

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
District of Delaware

FILED
CLERK U.S. DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF DELAWARE
2014 AUG -6 AM 9:51

In the Matter of the Seizure of)
(Briefly describe the property to be seized))
Columbus, Christopher. Epistolae... De Insulis Indie supra Gangem)
nuper inventis)
(also listed as: Epistola de insulis nuper inventis))

Case No. 14- 119M

SEALED

APPLICATION FOR A WARRANT
TO SEIZE PROPERTY SUBJECT TO FORFEITURE

I, a federal law enforcement officer or attorney for the government, request a seizure warrant and state under penalty of perjury that I have reason to believe that the following property in the _____ District of _____ Delaware is subject to forfeiture to the United States of America under 18/19 U.S.C. §

2314, 2315, 545/2607, 2609, 1595a(c) (describe the property):

Columbus, Christopher. Epistolae... De Insulis Indie supra Gangem nuper inventis (also listed as: Epistola de insulis nuper inventis).

The application is based on these facts:

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Mark W. Olexa

Applicant's signature

Special Agent Mark Olexa

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 8/6/2014

Sherry R. Fallon

Judge's signature

City and state: Wilmington, Delaware

The Honorable Sherry R. Fallon

Printed name and title

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE**

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF SEIZURE WARRANT

I, Special Agent Mark W. Olexa, United States Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”), United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”), Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”), being duly sworn, depose and state as follows:

1. This affidavit is made in support of a seizure warrant for a rare book known as **Columbus, Christopher. *Epistolae... De Insulis Indie supra Gangem nuper inventis*** (also listed as: *Epistola de insulis nuper inventis*), Rome, Stephan Plannck, 1493 (the title is “Of the islands of India beyond the Ganges, recently discovered”), which is more fully described in Attachment A. As set forth herein, there is probable cause to believe that this rare book was stolen from the Biblioteca Riccardiana (hereinafter referred to as the “Riccardiana Library”), located in Florence, Italy, and was transferred into the United States, and therefore is evidence and instrumentalities of a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2314 and 2315 (the National Stolen Property Act); and Title 18, United States Code, Section 545 (Smuggling Goods into the United States). The item listed in Attachment A is also subject to forfeiture under Title 19, United States Code, Sections 2607 and 2609, and Title 19, United States Code, Section 1595a(c).

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

2. Your affiant is a Special Agent with HSI, and has been a Special Agent for approximately eighteen years. Your affiant is currently assigned to the HSI Resident Agent in Charge Office located in Wilmington, Delaware. Your affiant has received specialized training regarding the investigation and seizure of evidence relating to the investigation of cultural property and art crime. As an HSI Special Agent, your affiant is authorized to investigate violations of laws of the United States, and to execute arrest, search and seizure warrants under

the authority of the United States. Pursuant to these duties your affiant has made arrests, and has executed search and seizure warrants for criminal violations under Title 18 of the United States Code. Your affiant has been the case agent on numerous cultural property criminal investigations, including but not limited to, violations involving Smuggling Goods into the United States (18 U.S.C. § 545) and the National Stolen Property Act (18 U.S.C. §§ 2314, 2315).

3. I make this affidavit based upon (a) personal observations and knowledge while conducting this investigation; (b) conversations with other law enforcement agents who have participated in this investigation and related investigations, to include foreign law enforcement agents; (c) review of documents connected with the investigation; and (d) information obtained from witnesses and subject matter experts in this investigation. Since this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause to obtain a seizure warrant, I have not included details of every aspect of this investigation of which I am aware.

THE APPLICABLE LAW AND REGULATIONS

NATIONAL STOLEN PROPERTY ACT (18 U.S.C. §§ 2314-2315)

4. Title 18, United States Code, Section 2314 makes it a crime to transport, transmit, or transfer in interstate or foreign commerce any goods, wares, merchandise, securities or money, of the value of \$5,000 or more, knowing the same to have been stolen, converted or taken by fraud. Title 18, United States Code, Section 2315 states it is a violation to receive, possess, conceal, store, barter, sell, or dispose of any goods, wares, or merchandise, securities, or money of the value of \$5,000 or more, or pledges or accepts as security for a loan any goods, wares, or merchandise, or securities, of the value of \$500 or more, which have crossed a State or United States boundary after being stolen, unlawfully converted, or taken, knowing the same to have been stolen, unlawfully converted, or taken.

