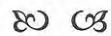
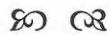


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Articles of Agreement between
the Lords the Catholic Sovereigns
and Cristóbal Colon

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C O N T E N T S

Columbus appointed Admiral and Viceroy of such
Mainland and Islands as he should Discover77

Title granted by the Catholic Sovereigns to Christóbal
Colon of Admiral, Vicery, and Governor of the
Islands and Mainland that may be discovered81

The Powers and Privileges of the Office of Admiral.....82

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ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LORDS THE CATHOLIC SOVER- EIGNS AND CRISTÓBAL COLON¹

THE things prayed for, and which Your Highnesses give and grant to Don Cristóbal Colon² as some recompense for what he is to discover in the Oceans, and for the voyage which now, with the help of God, he has engaged to make therein in the service of Your Highnesses, are the following:

Firstly, that Your Highnesses, as actual Lords of the said Oceans, appoint from this date the said Don Cristóbal Colon to be your Admiral in all those islands and mainlands which

¹ The Spanish text is that printed by Navarrete in his *Coleccion de los Viages y Descubrimientos*, etc. (Madrid, 1825), II. 7-8, and taken from the Archives of the Duke of Veragua. The translation is that of George F. Barwick printed by Benjamin Franklin Stevens in his *Christopher Columbus His Own Book of Privileges*, 1502, etc. (London, 1893), pp. 42-45, with such slight changes (chiefly of tenses) as were necessary to bring it into conformity with the text of Navarrete. This document is also given in English translation in *Memorials of Columbus* (London, 1823), pp. 40-43. That volume is a translation of G. B. Spotorno, *Codice Diplomatico Colombo-Americano* (Genoa, 1823).

² In this edition of the Narratives of the Voyages of Columbus his name in the translation of the original documents will be given in the form used in the originals. During his earlier years in Spain Columbus was known as Colomo, the natural Spanish form corresponding to the Italian Colombo. At some time prior to 1492 he adopted the form Colon, apparently to make more probable his claim to be descended from a Roman general, *Colonius*, and to be related to the French admiral, Coullon, called in contemporary Italian sources *Colombo*, and *Columbus* in Latin. In modern texts of Tacitus the Roman general's name is *Cilonius*, and modern research has shown that the French admiral's real name was *Caseneuve* and that *Coullon* was a sobriquet added for some unknown reason. On the two French naval commanders known as *Colombo* or *Coullon* and the baselessness of Columbus's alleged relationship see Vignaud, *Études Critiques sur la Vie de Colomb*, pp. 131 ff.

by his activity and industry shall be discovered or acquired in the said oceans, during his lifetime, and likewise, after his death, his heirs and successors one after another in perpetuity, with all the pre-eminences and prerogatives appertaining to the said office, and in the same manner as Don Alfonso Enriques, your High Admiral of Castile,¹ and his predecessors in the said office held it in their districts. — It so pleases their Highnesses. Juan de Coloma.

Likewise, that Your Highnesses appoint the said Don Cristóbal Colon to be your Viceroy and Governor General in all the said islands and mainlands and in the islands which, as aforesaid, he may discover and acquire² in the said seas; and that for the government of each and any of them he may make choice of three persons for each office, and that Your Highnesses may select and choose the one who shall be most serviceable to you; and thus the lands which our Lord shall permit him to discover and acquire for the service of Your Highnesses, will be the better governed. — It so pleases their Highnesses. Juan de Coloma.

¹ In 1497 Columbus at his own request was supplied with a copy of the ordinances establishing the admiralty of Castile so that he might have a documentary enumeration of his prerogatives in the Indies. This official copy he preserved in the collection of his papers known as the *Book of Privileges*, and the translation of the documents relating to the Admiralty of Castile is given in Stevens's edition of the *Book of Privileges*, pp. 14 ff. This dignity of Admiral comprised supreme or vice-regal authority on the sea and the general range of legal jurisdiction in determining suits of law that is enjoyed by modern courts of admiralty. A translation of Columbus's exposition of his rights derived from his admiralty of the islands in the Ocean may be found in P. L. Ford, *Writings of Columbus* (New York, 1892), pp. 177-198, taken from *Memorials of Columbus* (London, 1823), pp. 205-223. For a summary of these powers cf. the *Titulo* that follows.

