De Insulis nuper in mari Indico repertis

Epistola Christoferi Colom cui est nostrorum scriptum de Insulis in mari Indico nuper inuentis: ad quas pervenientes ostensi ante a me anteipsius etgesse inauditissimi Ferdinandi Hispaniarum Regis suffosam metricam Magnificentissimi Dominii Raphaelem Sansìnei, quædem 550: in Regio Thesaurarii munisit; quorum nobilissimae literatis viri Albertus de Cosa, ab Hispano idem in Latinum conversae tertio kalendas Maii MCCCCLXXII, Pontificatus Aegardi Sexti Anno primo.

The Kislak Collection includes resources that focus on one of the most dramatic events of the modern period: the encounter between Europe and the Americas, and the wide range of critical historical processes that ensued. This encounter is made particularly significant by virtue of the context of both regions at the end of the fifteenth century.

The artifacts, documents, maps, and other materials offer an opportunity to explore three major and connected processes at the time of encounter: the development of the pre-Columbian civilizations of the Americas, the conflict and accommodation that defines the generation of the encounter, and the establishment of a stable Spanish-American society constructed as a consequence of the encounter itself.

America included a rich and diverse collection of civilizations, with a deep and long historical development at the time of the encounter, which is reflected in the triumph of the Mexican-Aztec Empire and the Inca Empire. These two exceptional political, social, economic, and cultural enterprises achieved their success by virtue of large-scale, complex organizational structures of trade and government built up through intense and often violent competition among the many peoples in the Americas.

Europe experienced the encounter primarily through the initiative of the recently ascendant Spanish kingdoms. This Spanish moment at the end of the fifteenth century represented the culmination of a centuries-long campaign to re-conquer the Iberian Peninsula, construct a coherent and effective national presence, and create a sense of cultural identity based on religious and linguistic uniformity capable of sustaining an imperial presence.

Chronologically, the story begins with the early history of the Americas to 1500; it then captures the moment between 1500 and 1550 that defines the characteristics of the new Spanish order in the Americas with special emphasis on the conflict and accommodation of
culture, religion, language, economics, and politics that is central to this process, and it closes with the establishment of the Spanish imperial system in the Americas into the seventeenth century.

This focus creates a context for understanding some of the consequences of this dramatic encounter. We can see the intensity of engagement around the issues of religion and language, central concerns for both Native Americans and Spaniards. We can recognize the remarkable European Renaissance commitment to rational thought that motivates the intense pursuit of specific knowledge reflected in the Spanish effort to catalog, map, and understand all they found new in the Americas. We can appreciate the Atlantic-wide impact of this encounter by observing the reaction of other European nations as they challenged Spanish control over the opportunities offered by the Americas.

This story marks an extraordinary transition in world history that set the stage for the resulting rise of Western Europe and its extensive empires well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It engages us in an effort to comprehend the trauma of the conflict and readjustment required by the encounter of the powerful but quite distinct civilizations and cultures of Spain and the Americas. It captures both the fragility of civilization and the enduring strength of culture and language in the face of conquest and colonization. This is a story for our time as well, because the experience of the Americas illustrates so many of the themes that occupy our attention today: conflict and accommodation among highly diverse cultures, the maintenance of diverse cultural identities within the context of the homogenizing influence of global trade, and the challenge of balancing rights and responsibilities among cultural and political groups with distinct, and often unequal, levels of technological sophistication and power.

The insights from our study of this critical period expand our comprehension of the large issues that have always defined the cultural, social, economic, and political conflicts of our past and our present, and that will most likely condition our future.

JOHN LOMBARDI
Louisiana State University
AN EXTRAORDINARY TRANSITION

The idea that the islands that Columbus encountered were in fact part of a “new world” was not at all self-evident to early observers. Columbus, after all, had not sailed in quest of a new world but of a new route to a familiar one, the Indies. Moreover, at the height of the European Renaissance, the notion that there was anything left to be discovered in the world was heresy to those who worshipped at the altars of antiquity. The wisdom of the ancients made everything after them so much déjà vu. It is important to keep this in mind when trying to account for the apparent flatness, the lack of wonder, surprise, and curiosity that characterizes so many early accounts of the Americas and its peoples.

