consecuti sumus, quæ hactenus mortalium vires minimè attigerant ; nam si harum insularum quidpiam aliqui scripserunt aut locuti sunt, omnes per ambages et*

as little else than fables. Therefore let the king and queen, our princes and their most happy kingdoms, and all the other provinces of Christendom, render thanks to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has granted us so great a victory and such prosperity. Let processions be made, and sacred feasts be held, and the temples be adorned with festive boughs. Let Christ rejoice on earth, as he rejoices in heaven in the prospect of the salvation of the souls of so many nations hitherto lost. Let us also rejoice, as well on account of the exaltation of our faith, as on account of the increase of our temporal prosperity, of which not only Spain, but all Christendom will be partakers.

Such are the events which I have briefly described. Farewell.

Lisbon, the 14th of March.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,

*Admiral of the Fleet of the Ocean.*

---

conjecturas, nemo se eas vidisse asserit: unde prope videbatur fabula. Igitur Rex et Regina, Principes, ac eorum regna felicissima, cunctæque aliæ Christianorum provinciæ, Salvatori Domino nostro Jesu Christo agamus gratias, qui tanta nos victoria munereque donavit. Celebrentur processiones, peragantur solemnia sacra, festæque fronde velentur delubra. Exsultet Christus in terris, quemadmodum in cœlis exsultat, quum tot populorum perditas antehac animas salvatum iri prævidet. Lætetur et nos, tum propter exaltationem nostræ fidei, tum propter rerum temporalium incrementa, quorum non solum Hispania, sed universa Christianitas est futura particeps. Hæc gesta sic breviter enarrata. Vale. Ulisbonæ pridie idus Martii.

CHRISTOFORUS COLOM,

*Oceanæ classis præfectus.*