

# PROCEEDINGS

## First San Salvador Conference Columbus And His World

Compiled by Donald T. Gerace



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# **Columbus' First Landfall: San Salvador**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In order to try to understand any event in history, it is necessary not only to examine the event itself, but also to study what went before it, and after it. Consequently it is not enough, when looking into the matter of Columbus' landfall, to read for a few weeks an English translation of Las Casas' transcription of Columbus' Journal. Let us go a little further:

## **WHO WAS COLUMBUS?**

When he accepted the "Capitulaciones", at a time when people were relatively short and seldom reached sixty, Columbus was tall, imposing and just over forty years old. He had blue eyes, and his reddish hair was prematurely greying. Always courteous, even to the lowliest sailor, he pointed out right from the start that the gentle "indians" would better be gained "for our holy faith" by kindness than by force. But his salient trait was his single minded vocation. We have all met individuals with one overriding vocation; they are either irresistible or unbearable. Columbus was both, in turns.

Like Taviani, I have little doubt that the Discoverer was born Genoese; but the Discovery was neither Italian nor hardly even Spanish. It was Castilian and Aragonese, for Italy had not yet emerged as a nation-state and a unified Spain was just about to see the light.

Like every genius, Columbus had complexes, at least three. He was a snob who wanted to prove his noble birth, though his parents and grandparents were modest textile workers (he never married Beatriz Enriquez de Arana, the mother of his most talented son, Fernando, because she was a commoner). He insisted on proving that he was a scientific navigator, when in fact he was the greatest instinctive navigator of all time (as Peter Martyr put it, "Nada me gustan a mi las razones de este Almirante"). Finally, he had a persecution complex, and when one shows what one fears, one often achieves it. On the other hand, his principal values were these: loyalty to the crown, ambition for gold (for the reconquest of Jerusalem, he insisted),

and faith in God, who had chosen him to carry Christ to another world (“Otro Mundo”). Cristo Ferens, he called himself. Why then is he not a Saint?

When I first visited the Monastery of La Rábida, the brother-porter who opened the door said he would be glad to show me in, but only if I first listened to his reasons for believing that Columbus did in fact marry Beatriz. I listened, but, like the Church, I was not convinced. This was at least one reason why Columbus was never canonized. Sainthood is a full time job.

Saint he was not, but poet he was. “Era grande el gusto de las mañanas”, “el viento tornó a soplar amoroso”; his writings are full of such beautiful phrases. America bears that name because Americo Vepucci was a journalist whose boisterous letters were immediate bestsellers which soon reached some 40 editions, while Columbus’ first letter, one of the most important in History, only achieved a dozen. History, like Universities, often favors those who publish over those who discover.

We are dealing, then, with a visionary, a complex genius, and an instinctive, not scientific, sailor. Precise information could not be his forte, and his Journal shows it.

#### **IN WHAT MOMENT OF HISTORY DID COLUMBUS SAIL?**

The Discoverer had one foot in the Middle Ages and the other in the Renaissance. He found it difficult to deal with true Renaissance princes like Joao II of Portugal, who refused to have his devils exorcised “lest his angels leave with them”. With Queen Isabella of Castille he did better, but she also belonged more to the Renaissance than Columbus (her library included Boccaccio).

For the new Spain the opportunity was perfect: her champions had for centuries been pushing frontiers against the Moors, and now the war was over. “Yo vide poner los estandartes de vuestras majestades sobre las torres del Alfambra”, said Columbus, and his project was approved at Santa Fé precisely when Spain was ready to start pushing frontiers again, this time across the Ocean. But the incipient unification of Spain had a high price: Moors and Jews who would not join her unified Christendom were exiled, and the very day that Columbus weighed anchors from Palos, a shipload of weeping exiles crossed, as he did, la Barra del Saltes, out to sea. So Spain lost some of her best scientists and cartographers. But make no mistake: this was not a racial persecution. It was religious; and a converted Jew, Luis de Santangel, was confirmed as King Fernando’s treasurer, and put up the money to equip for Columbus the ships which Palos owed the crown; and it was to Santangel that Columbus sent his first letter. (I am sorry, but the Queen did not have to pawn her jewels). On the other hand, despite Madariaga, there is no hard evidence that Columbus himself may have been a Jew.