At the same time, it gradually became clear that the Americas were indeed a New World. Here across the Atlantic were new flora and fauna, new species of animals, and above all new peoples with new, sometimes utterly perplexing manners, customs, and beliefs. An older Renaissance hermeneutics that could bend and twist ancient texts to reveal the hidden presence of the New World yielded slowly to the realization that those texts were silent on the subject of the Americas. Beyond the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar) lay only the back of beyond for the ancients. Columbus’s New World truly was new to Europeans.

For much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these two perspectives collided uncomfortably in the minds of many observers. It was rarely an either/or matter, especially when trying to make sense of the indigenous peoples. Tension, ambivalence, and contradiction were the modi intellegendi.

Indigenous peoples were no simple “other,” although it is often possible to gain that impression from early observers as well as from their twentieth-century interpreters. In fact, the peoples of the Americas were as varied and different from each other as those in Europe and Asia. The Caribs that Columbus encountered were very different indeed from the Aztec civilization with which Cortés did battle and from the Maya whom missionaries attempted to convert. So, too, the images of the Indians that began to circulate in Europe assumed over time a variety of appearances and representations. These, in turn, required a more nuanced understanding than the term “Indians” seemed to permit. The image of the Indian gradually became images of Indians: savages, barbarians, and pagans; Edenic innocents and blameless children; builders of cities and monuments. These and other representations of indigenous populations created a confusing mosaic for those who insisted on clinging to a totalizing notion of otherness. The Indians slowly became a political, religious, and above all intellectual problem for Europe. While some, like Michel de Montaigne, reconciled themselves to the lack of coherence in human affairs, many others found the skeptic’s option unsatisfying. The belief in an ordered universe demanded reason and intelligibility in human affairs. The New World would be understood.

—Michael Ryan
At dawn on October 14, 1492, Columbus and the crew of his flagship, the Santa María, sighted land—an unknown island in the Bahamas. In late October Columbus landed on Cuba, then on La Isla Española (anglicized to Hispaniola), among several landfalls he made during his first voyage to the New World. After the Santa María struck a coral reef and foundered near the site of present-day Cap Haïtien, Columbus established a makeshift settlement on the north coast, which he dubbed Navidad (Christmas). The original inhabitants, the Taino (or Arawak), referred to their homeland by many names, most commonly Ayty, or Haüty (mountainous). The tribes that currently live in the Orinoco River delta are descendants from those Arawakan-speaking people. Today, the island consists of the nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

When Christopher Columbus returned to Spain in February 1493, he wrote an account of his discoveries and sent it to the Spanish sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, who were then holding court in Barcelona. Enclosed in the packet was a letter to the secretary of the royal treasury, Luis de Santángel, one of Columbus’s prominent supporters at court. Columbus begins his letter to Santángel with great enthusiasm and conviction:

Because my undertakings have attained success, I know that it will be pleasing to you; these I have determined to relate, so that you may be made acquainted with everything done and discovered in this our voyage. On the thirty-third day after I departed from Cadiz, I came to the Indian sea, where I found many islands inhabited by men without number, of all which I took possession for our most fortunate king, with proclaiming heralds and flying standards, no one objecting. To the first of these I gave the name of the blessed Saviour, on whose aid relying I had reached this as well as the other islands. But the Indians call it Guanahany.

Several copies of this manuscript were made for court officials, but none of the original manuscripts of Columbus’s letters have survived. All we have today are printed copies derived from the Santángel letter. A year later, an illustrated Latin edition appeared in Basel.
162. Verardi, Carlo, 1440–1500
[Historia Baetica]
In laudem Serenissimi Ferdinandi, Hispaniarum Regis, Bethiae & regni Granatæ obsidiæ victoria & triumphus. Basel: Johann Bergmann, de Olpe, 1494.
The front part of this book (and curiously the most important part, in the eyes of the publisher) contains a prose piece by Verardus about Ferdinand’s 1492 capture of Granada from the Moors, and the frontispiece to the volume appropriately is a portrait of Ferdinand of Aragon (see page 57).
The second part of this book, De insulis nuper in Mari Indico nuper repertis, is Leandro di Cosco’s Latin translation of Columbus’s letter to Luis de Santángel, written while Columbus was on board the Niña.
The Basel edition of 1493 had five woodcuts purporting to be the earliest pictures of the New World. In fact, the illustrations are mostly imaginary and were probably adapted from drawings illustrating the Mediterranean. The blocks were reprinted in this 1494 edition. Between the first edition of this letter in 1493 and 1500, the letter went through approximately twenty editions.