SMUGGLING GOODS INTO THE UNITED STATES (18 U.S.C. § 545)

5. Title 18, United States Code, Section 545 makes the following acts a crime: whoever fraudulently or knowingly imports or brings into the United States, any merchandise contrary to law, or receives, conceals, buys, sells, or in any manner facilitates the transportation, concealment, or sale of such merchandise after importation, knowing the same to have been imported or brought into the United States contrary to law. Merchandise introduced into the United States in violation of this section...shall be forfeited to the United States.

STOLEN CULTURAL PROPERTY IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES (19 U.S.C. §§ 2607, 2609)

6. No article of cultural property documented as appertaining to the inventory of a museum or religious or secular public monument or similar institution in any State Party which is stolen from such institution after the effective date of this chapter, or after the date of entry into force of the Convention for the State Party, whichever date is later, may be imported into the United States.

7. Any designated archaeological or ethnological material or article of cultural property, as the case may be, which is imported into the United States in violation of section 2606 of this title or section 2607 of this title shall be subject to seizure and forfeiture. All provisions of law relating to seizure, forfeiture, and condemnation for violation of the customs laws shall apply to seizures and forfeitures incurred, or alleged to have been incurred, under this chapter, insofar as such provisions of law are applicable to, and not inconsistent with, the provisions of this chapter.

MERCHANDISE INTRODUCED CONTRARY TO LAW (19 U.S.C. § 1595A(c))

8. Merchandise which is introduced or attempted to be introduced into the United States contrary to law shall be treated as follows:

(1)The merchandise shall be seized and forfeited if it—

(A)is stolen, smuggled, or clandestinely imported or introduced....

SUMMARY OF THE INVESTIGATION

9. Since September 2011, the HSI Office in Wilmington, Delaware (hereinafter referred to as “HSI-Wilmington”) has been conducting a cultural property investigation relating to several historically-significant, manually-printed copies of a letter authored by explorer Christopher Columbus during his return trip from the New World in 1493. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] HSI-Wilmington has been conducting this investigation in concert with its foreign law enforcement partners, to include law enforcement in Italy.

A. History of Columbus Letters

10. Christopher Columbus’s first transatlantic expedition left the harbor of Palos in Spain in three ships in August of 1492. Columbus returned to Spain in March 1493, concluding his memorable voyage of discovery to the Americas. Columbus’s report, in the form of a letter to his royal patrons Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, was written while still on the high seas in February 1493, and was reportedly dated when he arrived in Lisbon on March 4, 1493, where he stayed for approximately ten days before sailing home to Spain.¹ The letter was instrumental in

¹ Matthey S. Edney, *The Columbus Letter: The Diffusion of Columbus’ Letter through Europe, 1493-1497* (1996, rev.2009), Online at University of Southern Main, <http://www.oshermaps.org/special-map-exhibits/columbus-letter/iv-diffusion-columbuss-letter-through-europe-1493-1497>, last accessed April 21, 2014.

spreading the news throughout Europe about Columbus's voyage.² Soon after Columbus's arrival in Spain, printed versions of the letter began to appear and were issued across Western Europe, in Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Eleven editions were published in 1493 and six more editions were published between 1494 and 1497. They are, however, all quite rare today. Indeed, several of these editions survive in only a single copy, and there are no more than 80 surviving copies of all the various editions.³

11. Two of the aforementioned editions of the Columbus Letter were published by Rome printer Stephan Planck in 1493. The editions are referred to as either Planck I or Planck II editions based upon the sequence in which a specific letter was published at the time it was created. Based on my investigation into the case, present day rare book dealers typically refer to these letters collectively as the "Columbus Letters."