² It is a remarkable fact that nothing is said in this patent of discovering a route to the Indies. It is often said that the sole purpose of Columbus was to discover such a route, yet it is clear that he expected to make some new discoveries, and that if he did not, the sovereigns were under no specified obligations to him. Patents are usually drawn on the lines indicated by the petitioner. Can we conclude that the complete silence of the articles as to the Indies means that Ferdinand and Isabella refused to make any promises if Columbus only succeeded in reaching the known East Indies and could gain for them no new possessions?

Item, that of all and every kind of merchandise, whether pearls, precious stones, gold, silver, spices, and other objects and merchandise whatsoever, of whatever kind, name and sort, which may be bought, bartered, discovered, acquired and obtained within the limits of the said Admiralty, Your Highnesses grant from now henceforth to the said Don Cristóbal, and will that he may have and take for himself, the tenth part of the whole, after deducting all the expenses which may be incurred therein, so that of what shall remain clear and free he may have and take the tenth part for himself, and may do therewith as he pleases, the other nine parts being reserved for Your Highnesses. — It so pleases their Highnesses. Juan de Coloma.

Likewise, that if on account of the merchandise which he might bring from the said islands and lands which thus, as aforesaid, may be acquired or discovered, or of that which may be taken in exchange for the same from other merchants here, any suit should arise in the place where the said commerce and traffic shall be held and conducted; and if by the pre-eminence of his office of Admiral it appertains to him to take cognizance of such suit; it may please Your Highnesses that he or his deputy, and not another judge, shall take cognizance thereof and give judgment in the same from henceforth. — It so pleases their Highnesses, if it appertains to the said office of Admiral, according as it was held by Admiral Don Alfonso Enriques, and others his successors in their districts, and if it be just. Juan de Coloma.

Item, that in all the vessels which may be equipped for the said traffic and business, each time and whenever and as often as they may be equipped, the said Don Cristóbal Colon may, if he chooses, contribute and pay the eighth part of all that may be spent in the equipment, and that likewise he may have and take the eighth part of the profits that may result from such equipment. — It so pleases their Highnesses. Juan de Coloma.

These are granted and despatched, with the replies of Your Highnesses at the end of each article, in the town of Santa Fe

de la Vega of Granada, on the seventeenth day of April in the year of the nativity of our Saviour Jesus Christ, one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. I the King. I the Queen. By command of the King and of the Queen. Juan de Coloma. Registered, Calcena.

TITLE GRANTED BY THE CATHOLIC
SOVEREIGNS TO CRISTÓBAL COLON OF
ADMIRAL, VICEROY AND GOVERNOR
OF THE ISLANDS AND MAINLAND THAT
MAY BE DISCOVERED ¹

DON FERDINAND and Donna Isabella, by the grace of God King and Queen of Castile, Leon, Aragon, Sicily, Granada, Toledo, Valencia, Galicia, Majorca, Seville, Sardinia, Cordova, Corsica, Murcia, Jaen, Algarbe, Algeciras, Gibraltar, and the Canary Islands; Count and Countess of Barcelona; Lords of Biscay and Molina; Dukes of Athens and Neopatria; Counts of Roussillon and Cerdagne, Marquises of Oristano and Goziano; Forasmuch as you, Cristóbal Colon, are going by our command, with some of our ships and with our subjects, to discover and acquire certain islands and mainland in the ocean, and it is hoped that, by the help of God, some of the said islands and mainland in the said ocean will be discovered and acquired by your pains and industry; and as it is a just and reasonable thing that since you incur the said danger for our service you should be rewarded for it, and since we desire to honor and favor you on account of what is aforesaid, it is our will and pleasure that you, the said Cristóbal Colon, after you have discovered and acquired the said islands and mainland in the said ocean, or any of them whatsoever, shall be our Admiral of the said islands and mainland which you may thus discover and acquire, and shall be our Admiral and Viceroy

¹ Spanish text in Navarrete, II. 9-11. We omit the long preamble. Spanish text and facsimile of Paris Codex in Stevens, *Christopher Columbus His Own Book of Privileges*, pp. 49 ff. The translation is that of George F. Barwick. This document is also to be found in English in *Memorials of Columbus* (London, 1823), pp. 52-57.

