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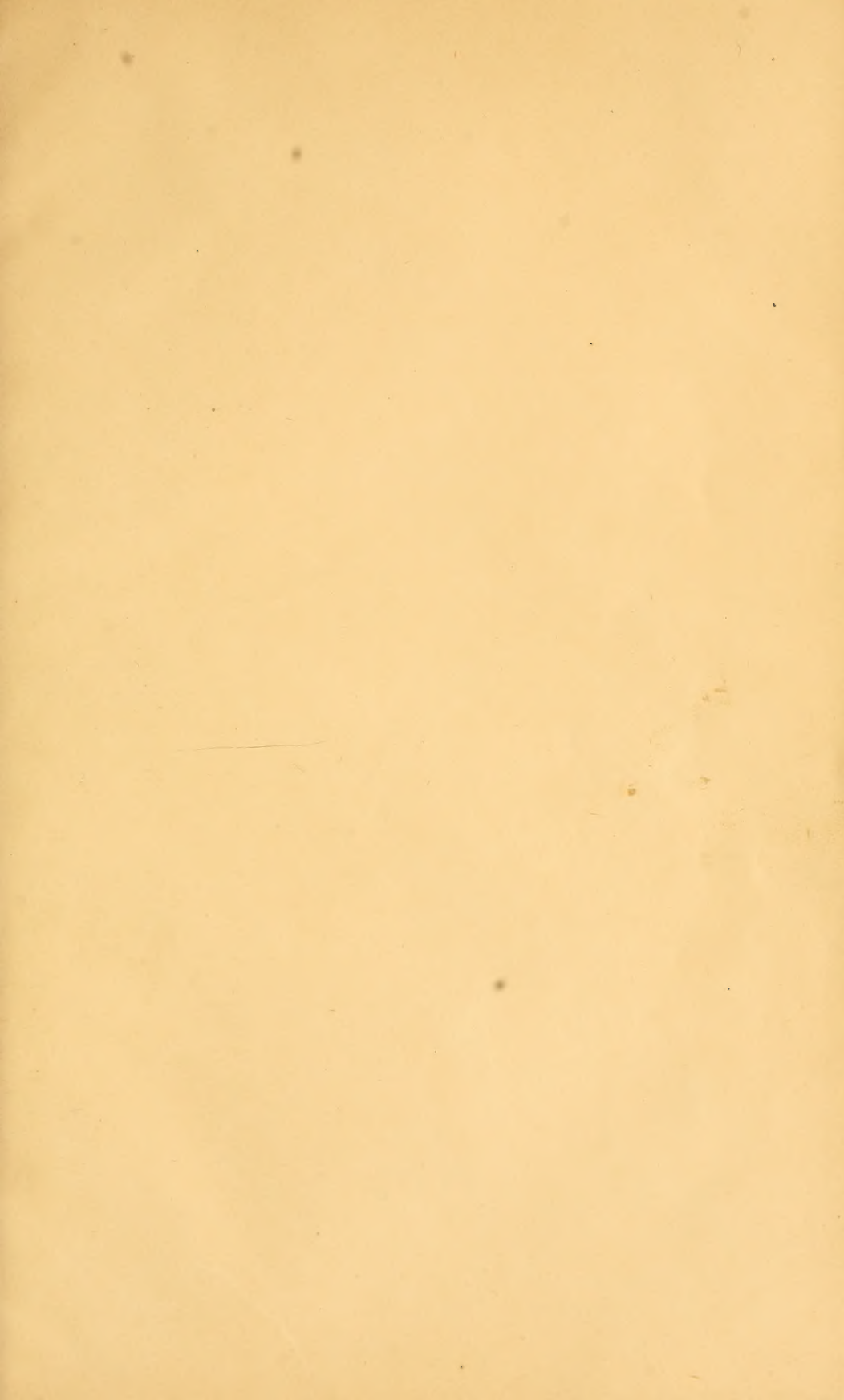
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LETTER OF COLUMBUS,
TO
LUIS DE SANTANGEL,
I 493.



FAC-SIMILES OF THE SPANISH LETTER OF COLUMBUS.

Published in 1493,

From the only known copy in the Ambrosian Library, Milan.

Commencement



Eño por que se que aureis plazer dela grand victoria que nro señor me ha dado en mi viaje vos escrivo esta por la q̄l sabreys como e rruj dias pafé alas yndias cōla armada que los illustrißimos Rey e reynanos señores me dieron donde yo falle muy muchas y las pobladas con gente syn numero. y dellas todas he tomado posesiō por sus altezas con pregon y vadera real estēdida y no me fue cōtradicho:

Close of the Letter.

ala espana mas a todos los cristianos ternan aqui refrigerio y ganancia esto segun el fecho asi en brene fecha en la camera sobze las yslas de canaria a xv. de febrero. Mill. e quatrocientos e nonenta e tres años.

Sara lo que mandareys El almirante,

Pluma que yenia dentro en la carta.

Despues desta escripto: y estando en mar de Castilla salyo tanto viento conmigo, tul y fueste que me ha fecho descargar los namos por cost aqm en este puerto de lyssona oy q̄ fue la mayor maranilla del mundo adonde acozde escribir a sus altezas. En todas las yndias he siempre ballado los temporales como en mayo adonde yo fuy en rruj dias z bolui en xxviij. salvo que estas tormentas me han detenido. xiiij. dias cozriendo por estamar. Dizen aqua todos los hombres dela mar que jamas on tan mal yuier no no ni tatas verdidas de nanes, fecha a. xiiij. dias de mayo.