B. The Tip

12. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

13. Although not specifically addressed in the initial tip, subsequent reporting in May and June of 2012 by the CW provided details of a suspected stolen Christopher Columbus Planck II edition letter (hereinafter referred to as the "Riccardiana Planck II Columbus

² B.W. Ife, *Introduction to the Letters from America*, (1992, 2002), Research at King's College London, Online at <http://www.ems.kcl.ac.uk/content/pub/b002.html>, last accessed April 21, 2014.

³ See *id.* at fn 1.

Letter”) that had been stolen from the Riccardiana Library (Biblioteca Riccardiana), located in Florence, Italy, and replaced with a forgery.

14. The CW stated that on or about November 25, 2010, while conducting research, the CW examined a Plannck II Columbus Letter at the Riccardiana Library. Upon his review of the Plannck II edition, the CW strongly suspected that the Riccardiana Library copy was a forgery. The CW explained that this particular Plannck II edition was a collected volume, described as a pamphlet of several works bound together. The CW was suspicious of this particular Plannck II edition copy for a number of reasons. The CW described in detail that the gutters of the book appeared to have been pasted together in order to hide the absence of a watermark. The CW stated that the Plannck II edition was shorter than the other pamphlets in the same volume, appearing as though it had been inserted into the pamphlet of works bound together. The CW stated that the paper appeared to be a forgery, since it appeared to be printed by lithography rather than type. The CW noticed that all or most of the pamphlets in the collected volume each possessed a library stamp except the Plannck II edition.

15. After receiving the initial tip, investigators contacted the SME and explained to him that they were investigating allegations regarding various forged and stolen Columbus Letters. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

16. In July 2012, the HSI Attaché office in Italy made notification to Italy’s Carabinieri Police Force for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (hereinafter referred to as “Italian law enforcement”) of the aforementioned lead information regarding the suspected theft at the Riccardiana Library and requested their assistance in conducting a joint United States and

Italian investigation.

C. Examination of the Italian Riccardiana Library Forgery

17. In July 2012, the SME and your affiant, in coordination with the HSI Attaché office in Italy and Italian law enforcement, traveled to Florence, Italy to examine the suspected forgery located in the Riccardiana Library. Upon arriving at the library, the SME was permitted to conduct an in-person examination of the suspected forgery. Based on this examination, the SME determined that the document was a forgery. The SME prepared a written report that detailed his findings and conclusions for law enforcement, including the following relevant excerpts:

a. I examined this copy in Florence on Wednesday morning, 18 July 2012. The collections of the Riccardiana are those of the Riccardi family of Florence in the 17th and 18th centuries, which includes their purchase of the library of another well known 17th-century Florentine book collector, Vincenzo Capponi. The Riccardi family went bankrupt in the early 19th century, and the library was purchased by the city of Florence, April 1813, to prevent its treasures from leaving Tuscany. The volume containing the Columbus Letter, Ed. R. 684, is a miscellaneous collection of 41 early printed books. The binding is of early 19th-century marbled boards with vellum spine and tips; there is a leather spine label, titled "Miscellanea Varia". On the flyleaf there is a 20th-century pencil list of the items, the Columbus Letter being counted as the 18th item. There is also an older flyleaf with an earlier list of the contents, written in ink. The Riccardiana has been recorded in print as owning a copy of the "Planck II" Columbus Letter at least since 1894 (Henry Harrisse, "Christophe Colombe et les Académiciens espagnols," *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 11 [1894], p. 36).