163. Isabella, Queen of Spain, 1451–1504
Autograph document, signed: Order to her steward, Sancho de Paredes, regarding a mourning costume for a servant, Beatrice Galindo. Written in Granada and signed “Yo la Reyna.” Countersigned by the queen’s secretary, Gaspar de Trizio, February 20, 1501. 1 page. In Spanish.

164. Bible. O.T. Psalms. Polyglot. 1516

165. Robert of Reims, 12th cent.

166. Giustiniani, Agostino, 1470–1536
167. Gambara, Lorenzo, ca. 1495–1585
De navigatione Christophori Columbi. Rome: Bartholomaei Bonfadini & Titi Diani, 1583.
PQ4623.G18D4 1583

168. Gambara, Lorenzo, ca. 1495–1585
De navigatione Christophori Columbi. Rome: Bartholomaei Bonfadini & Titi Diani, 1585.
PQ4623.G18D4 1585

169. [Columbus, Christopher, 1451–1506]
Por parte del conde de Géuel, de doña Francisca Colon, de don Christoval Colon, y de don Baltasar Colon, se suplica a V.m. que cerca de la executoria que la parte de la marquesa de Guadaleste pide, de la que llama sentencia, dada en su favor por el consejo Real de las Indias. [Spain: s.n., ca. 1586] E112.P855 1586

170. Foglietta, Uberto, 1518–1581
Vberti Folietar darorum Ligurum elogia. Genuæ: Hieronymi Bartoli, 1588. First published Rome, 1572. These are the same sheets as the Rome, 1573, edition, except for pp. [1–8], the first group of paging, which has been reset. DG63.7.F64 1588

171. Colón y Toledo, Juana, ca. 1512–1592
Autograph document, signed: Will of Juana Colón y Toledo. 1591. 24 pages. In Spanish. Granddaughter of Christopher Columbus and wife of Luis de la Cueva (d. 1580), Captain of the Guard to Emperor Charles V, and brother of the Duke of Albuquerque. Includes references to the disputed title of Duque de Veraga y Marquesado de Jamaica, and to funds held in Panama. Written in Madrid. KISLAK MS 201

172. Colón, Fernando, 1488–1539
[Italian translation of Historie del S.D. Fernando Colombo....] Historie del sig. don Fernando Colombo... nelle quali s'ha particolare, & vero relazione della vita, & de fatti dell'ammiraglio don Christoforo Colombo suo padre. Milano: Girolamo Bordoni, [1614]. E111.C72

173. Bourgeois, Nicolas Louis, 1710–1776
Christophe Colomb, ou, l'Amérique découverte: Poème. Paris: Chez Moutard, libraire de Madame la dauphine, 1773. 2 volumes. E120.877

174. Belknap, Jeremy, 1744–1798
A Discourse Intended to Commemorate the Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus: Delivered at the Request of the Historical Society in Massachusetts on the 23d Day of October, 1792. Boston: Apollo Press by Belknap and Hall, 1792. E111.B43

175. Campe, Joachim Heinrich, 1746–1818
[English translation of Entdeckung von Amerika. 1. Theil] Columbus or, The Discovery of America: As Related by a Father to his Children, and Designed for the Instruction of Youth. Translated by Elizabeth Helme. London: Sampson Low, 1799. 2 volumes. E111.C183 1799

176. Serra, Girolamo, marchese, 1761–1837
Ragionamento, nel quale si conferma l'opinion generale intorno alla patria di Cristoforo Colombo / presentato all'Accademia delle Scienze, Lettere e Arti di Genova nell'adunanza del dì 16 dicembre 1812. Genova: [s.n., 1812?] E112.S495 1812