Nor is there any real evidence that some old sailor had already crossed the Ocean and showed Columbus the way. I have followed the route of the Vikings and I am convinced they did reach Newfoundland. But they did not inform the rest of the world, and to discover is to rend the veil and to pass on what one has discovered, not to run into something and forget it. And Columbus did not seek "Skrelings" in the North; he sought the Grand Khan in the Tropics. In any case, the first to bump into America was probably not a Viking but an African, for winds and currents flow irresistibly from Guinea to the Caribbean.

Also, let us not forget that the first modern grammar, that of Nebrija, was published the very year Columbus sailed. So we are dealing with memoirs born on the frontier between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and also on the frontier between Spain's war of independence and a new, unified Spain. A moment of transition, not of standardized words and measures. So Columbus' Journal must be honestly interpreted as well as read.

### **HOW DID COLUMBUS SEE HIS WORLD?**

It seems likely that Toscanelli, the Great Florentine doctor and cosmographer, passed on to Columbus the world-view of Henricus Martellus and of Martin Behaim, who in 1492 produced the first known globe. National Geographic Magazine has recently published the best rendering I have seen of this globe, which is in Nuremberg.

It has been said that Columbus thought that the circumference of the globe was smaller than Eratosthenes had calculated three centuries before Christ, an estimate which Islam had since confirmed; more important, he obviously calculated that Asia reached much further around the globe than it does, leaving only some three thousand nautical miles of ocean between Asia and Europe. Not a surprising mistake, for Asia had been described by Muslims, and by Marco Polo, whom Columbus avidly read, and the fact is that, seen from a camel or from a small lateener, Asia must have seemed almost endless. But the three commissions which examined Columbus' project, one Portuguese and two Spanish, knew better: they calculated that the distance to Asia was three times greater than Columbus estimated, and their negative reports were only overruled by Santangel's good judgment when he told the Queen, "What have we to lose?"

Great decisions often require as much good judgment as they do science, and so does the study of Columbus' route.

### **WHAT MEANS DID COLUMBUS HAVE AT HIS DISPOSAL?**

The Discoverer's three ships ranged between 60 and 100 tons, and the Caravel, Niña, was re-rigged by Columbus with a square mainsail, the better to run with the wind (tacking up-wind was a Portuguese specialty which cost Portugal the discovery, for to sail West from the Azores is still almost

impossible). We have no complete description of a caravel, but Gene Lyons' document, also published by National Geographic, does add a great deal of above-decks information about Niña's later voyages, and Roger Smith of INA tells me that we are at last finding remains of a Caravel near Turks and Caicos. (He and I both searched unsuccessfully for Columbus' last Caravels in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica; and perhaps one can be found at Isabella, Santo Domingo or at Porto Bello, Panamá.)

I propose that caravels were faster than naos not only because they were sleeker, but also because they were doubled-ended, at least below the water-line, which made them hydrodynamically more efficient. But, except in the most favorable following wind, the relatively clumsy nao Santa Maria must have set the limit to the fleet's speed.

Life on board the nao and the two caravels was at best spartan. The Captain did have a cabin to himself in the sterncastle, while most of the others slept wherever they could. But even the Captain's cabin was not a comfortable place to sleep; into it protruded the great tiller, probably held in place with block and tackle, which must have creaked hideously all night. Food on board was rudimentary, and as far as I know, Sebastian Cabot, that scoundrel, was the first to bring along a cook. Before that, salted meat, fish, flour, and chickpeas were prepared by the crew over coals in an iron box under the fo'castle, then eaten in any relatively cozy corner, washed down with watered wine while it lasted, and then with rotting water until rain could be caught in a sail. Mealtime conversation surely concentrated on things most missed: women, citrus fruit and green vegetables. And let us not avoid speaking of the body's necessities; they were done from a swing hanging over the gun'l and certainly not to the windward. Spanish sailors called the swing "El Jardin"; a splendid euphemism.

All this discomfort was not much greater than that suffered by any peasant of the time, and it was continually relieved by the beautiful traditions of the sea, especially by songs such as the one sung out each half hour when the hour-glass was turned (hence our ship's bells): "Bendito sea el día en que Dios nació, San Juan que lo bautizó, y Santa Maria que lo parió"; and the Salve Regina, sung at sundown to much the same tune as we use today. Not everything has been changed by the Vatican Council, and Columbus was so devout that he did not need a chaplain.