b. As for the Columbus Letter within this volume, it is clearly a forgery: specifically, a photographic facsimile of "Planck II" printed on older but incorrect paper. The original "Planck II" is a quarto of 4 leaves. That is, the pamphlet consisted of a single sheet of paper folded in quarters to produce 4 leaves: leaves 1 and 4 are attached to each other at the inner fold, as are leaves 2 and 3. The chainlines of the paper are horizontal, that is, they run in the same direction as the printing. Examination of and information on a

large number of authentic copies of Planck II shows that they were printed on a single stock of paper, with a watermark depicting a Balance (Scales) contained within a circle. I have good images of the two slight variants of this watermark. It should be noted that in the fifteenth century paper was handmade on twin paper moulds, which were used in alternation at the paper vat. Because each mould was individually made, the watermarks of the two moulds, created by shaped wires sewn to the surface of the mould, would be slightly different from each other. These are referred to as twin watermarks, and any given copy of the Planck II Columbus Letter will contain, divided either between leaves 1 and 4, or 2 and 3, one or the other of these twin marks. I have high-quality, actual-size images of both twins, one taken from the Princeton University copy and the other from the Hispanic Society of America (New York City) copy.

c. The paper of the Riccardiana Columbus Letter is different from the authentic paper of Planck II. At the inner margin of each of the four leaves is pasted a narrow strip, which obscures the paper and makes it hard to see a watermark. However, on leaf 2, positioned near the bottom margin, is a trace of a watermark projecting beyond the reinforcement strip. It does not look like the Balance watermark of Planck II, and it is in a different position from where the authentic Planck II watermark is found, roughly in the middle of the leaves, about halfway between the top and bottom margins. Moreover, the distance between chainlines of the Planck II Balance paper is about 34-35 mm, whereas the chainline spacing of the Riccardiana copy is only about 24 mm. This in itself is sufficient to prove that it is not the authentic paper of a genuine copy of Planck II.

d. There is another strong indicator of the falsity of this copy. The Columbus Letter is a work of 8 pages printed on 4 leaves: that is, four pages (1-recto, 2-verso, 3-recto and 4-verso) were printed on one side of the original blank sheet of paper, and the remaining four pages (1-verso, 2-recto, 3-verso and 4-recto) were printed on the other side of the sheet. The type-pages for each side were locked up tight into a single physical unit, called a forme: that containing the 1-recto type-page is called the outer forme, that containing 1-verso is called the inner forme. The distances, or dimensions, separating each type-page in a locked-up forme are constants. In particular, the distance from the right margin of 2-verso to the left margin of 3-recto is a constant. This distance can be measured very accurately in the Princeton University copy of Planck II, for it is disbound: the bifolium of leaves 2 and 3 can be fully viewed, without any distortion from the binding and its

sewing. This inner-margin distance measures 35.5 mm. However, in the Riccardiana copy, the equivalent measurement is 26 mm, which is notably too narrow. The strong presumption is that when this forged Letter was printed from photographic plates, the forger was not aware that there is a correct measurement for the inner margins, and that if the facsimile printing gets this measurement wrong, that will be a signal of its falsity.

e. Finally, there are clear signs that this Columbus Letter was inserted into the volume at a later date. The entire thick volume Ed. R. 684 was sturdily sewn on 6 bands, which run horizontal at the spine of the volume. However, the sewing thread of the Columbus Letter, visible in the inner margin (gutter) between leaves 2 and 3, shows an entirely different pattern of stitching from the remaining items in the volume; and its stitches do not line up with the 6 bands which establish the pattern of the original stitching. Moreover, the dimensions of the Columbus Letter are somewhat smaller than those of the other 40 works in the volume. The latter measure 19.8 x 14.1 cm, while the Columbus leaves measure 19.5 x 13.5 cm.

f. In conclusion: there is strong evidence that an authentic Planck II Columbus Letter was originally in the Riccardiana volume Ed. R. 684, and that it has been removed from the volume and replaced by an inserted forged copy of the same work.

18. On or about August 24, 2012, based in part on the SME's report, Italian law enforcement seized the forged Columbus Letter from the Riccardiana Library in Florence, Italy, and conducted an investigation into how the original Riccardiana Planck II Columbus Letter was stolen from the library.