*Esta carta embio Colon a lescrimano Deracion
dela Yslas balladas en las Yndias. Contemida
a otra De sus Altezas.*

LETTER OF COLUMBUS,

TO

LUIS DE SANTANGEL,

1493.

*Original in the
Library of the
University of Cambridge*


*John G. ...
187-*

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LETTER OF COLUMBUS,

1493.

 PRINTED copy of the first letter of Columbus *in Spanish*, addressed to Luis de Santangel,¹ has at length been discovered in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. It belongs to a collection of books and manuscripts bequeathed to

¹ He is called at the close of the letter *Escribano de Racion*. This office seems from Navarrete's explanation to include those of Secretary and Steward of the Royal Household.

that library about twelve years ago by the Baron Pietro Custodi, a Milanese historian and political economist. It is a small quarto of four leaves in semi-gothic type---that is with black letter and roman characters mixed:---the text begins on the recto of the first leaf without any title, and fills seven entire pages, and above a third of the eighth page. The full page contains 32 lines, while there are only eleven lines of text on the 8th page, followed by a postscript of 14 lines.¹ The first

¹ This Spanish original must not be confounded with the other letter written by Columbus at the same time to Rafael Sanchez, the royal Treasurer, translated from the Spanish into Latin by Leander de

capital letter, S, is an ornamented wood cut, occupying the square space of 5 lines of the text. There are neither signatures, catchwords, pagination, nor paragraphs---the text being printed without any break in the lines. The paper is thick, and very much sized---the water-mark is an open hand with the monogram of Christ over the third finger. The copy is in very good condition, with broad margins---a drop of oil, however, disfigures the last page. The whole leaf measures 20 centime-

Cofco. This translation has been frequently printed. The two letters are in substance the same; but no contemporaneously printed copy of that to Santangel was known until the discovery of the one now announced.

tres high by 14 broad, and the printed portion is 13.3 centimetres high by 16 broad.

Besides this full account of this precious little book, my correspondent has sent me a fac simile of eight lines at the beginning, and five lines at the end of the letter, and of the whole 14 lines of the *Anyma* at the close. A copy of this fac simile is given with this notice. These portions agree generally with the reprint of Navarrete (vol. I, pages 167 to 175) from the MS. in the Royal Archives at Simancas. There are some variations, the most remarkable of which is his omission of the words at the end of the letter.

“Faro lo que mandereys---El almirante.” He has corrected the orthography in some places, and leaves out many of the contractions. Some of the readings of the letter are better than his, because the words it supplies render the meaning more clear. The date at the close is at the Canary Islands the 15th of February, 1493; and that of the *Anyma* the 14th day of March. Of the first Navarrete says, that the islands seen on the 15th February were the Azores, not the Canaries; and of the second, that although the figures seem to indicate the 14th, the true date must be the 4th of March. *Anima*, he says, means a written paper, in-

ferted in a letter after the letter is closed.

As there is no place or name of printer, these must remain unknown unless the type and watermark should help some bibliophile to make a fortunate conjecture on these points. The volume, however, must have been printed before any of the Latin editions of the letter to Sanchez, and most probably in Spain.

I may refer in this place to the small 8vo edition in Latin with wood cuts; which some bibliographers suppose to have been printed at Grenada, because the arms and name of that city are found on the last page. Mr.

Brunet infers that this is not to be taken as positive proof that the book appeared at Grenada, and I am not disposed to assert that he is mistaken. But in other instances a similar mark is considered an indication of the place of printing:---among these I may cite the German abridged edition of Columbus' Voyages, printed by Sigismund Grimm in 1522. The pine-apple on the last page is deemed good evidence that the volume was issued by him at Augsburg. (Vide Appendix B in the New York reprint of Syllacius, page lviii.) And I may add that the arms of Grenada *in the form*

in which they appear in the 8vo edition with wood cuts, are not found in any other edition. Even the Basle edition of 1494, which copies all the other wood cuts of the little 8vo, *does not copy* these arms---but gives on the recto of the last leaf, the arms of Castile and Leon as these appear on the first leaf of the 8vo, and on the verso of the same leaf reproduces the cut of the vessel, found on the first leaf, both of the 8vo, and of its own first leaf, with the addition of an ornament above and below the cut. These different wood cuts may be seen on pages xxxvi, xxxvii and xlii of Appendix 3 of the New York Syllacius.

In order to avoid misapprehension I may add that in the portraits of Ferdinand both in the 8vo and in the Basle editions, two escutcheons containing the arms of Castile, &c., and of Grenada hang from the arm of the king; but they have nothing to do with the crowned escutcheon, and the word Grenada as these are found on the last page of the little octavo.

I regret to say on the authority of my correspondent that the copy of this last edition, described by Rossi, has *disappeared* from the Brera library in Milan. I will transcribe what he writes upon the subject. “Cette bibliothèque

vient de perdre l'exemplaire de la lettre de 1493, sur laquelle Boffi a fait ses travaux. Ce vol a été fait avec une audace, et avec une adresse d'escarmoteur. Elle existait encore à la bibliothèque il y a six ans. Nous avons ici des amateurs larrons dont on ne se garde pas assez, et qui font la peste des collections *publiques* et *particulières* ; il y en a partout, mais chez nous se donnent rendezvous les filous du monde entier. Quant à la Bibliothèque Ambrosienne, c'est différent ; on y est moins confiant.

L.