Nevertheless, we can hardly expect navigators living and working under such conditions to be precise in modern terms, and we must read the chroniclers accordingly.

### HOW DID COLUMBUS NAVIGATE?

The basic system was dead reckoning (direction, speed, and elapsed time) and it was obviously approximate. Time was measured with the hour glass, which a sea-sick cabin boy might delay turning; and it could only be corrected at high noon, and only for local time, so that longitude could not

be figured. Direction was measured with a compass which was divided into 32 points instead of our 360 degrees, so that one must allow a tolerance of up to 11 1/2 degrees each way when translating points to degrees. Variation and deviation were only then beginning to be studied, but the compass could be corrected at midday with a gnomon. Speed was estimated by the time it took a bow-wave or a floating object to travel the length of the ship. Three fifths of the waterline in feet divided by the number of seconds gives the speed in knots; I have tried it with a champagne cork and it works, even after champagne. The Journal of Oct. 25 gives us the average speed of Columbus' fleet with a favorable wind; 2 leagues, or some 6 knots, a reasonable speed which agrees with many other instances in which the Journal gives distance and elapsed time.

But there is evidence that dead reckoning was carefully checked by latitude sailing, a method used centuries before by Greeks and by Polynesians. For example, in the Journal of his third voyage, on July 7, Columbus says that he plans to sail Southwest down to a parallel with the lands of Sierra Leone. Even with the naked eye one can easily follow known overhead stars along a given latitude (again, I have tried it with success); and when Columbus sailed in 1492, the Pleiades, or Seven Sisters, and Castor and Pollux, the twins, sailed with him near the latitude of Ferro in the Canaries, which Columbus said was the same as that of the Island of San Salvador.

This might support Arne Molander's Northern Bahamas landfall hypothesis, which he has presented here; but the fact is that the difference between San Salvador's latitude of 24 degrees and Ferro's of 27.5 is equivalent only to a sighting over two knuckles held at arms length. If you look straight up tonight near midnight, you will see the Pleiades. Hold up your fist and check if you can tell whether the Seven Sisters are a couple of knuckles off.

Columbus did try to use a quadrant, but it gave him very poor results (before you criticize the Discoverer, please try it on a pitching ship).

Morison and McElroy interpreted Columbus' league to be equivalent to 3.18 nautical miles. Marden of National Geographic prefers a league of 2.82 nautical miles, and to keep the transatlantic course from running into the Continent (or Cuba), a correction of 9-10% has to be applied. Once again, historical perspective has something to teach us. The smallest estimate for the length of a medieval league is to be found, in my opinion, in the "Siete Partidas" of Alfonso X el Sabio (late XIII Century), and it works out at a little more than 2 nautical miles per league. The greatest estimate for a Renaissance league is that of Hernando Colón, the Discoverer's son, whose testimony at the Junta de Badajoz (April 13, 1524) works out at some 4 nautical miles per league. But the estimates of several of his colleagues at Badajoz work out at less than 3 1/2. So I submit that the best we can do is to figure somewhere around 3 nautical miles to the league. And there is practical evidence for this approximation: in his first letter from America, Columbus states that the distance from Cuba to Hispaniola was 18 leagues,

which makes the league equivalent to some three nautical miles; and one generation later, Juan Sebastian de Elcano, Magellan's successor (whose Diary I was lucky enough to find) says that Magellan's Strait is one hundred leagues long, and its length is in fact some three hundred nautical miles.

So we are dealing with eye-ball estimates by Columbus expressed in approximate units, and to crank Columbus' data into a computer to two decimal points is obviously foolhardy.

All this and much more must be taken into account when trying to deduce Columbus' landfall from Las Casas' transcription of Columbus' Journal. The original Journal is lost, and Las Casas' transcription itself must be taken with a grain of salt since it was written by a Bishop, not a navigator, who corrected headings or distances more than 50 times in his text on the first voyage, by crossing out, inserting, etc.

### THE ATLANTIC CROSSING

As always, the National Geographic Magazine has made a splendid presentation which will reach several million people and will be accepted by many of them as final. Therein lies the danger; for on the subject of Columbus' route, and especially on the subject of his landfall, it is unlikely that anyone will soon say the last word, unless Varela finds the original Journal for us.