19. During the Italian investigation, a technical report was prepared about the theft, which was shared with HSI investigators, and which included the following relevant facts: (1) the text of the forged letter was determined to be a photocopy (fake); (2) the numbers visible on the top right side of the first page margin (18 and 20) of the forged letter were found to be written with a pen, while number 19, seemingly written with a pencil, was actually photocopied; (3) the 'C. 4' monogram placed at the end of the "epistle" in the forged letter was also the result of a photocopy; and (4) no library stamp was present on the forged letter. In sum, while no

suspects were identified, Italian law enforcement was able to confirm that the Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter was stolen and the forged letter was inserted in its place.

E. **The Stolen Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter is Located and its Authenticity Confirmed**

20. In August of 2012, HSI-Wilmington agents obtained additional information in the course of the investigation that the stolen Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter was possibly located at the United States Library of Congress.

21. Records subsequently obtained by HSI-Wilmington from a New York based auction house that was known to have sold the Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter in 1992 detailed that the book was consigned in late 1992 to the auction house by a New York-based rare book dealer. According to records provided by the rare book dealer to the auction house at the time of consignment, the New York-based rare book dealer previously purchased the book from an unknown entity in September of 1990 for an undisclosed amount of money. The Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter was ultimately sold by the auction house in November of 1992 to a private purchaser in the amount of \$300,000. The purchaser subsequently donated the item to the Library of Congress in 2004, where the book remained.

22. On August 23, 2012, and again on July 17, 2013 the SME examined the Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The SME determined that this document is the original document that was stolen from the Riccardiana Library in Florence, Italy. Following the SME's July 2013 examination, he prepared a formal report that documented his findings and conclusions. A summary of the relevant excerpts is set forth below:

- a. On 23 August 2012 I examined the [referenced donator]-LC copy of Plannck II, and was struck by three features that allowed it to be, and even suggested it to be, identical with the stolen

Riccardiana copy:

- *Leaf dimensions.* The dimensions, 18.9 x 13.6 cm, are slightly smaller than those of the Riccardiana copy, and in my notes I wrote, "edges plain, ?recently trimmed down".
- *Library stamp deleted.* On leaf 4 verso, centered in the lower margin, are unmistakable signs of a heavy deletion. The position is approximately where the Riccardiana copy would have had its stamp. The deletion involved severe erasure. As [Library of Congress employee] noted, the corresponding printing of 4 recto was affected by it, this being the place of the "small restorations" on 4 recto described by Christie's.
- *The sewing holes of the earlier binding.* I made a note: "earlier sewing holes vis[ible], not used", that is, not (all) used for the stitching of the current red morocco binding. I sketched a rough diagram in my notebook, and recorded the approximate distances between the sewing holes, from top of the leaf to the bottom, in the gutter of the bifolium leaves 2-3.

b. Since I examined the []-LC copy in August 2012, the Carabinieri in Florence have supplied additional photographs of the volume **Ed. R. 684** [collected volume that previously contained the Riccardiana Planck II Columbus Letter], which allow more detailed comparisons. We now have good images of the inventory numbers written in the pamphlets immediately preceding and following the missing Columbus Letter in the Riccardiana volume, and so we know to near certainty what numbers that Columbus Letter contained. We also have a sharp image of the Riccardiana stamp, so that we know its dimensions and design in detail. Finally, we have, with mm-scale included for accuracy of measurement, a very clear picture of the sewing bands of the Riccardiana volume, at the place where the forged Columbus Letter was inserted.

c. With these photographs as additional comparative evidence, I revisited the Library of Congress on 17 July 2013, and examined the []-LC copy again, with the help of [Library of Congress employee]. Two additional items of evidence became clear on re-examination:

- *Sewing holes:* From the photograph of the sewing bands of **Ed. R. 684**, the distances between the sewing holes, going from upper edge to lower edge, can be accurately estimated. I did not have this information in August 2012, when I first measured the sewing-hole spacings of the []-LC copy. I also re-measured the

spacings in the []-LC copy on this second visit. The result: the distances between sewing bands of the Riccardiana volume are, within the limits of quick measurement, identical to those of the []-LC copy of the Columbus Letter. This is especially significant, for the Riccardiana volume has a distinct eccentricity in the spacing of its bands. The distances between bands 1-2 and between 5-6, with short stitches, are more or less identical, about 22 mm. The distances between bands 2-3, 3-4, and 4-5, with long stitches, ought in principle to be more or less identical, that is, evenly spaced, but they are not. The distance from band 2 to 3 is only about 35 mm, whereas the remaining two, band 3 to 4 and band 4 to 5, are (essentially) identical, about 40 mm. This same anomaly holds for the []-LC copy.

