¶ Epistola Christofori Colom: cui eas nostra multũ debet: de Insulis Indie supra Gangem nuper inuẽtis. Ad quas pergendas octauo antea mense auspiciis ꝛ ere inuictissimoꝝ Fernãdi ꝛ Helisabet Hispaniaꝝ Regũ missus fuerat: ad magnificum dñm Gabrielem Sanchis eorundẽ serenissimoꝝ Regum Thesaurariũ missa: quã nobilis ac litteratus vir Leander de Cosco ab Hispano idiomate in latinum cõuertit tertio kal's Maii. M.cccc.xciii Pontificatus Alexandri Sexti Anno primo.

QUoniam suscepte prouintie rem perfectam me ꝓsecutum fuisse gratum tibi fore scio: has constitui exarare: que te vniuscuiusq; rei in hoc nostro itinere geste inuenteq; admoneant: Tricesimotertio die postq̃ Gadibus discessi in mare Indicũ perueni: vbi plurimas insulas innumeris habitatas hominibus repperi: quarum omnium pro felicissimo Rege nostro preconio celebrato ꝛ vexillis extensis contradicente nemine possessionem accepi: primeq; earum diui Saluatoris nomen imposui: cuius fretus auxilio tam ad hanc: q̃ ad ceteras alias peruenimus. Eam ꝓ Indi Guanahanin vocant. Aliarũ etiam vnam quanq; nouo nomine nuncupaui: quippe aliã insulam Sancte Marie Conceptionis. aliam Fernandinam. aliam Hysabellam. aliam Ioanam. ꝛ sic de reliquis appellari iussi. Cum primum in eam insulam quam dudum Ioanam vocari dixi appulimus: iuxta eius littus occidentem versus aliquantulum processi: tamq; eam magnam nullo reperto fine inueni: vt non insulã: sed continentem Chatai prouinciam esse crediderim: nulla tñ videns oppida municipiaue in maritimis sita confinib? preter aliquos vicos ꝛ predia rustica: cum quoꝝ incolis loqui nequibam. quare si mul ac nos videbant surripiebant fugam. Progrediebar vltra: existimans aliquã me vrbem villasue inuenturũ. Deniq; videns q̃ longe admodum progressis nihil noui emergebat: ꝛ hmõi via nos ad Septentrionem deferebat: q̃ ipse fugere exoptabã: terris etenim regnabat bruma: ad Austrumq; erat in voto cõtendere: rit opus. tñ vero aromatum. bombicis. mastichis: q̃ apud Chium duntaxat innenitur. tantũq; ligni aloes. tantum seruoꝝ hydolatrarum: quantum eorum maiestas voluerit exigere. it. m reu barbarum ꝛ alia aromatum genera que ii quos in dicta arce reliqui iam inuenisse atq; inuenturos existimo. q̃nquidem ego nul libi magis sum moratus nisi quantum me coegerunt venti: preterq̃ in villa Natiuitatis: dum arces condere ꝛ tuta oia esse prouidi. Que ꝛ si maxima ꝛ inaudita sunt: multo tñ maiora forent si naues mihi vt ratio exigit subuenissent. Vex multum ac mirabile hoc: nec nostris meritis correspondens: sed sancte Christiane fidei: nostrorumq; Regum pietati ac religioni: quia quod humanus consequi nõ poterat intellectus: id hi manis cõcessit diuinus. Solet enim deus seruus suos: quiq; sua precepta diligũt ꝛ in impossibilibus exaudire: vt nobis in presentia contigit: qui ea consecuti sumus que hactenus mortalium vires minime attigerant: nam si harũ insulaꝝ quipiam aliquid scripserunt aut locuti sunt: omnes per ambages ꝛ cõiecturas. nemo se eas vidisse asserit vnde propr videbatur fabula. Igitur Rex ꝛ Regina principesq; ac eoꝝ regna felicissima cunctesq; alie Christianoꝝ prouincie Saluatori dño nostro Iesu Christo agam? gratias: qui tanta nos victoria munereq; donauit: celebrentur processiones. peragantur solennia sacra: festa q̃ fronde velentur delubra. exultet Christus in terris quemadmodum in celis exultat: quom tot populorum perditas ante hac animas saluatum iri preuidet. Letemur ꝛ nos: cum propter exaltationem nostre fidei. tum propter rerum temporalium incrementa: quoꝝ non solum Hispania sed vniuersa Christianitas est futura particeps. Hec vt gesta sunt sic breuiter enarrata. Vale. Vlis bone pridie Idus Martii.

Christoforus Colom Oceane classis Prefectus.

Letter by Christopher Columbus on the Discovery of America (1493)

On returning from his first voyage, Columbus wrote an official letter to Gabriel Sanchez, crown treasurer of the King and Queen of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella, announcing his discovery. This tremendous news was immediately put into print and swept through Europe. Editions appeared in Latin, Italian and German. This is a copy of the second Latin edition, printed in Rome in 1493. A partial translation follows: "Thirty-three days after my departure from Cadiz, 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 Concepción, another Fernandina, the third Isabella, the fourth Juana (Cuba)."

" - - - and found it to be so large and apparently without termination, that I cannot suppose it to be an island but the continental province of Cathay. Seeing however no towns or populous places on the seacoast 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 - - - ."

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