177. Columbus, Christopher, 1451–1506

178. Bossi, Luigi, 1758–1835

179. Spotorno, Giovanni Battista, 1788–1844

180. Columbus, Christopher, 1451–1506

181. Columbus, Christopher, 1451–1506

182. Amati, Giacinto, 1778–1850

183. Memorial de Don Diego Colon, Virrey y Almirante de las yndias a S.C.C. Magd el Rey don Carlos sobre la conversion e consvacio de las gentes de las yndias. Londres: Carlos Whittingham, Chiswick Press, Por H. Stevens, Morley's Hotel, 1854. E113.C53
184. Fernández Duro, Cesáreo, 1830–1908
Colón y la historia póstuma: Examen de la que escribió el conde de Roselly de Longues, leído ante la Real Academia de la Historia, en junta extraordinaria celebrada el día 10 de mayo. Madrid: M. Tello, 1885.
E112.R822

185. Harrisse, Henry, 1829–1910
Los restos de Don Cristóbal Colon / disquisicion por el autor de la Biblioteca americana vetustísimla. Anó 1878.
Sevilla: Francisco Alvarez y ca., 1878.
E112.H32

186. Fernández Duro, Cesáreo, 1830–1908
Colón y Pinzón: Informe relativo a los pormenores de descubrimiento del nuevo mundo.
Madrid: Manuel Tello, 1883–1884.
E112.F37 1883

187. Harrisse, Henry, 1829–1910
Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George (Ucbio di San Giorgio in Genoa): Two Letters Addressed to Samuel L. M. Barlow, Esquire.
E112.H317

188. Columbus, Christopher, 1451–1506
(English/Spanish edition of Codex diplomaticus)
Christopher Columbus, His Own Book of Privileges, 1502: Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript in the Archives of the Foreign Office in Paris. Translated into English by George F. Barwick; introduction by Henry Harrisse; compiled and edited, with preface, by Benjamin Franklin Stevens.
E114.S84

189. Columbus, Christopher, 1451–1506
The Letter of Columbus on the Discovery of America.
New-York: The De Vinne Press, 1892.
E116.1 1892A

190. Harrisse, Henry, 1829–1910
London: Henry Stevens, Son & Stiles, 1903.
E112.V68

191. Albo di onoranze internazionali a Cristoforo Colombo, iniziato da Angelo de Gubernatis e Cecilio Vallardi pel glorioso ricordo del Quarto Centenario della scoperta dell’America, 12 Ottobre 1892.
Milano; Roma: F. Vallardi, [1892].
E112.A33

192. Cronache della commemorazione del IV centenario Colombiano.
Genova: Stabilimento Fratelli Armanino, 1892.
E112.C93 1892

193. Cicala, Biagio

3 sheets of music. Illustrated sheet music cover accompanying the music for “Los ojos de una porteña (habanera),” the seventh part of a seven-song cycle of musical pieces by Biagio Cicala commemorating the 400th anniversary of the explorations of Christopher Columbus.
E112.C485 1892

194. Columbus, Christopher, 1451–1506
(English/Spanish edition of Codex diplomaticus)
Christopher Columbus. His Own Book of Privileges, 1502: Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript in the Archives of the Foreign Office in Paris. Translated into English by George F. Barwick; introduction by Henry Harrisse; compiled and edited, with preface, by Benjamin Franklin Stevens.
E114.S84

195. Italy. R. Commissione colombiana
6 parts in 14 volumes.
E111.I88

196. Vignaud, Henry, 1830–1922
Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901.
G161.R31

197. Vignaud, Henry, 1830–1922
A Critical Study of the Various Dates Assigned to the Birth of Christopher Columbus: The Real Date, 1451: With a Bibliography of the Question.
London: Henry Stevens, Son & Stiles, 1903.
E112.V68

198. Vignaud, Henry, 1830–1922
Études critiques sur la vie de Colomb avant ses découvertes.
E111.V68

199. Vignaud, Henry, 1830–1922
Histoire critique de la grande entreprise de Christophe Colomb.
Paris: H. Welter, 1911.
2 volumes.
E111.V69

200. Columbus, Christopher, 1451–1506
The Voyages of Christopher Columbus: Being the Journals of his First and Third, and the Letters concerning his First and Last Voyages, to which is Added the Account of his Second Voyage. Translated and edited, with an introduction by Cecil Jane. London: The Argonaut Press, 1930.
Ex libris: Samuel Eliot Morison.
E118.C88