- *Inventory numbers of 1-recto.* As noted above, in the volume Ed. R. 684, at the upper outer corner of the first page, the inventory number of the tract preceding the Columbus Letter is "19", and that of the tract following the Columbus Letter is "21". In the []-LC copy of the Columbus Letter, at this position, the intervening number "20" is clearly visible. That is, the number shows signs of bleaching to remove it, and some other deletion seems to have been carried out at this portion of the leaf; but still, the number "20" can be easily seen. Moreover, as [Library of Congress employee] pointed out, the shape of the "2" in this number is closely similar to the "2" of "21" in the tract following the Columbus Letter in Ed. R. 684. The second, correct inventory number "18" is not preserved in the []-LC copy, but for an obvious reason: the right margin of the leaf has been cut down from its original size by a half centimeter or more. Thus, the second inventory number got trimmed away, very possibly intentionally to remove it.

d. For these reasons it is my opinion that the []-LC copy of the Plannck II Columbus Letter, as sold by [auction house] New York on 20 November 1992, is the stolen copy of the Biblioteca Riccardiana.

23. On March 6, 2014, following discussions between the Department of Justice and the Library of Congress, HSI investigators traveled to the Library of Congress and took possession of the Catalonia Plannck II Columbus Letter from the Library of Congress pursuant to an inter-agency agreement.

24. On March 27, 2014, the Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter was also

examined at the Smithsonian Institution - Museum Conservation Institute in Suitland, Maryland for purposes of non-invasive digital imaging, to include Infrared Reflectography (IRR), Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI)⁴, Hyperspectral Imaging (HSI) and transmitted light imaging.⁵ This examination was conducted by a Smithsonian Imaging Specialist and a Smithsonian paper conservator.

25. The examination found evidence of the probable use of a chemical agent to bleach the ink of the prior library stamp previously located on the last page (folio 4 verso) of the Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter. The examination also found evidence that repair tissue had been adhered to this site where the bleaching work had occurred, likely to mask damage and add support to weaknesses sustained there from bleaching the prior library stamp. The examination also found damage and retouching to printed characters located on the reverse side of the page on folio 4 recto. A summary of the relevant excerpts from the Smithsonian imaging report are as follows:

RTI Summary for Riccardiana (Florence) Copy Folio 4 Recto:

a. An overall view of folio 4 recto of the Florence copy was imaged using RTI. The technique definitely enhances the three-dimensionality of the page and emphasizes the area where the original library stamp would have been on the reverse... The high-resolution imagery also shows the distorted text, obvious damage that resulted in misalignment and retouching to the printed characters as seen in visible light around the area of the

⁴ Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) is a newer imaging technique that creates hyper-realistic digital surrogates that are interactively controlled by the viewer. This new method is based upon the synthesis of multiple digital images of a subject in a fixed position collected from a fixed camera position (source: Smithsonian Report).

⁵ Transmitted illumination aids in viewing and documenting the density and thickness variation of an object and is a common technique to document watermarks, tears, repairs, and the structure of paper. An object is lit from the opposite side from the viewing perspective and the light that is able to penetrate the object is recorded by the camera (source: Smithsonian Report).

stamp (Figs.[]; un in cuncteque – the n has been visibly altered with an additional serif on the first leg of the n; su in Jesu Christo; on in donauit; st in sacra:festaque). This aligns with disturbances to the fibers that can be seen in transmitted light (Fig. []).

