COLUMBUS' FIRST VOYAGE

Latin Selections from Peter Martyr's *De Orbe Novo*

Edited for Students by

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VOCABULARY NOTES, LATIN TEXT, AND BACKGROUND NOTES

SECTION 1

Fig. 1. Ferdinand, King of Spain.

Vocabulary and Notes

1 **Ligur, -uris,** (adj.) of Liguria. See Fig. 2 in background notes.

1–2 **Fernandō et Helisabethae,** See Fig. 2 in background notes.

3 **suādeō, suadēre, suāsī**, to persuade (+ dat.); *here,* with indirect statement; with *ut* and a subjunctive verb in Classical Latin

ab occidente nostrō, from our west (**occidens, -entis,** m.), instead of sailing from the east

4 **inventūrum** = *inventūrum esse*

nāvigium, -ī, n. vessel

5 **attineō, attinēre, attinuī, attentum,** to pertain, to be pertinent; modifying *rebus*

instruō, instruere, instrūxī, instructum, to equip, to outfit (+ acc. and abl.)

6 **augeō, augēre, auxī, auctum,** to spread, to increase

margarīta, -ae, f. pearl

7 **arōma, arōmatis,** n. spice

inopīnātus, -a, -um, (adj.) unexpected, unanticipated

8 **instō, instāre, institī, instātum,** to press, insist, demand. **Instantī** = dative singular masculine, present participle with the pronoun "to him" understood

rēgius, -a, -um, (adj.) royal

fiscus, -ī, m. treasury

destinō, destināre, destināvī, destinātum, to allocate

9 **onerārius, -a, -um,** (adj.) for cargo

ūnum onerārium The *Santa María* was a cargo ship. See background notes.

mercātōrius, -a, -um, (adj.) for merchant trade

10 **caravella, -ae,** f. caravel

11 **circiter,** (adv.) nearly, approximately

Kal. = *Kalendās;* the Calends, the first day of the month

12 **Septembrīs** = *Septembrēs,* (adj.) of September

nōnāgēsimus, -a, -um, (adj.) ninetieth

13 **quadringentēsimus, -a, -um,** (adj.) four hundreth

millēsimus, -a, -um, (adj.) one thousandth

ā nostrā salūte = "from [the year of] our salvation," i.e. from the date of the birth of Christ

14 **instituō, instituere, instituī, institūtum,** to put together, to organize

cum virīs Hispānīs circiter CCXX Martyr says there were 220 men. See background notes.

1. Columbus Obtains Royal Spanish Support and Sets Out

Columbus successfully proposed his plan to Ferdinand, King of Aragon and Isabella, Queen of Castile. They provided funds for three ships (the *Santa María*, the *Niña*, and the *Pinta*) and in January of 1492 commanded Columbus to go to India with this fleet. The author of this narrative, Peter Martyr, says there were 220 men and does not discuss the departure from the mainland at Palos, Spain, on August 3. He actually refers here to when the fleet set sail from the Canary Islands, a Spanish possession in the Atlantic, on September 6.

Christophorus Colōnus, Ligur vir, Fernandō et Helisabethae Rēgibus Catholicīs prōposuit et suāsit sē ab occidente nostrō fīnitimās Indiae insulās inventūrum, sī [eum] nāvigiīs et rēbus ad nāvigātiōnem attinentibus instruerent, ā quibus augērī Christiāna religiō, et margarītārum arōmatumque et aurī inopīnāta cōpia habērī facile posset. Instantī ex rēgiō fiscō destināta sunt tria nāvigia, ūnum onerārium, alia duo mercātōria levia, quae ab Hispānīs caravellae vocantur. Hīs habitīs, ab Hispānīs lītoribus circiter Kal. Septembrīs annī secundī et nōnāgēsimī suprā quadringentēsimum et millēsimum ā nostrā salūte, iter institūtum cum virīs Hispānīs circiter CCXX Colōnus coepit.

Background Notes

1. Columbus Obtains Royal Spanish Support and Sets Out

Christophorus Colōnus, Ligur vir, Fernandō et Helisabethae Rēgibus Catholicīs prōposuit et suāsit sē ab occidente nostrō fīnitimās Indiae insulās inventūrum, sī [eum] nāvigiīs et rēbus ad nāvigātiōnem attinentibus instruerent, ā quibus augērī Christiāna religiō, et margarītārum arōmatumque et aurī inopīnāta cōpia habērī facile posset. Instantī ex rēgiō fiscō destināta sunt tria nāvigia, ūnum onerārium, alia duo mercātōria levia, quae ab Hispānīs caravellae vocantur. Hīs habitīs, ab Hispānīs lītoribus circiter Kal. Septembrīs annī secundī et nōnāgēsimī suprā quadringentēsimum et millēsimum ā nostrā salūte, iter institūtum cum virīs Hispānīs circiter CCXX Colōnus coepit.

9 ūnum onerārium The *Santa María,* in contrast to the *Niña* and the *Pinta,* was a cargo ship; caravels are smaller, lighter, and faster.

14 cum virīs Hispānīs circiter CCXX Martyr says there were 220 men. Most sources say the fleet was composed of 90 men, but Oviedo says there were 120.

Latin Form	Identification	Equivalent
Christophorus Colōnus	Christopher Columbus	Cristóbal Colón
Cuba, Cubae, f.	Cuba, the island	Cuba
Fernandus, Fernandī, m.	Ferdinand, King of Aragon, 1479–1516	Fernando
Grānātensēs Hispānī	inhabitants of Andalusia in Spain	"Andalusians" (MacNutt)
Guaccanarillus, Guaccanarillī, m.	the Taino[3] king met by Columbus on his first voyage	Gaucanagarí
Helisabetha, Helisabethae, f.	Isabel, Queen of Castile and León, 1474–1504	Isabella
Hispaniola, Hispaniolae, f.	the island comprising Haiti and the Dominican Republic	Hispaniola
Ioanna, Ioannae, f.	name given to Cuba	Cuba
Insubrēs, Insubrium, m.pl.	ancient inhabitants of northern Italy	"Milanese" (MacNutt)
Ligur, Liguris, (adj.)	Ligurian, of the area of Genoa, Italy	Ligurian

Fig. 2. Correlation of Latin, English, and Spanish Names.

3 Taino: The name of the Caribbean inhabitants first met by Columbus.