and Governor therein, and shall be empowered from that time forward to call and entitle yourself Don Cristóbal Colon, and that your sons and successors in the said office and charge may likewise entitle and call themselves Don, and Admiral and Viceroy and Governor thereof; and that you may have power to use and exercise the said office of Admiral, together with the said office of Viceroy and Governor of the said islands and mainland which you may thus discover and acquire, by yourself or by your lieutenants, and to hear and determine all the suits and causes civil and criminal appertaining to the said office of Admiralty, Viceroy, and Governor according as you shall find by law, and as the Admirals of our kingdoms are accustomed to use and exercise it; and may have power to punish and chastise delinquents, and exercise the said offices of Admiralty, Viceroy, and Governor, you and your said lieutenants, in all that concerns and appertains to the said offices and to each of them; and that you shall have and levy the fees and salaries annexed, belonging and appertaining to the said offices and to each of them, according as our High Admiral in the Admiralty of our kingdoms levies and is accustomed to levy them. And by this our patent, or by the transcript thereof signed by a public scrivener, we command Prince Don Juan, our very dear and well beloved son, and the Infantes, dukes, prelates, marquises, counts, masters of orders, priors, commanders, and members of our council, and auditors of our audiencia, alcaldes, and other justices whomsoever of our household, court, and chancery, and sub-commanders, alcaldes of castles and fortified and unfortified houses, and all councillors, assistants, regidores, alcaldes, bailiffs, judges, veinticuatro, jurats, knights, esquires, officers, and liege men¹ of all the cities, towns, and places of our kingdoms and dominions, and of those which you may conquer

¹ Audiencia means the king's court of justice; regidores are roughly equivalent to members of a town council. The Navarrete text has *corregidores*, town governors appointed by the king. Veinticuatro were town councillors, so called because commonly 24 in number. Jurats were municipal executive officers in Aragon. The original which is translated "liege men" is *Homes-Buenos*. Further explanations of these offices may be found in Hume,

and acquire, and the captains, masters, mates, officers, mariners, and seamen, our natural subjects who now are or hereafter shall be, and each and any of them, that upon the said islands and mainland in the said ocean being discovered and acquired by you, and the oath and formality requisite in such case having been made and done by you or by him who may have your procuration,¹ they shall have and hold you from thenceforth for the whole of your life, and your son and successor after you, and successor after successor for ever and ever, as our Admiral of the said ocean, and as Viceroy and Governor of the said islands and mainland, which you, the said Don Cristóbal Colon, may discover and acquire; and they shall treat with you, and with your said lieutenants whom you may place in the said offices of Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor, about everything appertaining thereto, and shall pay and cause to be paid to you the salary, dues and other things annexed and appertaining to the said offices, and shall observe and cause to be observed toward you all the honors, graces, favors, liberties, pre-eminences, prerogatives, exemptions, immunities, and all other things, and each of them, which in virtue of the said offices of Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor you shall be entitled to have and enjoy, and which ought to be observed towards you in every respect fully and completely so that nothing may be diminished therefrom; and that neither therein nor in any part thereof shall they place or consent to place hindrance or obstacle against you; for we by this our patent from now henceforth grant to you the said offices of Admiralty, Viceroy, and Governor, by right of inheritance for ever and ever, and we give you actual and prospective possession thereof, and of each of them, and power and authority to use and exercise it, and to collect the dues and salaries annexed and appertaining to them and to each of them, according to what is aforesaid. Concerning all that is aforesaid, if it should be necessary and you should require

Spain, Its Greatness and Decay, pp. 18 ff., and in *The Cambridge Modern History*, I. 348 ff.

¹ Procuration = power of attorney.

it of them, we command our chancellor and notaries and the other officers who are at the board of our seals to give, deliver, pass, and seal for you our patent of privilege with the circle of signatures, in the strongest, firmest, and most sufficient manner that you may request and may find needful, and neither one nor the other of you or them shall do contrary hereto in any manner, under penalty of our displeasure and of ten thousand maravedis¹ to our chamber, upon every one who shall do to the contrary. And further we command the man who shall show them this our patent, to cite them to appear before us in our court, wheresoever we may be, within fifteen days from the day of citation, under the said penalty, under which we command every public scrivener who may be summoned for this purpose, to give to the person who shall show it to him a certificate thereof signed with his signature, whereby we may know in what manner our command is executed. Given in our city of Granada, on the thirtieth day of the month of April, in the year of the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. I the King. I the Queen. I, Juan de Coloma, Secretary of the King and of the Queen, our Lords, caused this to be written by their command. Granted in form, Roderick, Doctor. Registered, Sebastian de Olano. Francisco de Madrid, Chancellor.

¹ The maravedi at this time was equal in coin value to about two-thirds of a cent.