RTI Summary for Riccardiana (Florence) Copy Folio 4 Verso:

b. An overall view of folio 4 verso of the Florence copy was imaged using RTI. Also seen with the RTI of folio 4 recto, the technique enhances the three-dimensionality of the page and emphasizes the area where the original library stamp would have been. This is best illustrated with the specular enhancement mode as seen in *Figs. []*.

c. In Fig. [], the particularly bumpy appearance of the circular area is coincident with an interruption of the pattern of laid lines (fine parallel lines running vertically and perpendicularly to the larger horizontal chain lines, thinner areas left in the paper from the papermaker's screen) which are less clearly visible than in the surrounding areas of blank paper. This is indicative of wetting and flattening under strong pressure, possibly a suction device, such that the natural pattern of formation in the paper is disrupted. This is also seen in the transmitted light images of both the Florence and [] copies.

d. Using the luminance unsharp mask mode in the RTIViewer, it was noted that the paper fibers around the area of the original library stamp varied quite a bit from the paper fibers of the page. The fibers of this area had spokes and resembled a corona (Fig.[]). These details can also be seen with the side view image using raking visible light in Fig.[] [Smithsonian SME] further investigated this variance with visual examination using two different sets of magnifying optical glasses and concluded that in fact a repair tissue has been adhered to this site, likely to mask damage and add support to weaknesses sustained there from bleaching. It is a skillful mend to a poorly executed stain reduction/bleach job.

- Individual fibers can be seen radiating out in a sunburst pattern, typical of what is described as a “feathered edge” to disguise the mend and blend it into the texture of the primary support paper.
- When viewed in very strongly angled raking light, to the naked eye (Fig. []) a difference in color, and gloss or reflection can be seen between the added fibers and the original paper outside the area of interest. It is possible that those long shiny

white fibers are possibly from a bast fiber source or silk, not cotton or linen rag, and so anachronistic to the original paper fibers, which are relatively matte and yellowed. It would be possible to remove and analyze this fiber under polarized light microscopy to determine the source.

Summary of Transmitted Illumination of Riccardiana (Florence) Copy:

f. Transmitted illumination emphasized the three areas of greater density, specifically the lower two also show lighter, whiter patches at the edges of the dark area. This indicates thinning of the paper, possibly due to aggressive use of a tool that scraped some fiber away. The thinning and density of fibers on folio 4 align with obvious damage that resulted in misalignment and retouching to the printed characters as seen in visible light (*Fig. []*). These details can be clearly seen by the reader of this pdf document on a monitor, as the high-resolution figures retain integrity up to 400%.

g. Additional note: a binder's mark was noted on the inner spine, bottom, of the box holding the Florentine copy. The toolmark is ATELIERS LAURENCHET. This Parisian firm (active 1947-2007) has evidently gone through bankruptcy proceedings and liquidation, c.2007-2014.⁶

CONCLUSION

26. Based upon the aforementioned information and analysis, your affiant believes that probable cause exists to show that the Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter in the custody of HSI-Wilmington is property valued at over \$5,000, was stolen from the Riccardiana Library located in Florence, Italy, and was transferred into the United States. Therefore, the Riccardiana Plannck II Columbus Letter is evidence of violations of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2314, 2315 (the National Stolen Property Act) and 18 U.S.C. § 545 (Smuggling Goods into the United

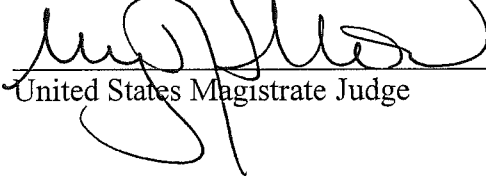
⁶ <<http://www.infofaillite.fr/fr/liquidation-judiciaire/600103/reliural-ateliers-laurenchet.aspx>>
Accessed 27 March 2014.

States) as outlined above, and is therefore subject to seizure and forfeiture pursuant to 19 U.S.C. §2609, as well as 19 U.S.C. § 1595a(c).

