ARMS OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

ACCORDING TO THE LETTERS PATENT GRANTED BY THEIR CATHOLIC MAJESTIES 20 MAY 1493

Christopher Columbus

HIS OWN BOOK OF PRIVILEGES

1502

PHOTOGRAPHIC FACSIMILE OF THE MANUSCRIPT IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE IN PARIS, NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME PUBLISHED, WITH EXPANDED TEXT TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH AND AN

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

THE TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION BY GEORGE F. BARWICK B.A. OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE INTRODUCTION BY HENRY HARRISSE

THE WHOLE COMPILED AND EDITED WITH PREFACE BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN STEVENS

LONDON: 4 TRAFALGAR SQUARE, CHARING CROSS
B. F. STEVENS
1893

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Virtuoso Señor,— Quando yo parti para el viaje de adonde yo vengo os fable largo; creo que de todo esto estobistes en buena memoria. Crebi que en llegando falleria yo vuestras cartas yaum persona con palabra. Tanbien dese tiempo dese a Françisco de Ribarol um libro de traslados de cartas, yotro de mis privilegios en una barjaca de cordoban colorado con su çerradura de plata, y dos cartas para el ofiçio de San Georgi, al qual atribuya yo el diezmo de my Renta, para en descuento delos drechos del trigo yotros bastimentos. De nada desto todo sey nuebas. Miçer Françisco diz que todo llego alla en salvo. Si ansi es, descortesia fue deses Señores de San Georgi de non haber dado respuesta, nypor ello han acresçentado la hazienda. Y esto es causa que se diga que quien sirve acomun non sirve anigun. Otro libro de mys privilejios como lo sobre dicho dese en Calis, a Franco Catanio portador desta, para que tanbien os enbiase, el uno y el otro fuesen puestos en buen recabdo, adonde avos fuese bien visto. Una carta reçeby del Rey y dela Reyna mys Señores a ese tienpo de my partida; ali esta escrita; vedela que vino muy buena; puriende Don Diego non fue puesto en la posesion, ansi como fue la promesa. Al tienpo que yo estaba en las Yndias escrivy a Sus Altezas de my viaje por tres o quatro vias. Una bolvio amys manos y ansi çerrada con esta os le enbio yel suplimento del viaje en otra letra, para que le deys a miçer Juan Luis con la otra del abiso, al qual scrivo que sereys el letor y entepreste della. Vuestra[s] cartas deseu de veer y que fablem cabto del proposito en que quedamos. Yo llegé aca muy enfermo; en ese tienpo falecio la Reyna my Señora que Dios tiene, sin verle. Fasta agora non os puedo dezir en que pareran mis fechos. Creo que Su Alteza lo habra bien probeydo en su testamento, yel Rey my Señor muy bien responde. Franco Catanio os dira el resto largo. Nuestro Señor os aya en su guardia. De Sebilla a xxvii de dezienbre 1504.

El Almirante Mayor del Mar Oçeano Viso Rey y Gobernador General delas Yndias etc.

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Xpo FERENS.

Honourable Sir,—When I set out upon the voyage from which I have just arrived, I spoke to you at length; I believe that of all this you have retained good remembrance. I thought that upon my arrival I should find letters from you, and possibly a person with a verbal message. At that time, likewise, I left with Francesco di Ribarola a book of transcripts of letters, and another of my privileges, in a bag of coloured cordovan, with a silver lock, and two letters for the Office of Saint George, to which I assigned the tenth of my revenue, for the reduction of the dues on corn and other provisions. Of nothing of all this have I heard any news. Messer Francesco says that it all arrived there safely. If this be the case, it was discourteous of those Gentlemen of Saint George not to have given a reply, nor have they thereby increased their treasury; and this is the cause why it is said that whoever serves all, serves nobody. I left another book of my privileges, like the abovesaid, at Cadiz with Franco Catanio, the bearer of this, in order that he might forward it to you in like manner, [and that] both the one and the other should be placed in safe keeping, wherever it might seem good to you. I received a letter from the King and Queen, my Lords, at the very time of my departure; it is copied therein; you will see that it came very opportunely; nevertheless Don Diego was not put into possession according to the promise that was made.

At the time when I was in the Indies, I wrote to their Highnesses about my voyage by three or four ways; one [letter] came again into my hands, and so I send it to you enclosed with this, and the supplement of the voyage in another letter, in order that you may give it to Messer Gian Luigi with the other of advice; to whom I am writing that you will be the reader and interpreter of it. I desire to see letters from you, and that they should speak cautiously of the design upon which we are engaged. I arrived here very ill; at that time the Queen, my mistress, who is now with God, died without my seeing her. Up to the present time I cannot tell you how my affairs will end. I believe that her Highness will have provided well for them in her will, and the King, my master, is very well disposed. Franco Catanio will tell you the rest at length. May our Lord have you in his care. From Seville, the 27th of December, 1504.