The first assumption that National Geographic's Luis Marden makes in plotting Columbus' course across the Atlantic, is that in his Journal Columbus simply noted his heading and his estimate of distance made good over the water. To this Marden applies a correction for wind and current based on average modern conditions. But is it conceivable that such a navigator would altogether omit correcting for drift? The fact is that Columbus often *did* correct for wind and current. There are several instances throughout his Journals, but two should suffice: on September 13, 1492, he notes his estimate and then says that he will write down less because the current is against him. And on September 25, 1498, he says that the current must have set the ships to the Northeast.

The point is that by applying an average correction to a course which Columbus had in many cases already corrected, Marden is surely compounding some corrections. So, Geographic's conclusion that the entire course leads to Samaná Cay carries no weight: over such a long distance, any minor daily error in Columbus' corrections, or in Marden's, can easily add up to a much greater difference than the one degree of latitude which separates San Salvador from Samaná. In fact, Marden himself points out that half a knot difference in leeway can make a sideways difference of 12 nautical miles in 24 hours, which adds up to 396 nautical miles in the 33 days of Columbus' Atlantic crossing. This could place Columbus' landfall anywhere from Walker's Key, the Northernmost point in the Bahamas, to Great Inagua, the Southernmost.



So to try to approximate leeway any more than Columbus himself did, proves nothing as to his landfall, and we must fall back on a much shorter leg of the voyage: Columbus' course from his first landfall to a well established point on the north coast of Cuba, via the islands which the Journal describes.

### COLUMBUS' COURSE THROUGH THE BAHAMAS

We have seen why no hypothesis can fit the geography perfectly, so until new evidence turns up, we must interpret leagues, compass points and average speeds with the tolerances already described, and be satisfied with the proposal which presents the least difficulties. Two pieces of information are basic: The Journal (Oct. 26) makes it clear that the indians led Columbus along their traditional canoe route, the only route they knew (they had no sail); second, the indians kept insisting that the island from which their gold came was a large one, and lay to the Southwest (Journal, Oct. 16 and 17).

For me the least problematic route goes as follows:

*Sun. Oct. 14:* The fleet left Guanahaní (San Salvador) at about 1600 hours. At night, lay to. Wind probably E, and contrary current. At dawn, sailed SW 7 leagues (23 Nautical Miles on a modern map) to Santa Maria de la Concepción (Rum Cay), arriving Mon. 1200.

*Mon. Oct. 15:* 1200 — 1800. Sailed down E coast and along S coast of Rum Cay (map, 12 NM).

*Tues. Oct. 16:* 1000 (1200?) — 1800. SE wind, then calm. Sailed 8 Lgs. W (map 19 NM) to Northern Fernandina (Long Island). Spent the night becalmed off the island til early morning, then sent longboat ashore for water.

*Wed. Oct. 17:* 1200 — 1800. Wind SW and S. Sailed NNW to port with two mouths. Stayed two hours, then sailed NW to end of island. Wind veered to WNW. Sailed all night ESE outside the reefs, probably at 3 kts., half average speed.

*Thurs. Oct. 18:* 0060 — 1800. Sailed on with same wind and heading, to the S end of the island. Total length of island 20 Lgs. (map 57 NM). Spent the night on board.

*Fri. Oct. 19:* 0600 — 1200. N wind. In six hours sailed 25 NM (map) E to Cabo del Ysleo, Ysabela-Saometo (Bird Rock, Crooked Island). Then sailed 12 Lgs. (map 18 NM) along E (N?) coast to Cabo Feroso, on a separate island, arriving in the evening, and staying til the morning. Shallow bight to the NE. Sailed to Cabo de la Laguna, on the SW end of Saometo.

*Sat. Oct. 20:* 0600. Tried to sail NE and E from C. Laguna. Too shallow. Very light wind. At night, lay too.

*Sun. Oct. 21:* 0600 — 1000. Sailed back to C. Ysleo. Explored the island until late at night.

*Wed. Oct. 24:* 0000 — 0600. Sailed WSW, probably about 18 NM at maximum 3 kts. because of proximity of Cape Verde at night. Then becalmed to 1200. 1200 — 1800 sailed same heading with the wind, to “Cape Verde Fix” (36 NM at 6 kts). At night, shortened sail and lay to.

*Thurs. Oct. 25:* 0600 — about 1730. Sailed 21 Lgs. WSW and W to Islas de Arena (Ragged Islands). Total on map 85 NM.

*Fri. Oct. 26:* Staid South of Ragged Islands.