Mark W. Olexa

Mark W. Olexa
Special Agent
Homeland Security Investigations

Sworn to and subscribed before me on
this 6th day of August 2014


United States Magistrate Judge

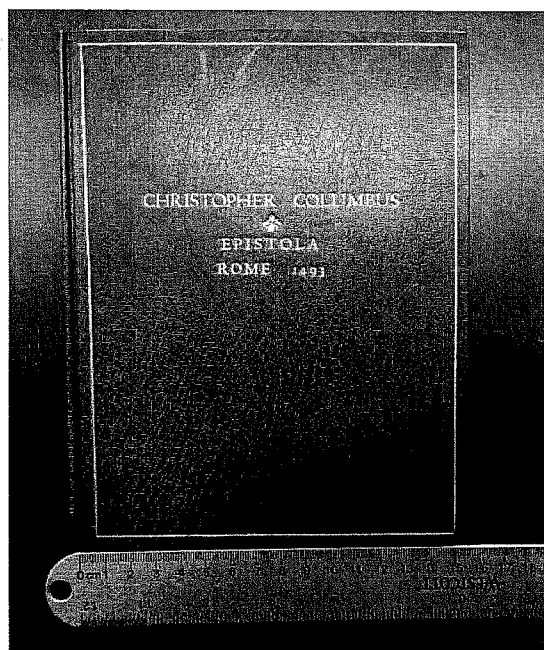
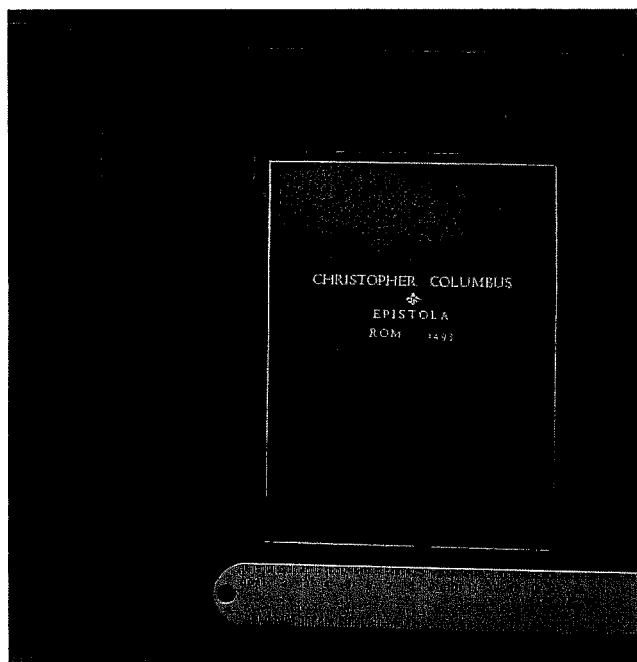
ATTACHMENT A

ITEM TO BE SEIZED:

Columbus, Christopher. *Epistolae... De Insulis Indie supra Gangem nuper inventis* (also listed as: *Epistola de insulis nuper inventis*), Rome, Stephan Planck, 1493 (the title is "Of the islands of India beyond the Ganges, recently discovered" and is commonly referred to as the "Columbus Letter")

The item is further described as being in a modern red morocco binding, title gilt on upper cover, blue watered silk endleaves; edges plain (possibly recently trimmed), and enclosed within a matching red morocco folding box. The dimensions of the leaves of the copy are 18.9 x 13.6 cm. On leaf 4 verso, centered in the lower margin, are unmistakable signs of a heavy deletion. On leaf 4 recto there are signs of restorations.

Photographs of the item to be seized are as follows:



¶ Epigramma R. L. de Cordaria Episcopi Montispaluffi
ad Inulcissimum Regem Hispaniarum.

Jam nulla Hispanie tellus addenda triumpho
Atq; parum tantis vitiis uxoribus erat.
Nunc longe Eois regio depensa sub undis.
Structura est titulos Hercis magnæ tuos.
Unde reperit merito referenda Colombo
Gratia: sed summo est malo: habeda deo.
Qui vincenda parat noua Regna tibiq; sibiq;
Atq; simul fortis prestat & esse pluri.