The High Admiral of the Ocean, Viceroy and Governor General of the Indies, etc.

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1670. 10 January.

The Magnificent Lorenzo Oderico having presented to the Most Serene Colleges two Books, in each of which is contained an authenticated copy, on parchment, of the privileges granted by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain his consort to Christopher Columbus, a Genoese, in recompense of his famous actions in the conquest of the New World, to the intent that their Most Serene Lordships may be pleased to cause the said Books to be preserved in the public archives, as a worthy memorial of so illustrious a compatriot, at the same time accepting them as a token of the affection and zeal which the said Magnificent Oderico entertains for the public service: The Most Serene Colleges have accepted the said Books, and in order to give a mark of their labour have by ballot ordered that a public testimonial be drawn up in labour of the same Magnificent Oderico, with an effectual recommendation of him both to the Most Serene Colleges and also to each of the two Councils on all the occasions which may occur to him for aspiring to any office, as well of the Mainland as of Corsica, to the intent that due regard may be had to the zeal and affection which the said Magnificent Oderico has displayed in the presentation of these Books, and that it may also be possible suitably to gratify him on the said occasions.

Felice.

1670. 10 *Genaro.*

Havendo il Magnifico Lorenzo Oderico presentato a Serenissimi Collegi due Libri, in ogn'uno de quali si contiene in carta pergamena copia autentica delli privileggi concessi dal Rè Fernando, e dalla Regina Isabella di Spagna sua moglie a Christoforo Colombo genovese in premio delle di lui famose operationi nella conquista del nuovo mondo, ad effetto che le Signorie Loro Serenissime si compiacciano di far conservar detti Libri nel publico archivio, como degna memoria d'un Nationale così glorioso, ricevendoli insieme per un attestato dell' affetto e zelo, che detto Magnifico Oderico professa al serviggio publico: Hanno i Serenissimi Collegi accettati detti Libri, e per dar segno del loro gradimento hanno a palle ordinato se ne facci una publica testimonianza a favore dell'istesso Magnifico Oderico, con raccomandarlo efficacemente tanto a Serenissimi Collegi, quanto all' uno, e l'altro Consigli in tutte le occasioni che al medemo si rappresenteranno di aspirare ad alcun' officio, così di terra ferma, come di Corsica, ad effetto, che si possa havere il dovuto riguardo del zelo et affetto, che hà dimostrato detto Magnifico Oderico nella presentatione di essi Libri, e si possi anche convenientemente gratificarlo in dette congionture.

Felice.