*Sat. Oct. 27:* 0600 — 1800. Sailed 17 Lgs. to Cay Santo Domingo (map, 28 NM). Staid the night on board.

*Sun. Oct. 28:* Sailed 42 NM to Rio San Salvador, Isla Juana (Puerto Gibara-Bariay, Cuba). Diary says it used to take the indians 1 1/2 days in their canoes to sail from Ragged Island to Puerto Gibara-Bariay, 70 NM on the map, which works out quite acceptably at under 2 knots.

Wolper has given a good explanation of the light Columbus saw before the sighting of San Salvador, and the island corresponds almost exactly to the Journal's description of Guanahani, with its many bodies of water and a lagoon in the center (Journal, Oct. 13). Columbus must have landed on the Western side of the Island for two reasons at least: the reefs along the Eastern side make it almost impossible to approach (it is studded with modern wrecks), and the “beach-rock” which Columbus describes as natural building blocks (Journal, Jan. 5, 1493) occurs only on the Western side. To row some 20 NM from Fernandez Bay to Graham's Harbor with its “Peninsula”, and back, between dawn and mid or late afternoon (Journal, Oct. 14) is no problem; and in any case Columbus does not say that his men rowed; in fact he makes a clear distinction between the Caravels' “barcas” and the Naos “batel”, so the Nao probably carried a “Yole” with a lateen sail. As to the many islands Columbus saw as he sailed away from Guanahani (Journal, Oct. 14), all reasonable hypotheses have to use hills appearing over the horizon as islands, so this is no argument against San Salvador.

The route does present one problem: Rum Cay is less than half as big as the Journal's “Concepción”, 5 x 10 leagues (Oct. 15). I find it hard to accept two kinds of leagues, and Kelley has demonstrated that Columbus' overestimation of the coasts of Cuba and Hispaniola can be explained by his having underestimated the current out of the East. The same explanation might apply to Rum Cay, for Columbus does say he encountered a contrary current; but it seems more likely that Las Casas once more confused leagues with miles, and forgot to correct his error. In miles, his figures would be quite close.

On the East coast of Northern Long Island, at Fish Pond Cape, there is a break in the reef, and nearby, the remains of old indian villages have been

found. To the Northeast there is a good but shallow “port with two mouths”, Newton Key Harbor or Seymour’s, with what looks like a river mouth inside it. All this fits the Journal’s descriptions (Journal, Oct. 16-17), and even though trade moves artifacts around, so that archaeology cannot give us a final answer, it can certainly help, as Charles Hoffman, Kathy Deagan, Steven Mitchell, and William Keegan have shown. Continuing Northwest along the coast, one reaches a point where it turns sharply Southwest and then South. This is not exactly East-West (Journal, Oct. 17), but it does not necessarily contradict Columbus’ description. And once Columbus turned back to sail Southeast along the same coast, he could easily have sailed the 20 leagues (60 NM) he claims to have seen of Fernandina in 24 hours (Journal, Oct. 16), probably shortening sail at night, and certainly staying away from the reefs which line the shore, as he says he did. The all-important objection that the wind was too light is quite unwarranted by the Journal.

Crooked-Fortune Islands correspond well to the Journal’s description of Ysabela-Saomete (Journal, Oct. 19-24), except for the coast which the Journal says runs West from “Cabo del Ysleo” (Bird Rock) to Cabo Hermoso (Journal, Oct. 19). Columbus says that the North wind was good for sailing from Ysleo to Hermoso, and Las Casas crossed out West and then wrote it in again. The coast could not run West, or it would have stood in Columbus’ way as his voyage continued. So it must have run South, and, to the South as Columbus points out, there is a break in the coast (Journal, Oct. 19). From C. Hermoso Columbus tries to enter a large bay but it is too shallow (The Bight of Acklins). Then he goes to Cabo de la Laguna for water (Frenchwells), and finally back to C. Ysleo whence he will sail WSW.

The Ragged Islands (Islas de Arena) and Puerto Gibara-Bariay, Cuba (Rio San Salvador) are not disputed, and in between there is no land but Cay Santo Domingo (Journal, Oct. 27).

So, you see, the San Salvador route works well within the limits we have set, and the principal objections which have been raised by National Geographic’s Joe Judge are not valid; nor for that matter are his remarks about Morison having had to change his mind: wise men do change their minds. And Morison’s work needs no defense: it stands alone.

