

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

*IN RE: COLUMBUS, CHRISTOPHER,
EPISTOLA DE INSULIS NUPER INVENTIS,
ROME, STEPHAN PLANCK, AFTER 29
APRIL 1493, Goff C-757*

Case No. 20-_____

STIPULATION AND ORDER

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”), Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”) and the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Delaware (“USAO”) have determined the following facts:

- a. The document that forms the subject of this Stipulation and Order is the Columbus, Christopher, Epistola de insulis nuper inventis (the “Columbus Letter-Planck I”), Rome, Stephan Planck, after 29 April 1493, Goff C-757.

HISTORY OF THE COLUMBUS LETTER

- b. 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 of his voyage, in the form of a letter to his royal patrons Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, was instrumental in spreading the news throughout Europe.¹
- c. Stephan Planck, a printer based in Rome, Italy, printed two editions of the Columbus Letter following Columbus’ voyage. The editions are commonly referred to as

¹ 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 September 24, 2019.

“Planck I” and “Planck II” editions. Both Planck editions are 4-leaf pamphlets of essentially identical text, but they are distinguishable because in the first edition the title heading mentions only King Ferdinand, while the second edition acknowledges both King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Both Planck editions are highly valued by rare book collectors around the world, including in the United States.

OWNERSHIP OF THE COLUMBUS LETTER-PLANCK I

- d. Sometime in or around 1875, the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, Italy acquired a copy of the Columbus Letter-Planck I.
- e. Between in or around 1985 and 1988, the Columbus Letter-Planck I was stolen from the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

CURRENT LOCATION OF THE COLUMBUS LETTER-PLANCK I

- f. In or around May 2003, INDIVIDUAL purchased the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana’s Columbus Letter-Planck I from a rare book dealer in the United States for a sum of money.
- g. At the time of the sale to INDIVIDUAL, the Columbus Letter-Planck I was not identified as belonging to, or coming from, the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, Italy, and the Biblioteca Nazionale Marcianna had not reported it as stolen.
- h. On or about February 7, 2019, special agents from HSI-Wilmington contacted INDIVIDUAL regarding the Columbus Letter-Planck I in INDIVIDUAL’s possession in the United States.
- i. On or about July 5, 2019, a subject matter expert determined that INDIVIDUAL’s Columbus Letter-Planck I is the same document previously stolen from the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, as noted in paragraph e.