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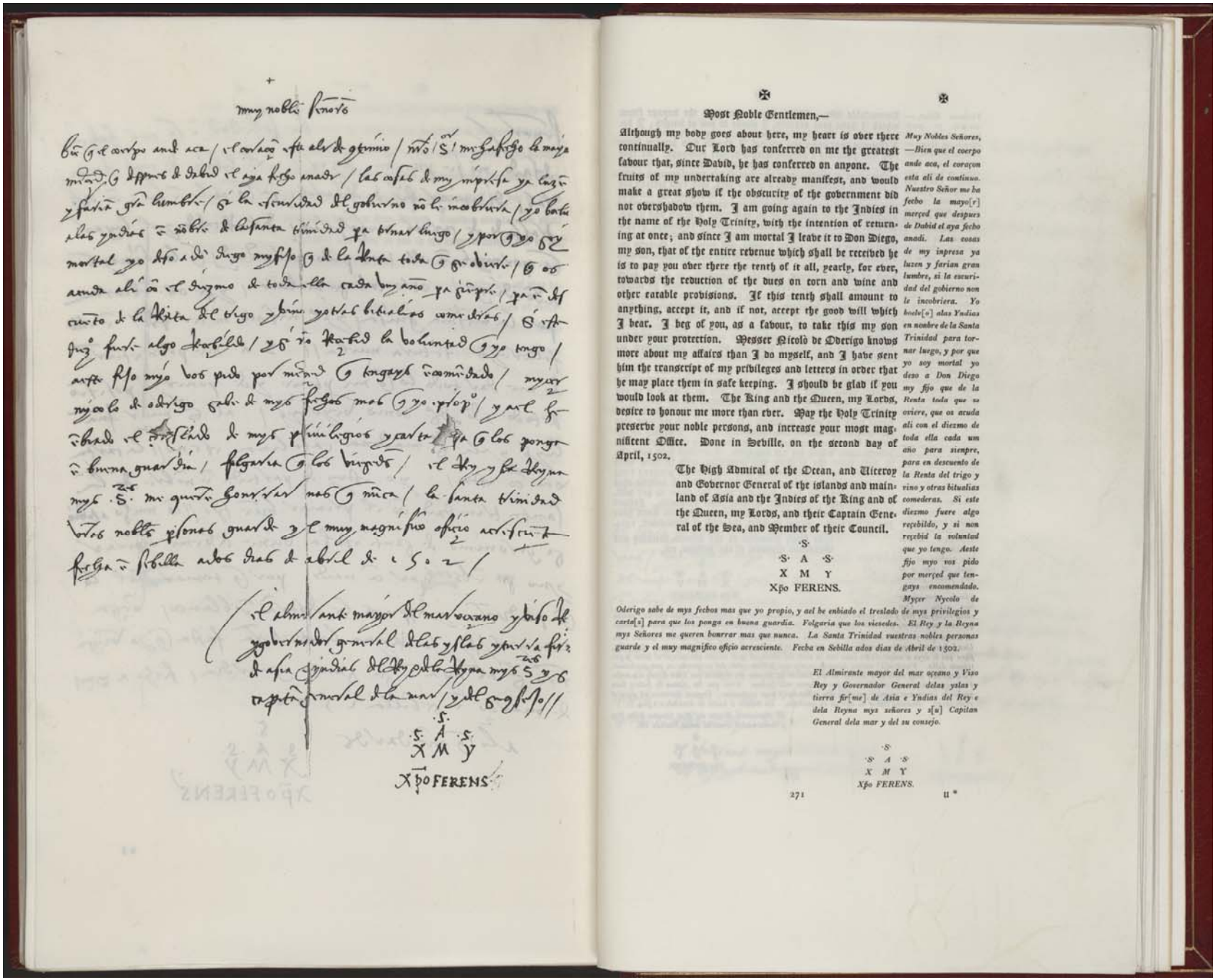

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Most Noble Gentlemen,—

Although my body goes about here, my heart is over there continually. Our Lord has conferred on me the greatest favour that, since David, he has conferred on anyone. The fruits of my undertaking are already manifest, and would make a great show if the obscurity of the government did not overshadow them. I am going again to the Indies in the name of the Holy Trinity, with the intention of returning at once; and since I am mortal I leave it to Don Diego, my son, that of the entire revenue which shall be received he is to pay you over there the tenth of it all, yearly, for ever, towards the reduction of the dues on corn and wine and other eatable provisions. If this tenth shall amount to anything, accept it, and if not, accept the good will which I bear. I beg of you, as a favour, to take this my son under your protection. Messer Nicolò de Oderigo knows more about my affairs than I do myself, and I have sent him the transcript of my privileges and letters in order that he may place them in safe keeping. I should be glad if you would look at them. The King and the Queen, my Lords, desire to honour me more than ever. May the Holy Trinity preserve your noble persons, and increase your most magnificent Office. Done in Seville, on the second day of April, 1502.

The High Admiral of the Ocean, and Viceroy and Governor General of the islands and mainland of Asia and the Indies of the King and of the Queen, my Lords, and their Captain General of the Sea, and Member of their Council.

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Muy Nobles Señores,—Bien que el coerpo ande aca, el coraçon esta ali de continuo. Nuestro Señor me ha fecho la mayo[r] merçed que despues de Dabid el aya fecho anadi. Las cosas de my inpresa ya luzen y farian gran lumbre, si la escuridad del gobierno non le incobriera. Yo boelo[o] alas Yndias en nombre de la Santa Trinidad para tornar luego, y por que yo soy mortal yo deso a Don Diego my fijo que de la Renta toda que se oviere, que os acuda ali con el diezmo de toda ella cada um año para sienpre, para en descuento de la Renta del trigo y vino y otras bituallas comederas. Si este diezmo fuere algo reçebido, y si non reçebid la voluntad que yo tengo. Aeste fijo myo vos pido por merçed que tengays encomendado. Myçer Nycolo de Oderigo sabe de mys fechos mas que yo propio, y ael he enbiado el treslado de mys privilegios y carta[s] para que los ponga en buena guardia. Folgaria que los viesedes. El Rey y la Reyna mys Señores me queren honrrar mas que nunca. La Santa Trinidad vuestras nobles personas guarde y el muy magnifico oficio acresciente. Fecha en Sebilla ados dias de Abril de 1502.

El Almirante mayor del mar oçeano y Viso Rey y Governador General delas ystas y tierra fir[me] de Asia e Yndias del Rey e dela Reyna mys señores y s[u] Capitan General dela mar y del su consejo.

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