The route from Samaná, on the other hand, does not fit our criteria; and Samaná Cay itself does not correspond to the Journal’s description of Guanahani. It runs East-West instead of roughly North-South (Journal, Oct 14), and it has no big central lagoon (Journal, Oct. 13).

Judge’s proposal for Concepción presents much worse problems than does Rum Cay. He proposes a Concepción composed of the North coasts of Acklins and Crooked Islands, unaccountably joined together. To get there from Samaná, Columbus must sail South instead of South-West (Journal, Oct. 13); and the eastern coast of this composite Concepción does not face Samaná as it should (Journal, Oct. 15).

Judge then sends Columbus on a short voyage up and down the South-eastern extreme of Long Island (Fernandina), much less than the Journal's 20-28 leagues (Journal, Oct. 15 and 16); and this exploration ends where the coast, far from finally turning East-West, turns briefly Northwest in full view of the rest of the island. Then he brings Columbus back to tiny Fortune Island, better known as Long Cay, and identifies it with Columbus' Ysabela, the indians great Saometo, the island of gold (Journal, Oct. 16 and 17). Fortune is almost attached to the Crooked Island which Judge has already used for Concepción. Columbus would hardly have named it for Queen Ysabela, and there is no break in its short coast. According to Judge, Columbus has sailed two continuous legs to the West, and another back East: is this a logical canoe route to the Southwest whither the Journal states repeatedly that Columbus' objective lies (Journal Oct. 13, 17, 24)? Other proposed landfalls, such as Turks-Caicos, present the same problem.

Judge makes much of moving "The Cape Verde Fix" some 10 nautical miles to the Southeast from Morison's location, but, as I read the Journal, it must lie considerably further to the West; and, more important, one can sail to Cuba, or back to San Salvador, from any of these fixes, so their exact location is not that important.

The 40-hour "Gap" which Judge suggests exists as the fleet approaches Cuba is not really a gap; the Journal does omit some pieces of information, but it always gives enough to permit the estimates which are necessary all along, such as "a distance of a day and a half in a canoe . . . without sail" (Journal, Oct. 16), and "17 leagues to the SSW" (Journal, Oct. 27).

Finally Samaná presents a worse problem. Juan de la Cosa was with Columbus at the landfall, as Master of the Santa María, and in 1500 he drew the first map of America, which hangs in the Naval Museum of Madrid. (See Taviani Landfall paper Figure 1, this volume.) In this map he places two islands in approximately correct relationship and labels one "Guanahani" to the North, and the other "Samanà" to the South. He is thus giving eye-witness testimony while Columbus is still very much alive, that the landfall is different from Samaná. Moreover, in 1526, Alonso Chàvez, in his "Espejo de Navegantes" which Geographic quotes in its supplement, describes Island number 15 as Samaná, and Island number 16 as Guanahani which Chàvez specifically identifies as the landfall. So again, they are not the same island.

There is some discussion as to whether there was one Juan de la Cosa or two, and as to the exact date of the map. Personally I always prefer the simpler solution, and the invention of a second Juan de la Cosa seems to me unnecessary and unfounded. But even if there were two Juan de la Cosas, and even if the date marked on the map is inexact, it is still the first map of America, and it shows quite clearly that Samaná is not Guanahani, a fact which Chàvez confirms one generation later. Historical place-names can be nomads, but it is hardly likely that less than a decade after the Discovery one island should become two, and that it should repeat the trick one

generation later. So Columbus' contemporaries and immediate successors appear to have been sure that the first landfall did not occur on Samaná.

These are the principal reasons why I continue to favor San Salvador over Samaná. But the important thing is not so much to try to reach a definitive conclusion; it is to avoid being dazzled by Geographic's splendid presentation, and to keep the subject open, accepting in the meantime the least problematic hypothesis, for me San Salvador.

Tonight on San Salvador I want to conclude our talk by reminding you that though, as far as we know, Columbus loved three women (Felipa de Perestrello, Beatriz de Arana and Inés Bobadilla de Peraza), his greatest love was surely the Caribbean Sea. I agree with him: it is a sea made by God to the scale of man for his enjoyment, like the Mediterranean and like the South China Sea. So I have little doubt that when in his testament he asked to be buried in Santo Domingo, he remembered the star-studded nights of the Caribbean, as you and I will long remember the firmament which tonight crowns San Salvador.