

REPERTORIUM COLUMBIANUM

E117
.L53
1997

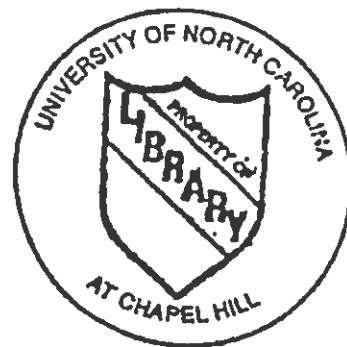
Volume III

THE *BOOK OF PROPHECIES* EDITED BY
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Roberto Rusconi
Historical and Textual Editor

6-4-91
MU
C

Blair Sullivan
Translator



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Berkeley Los Angeles London

[001]

[1] May Jesus and Mary go with us. Amen.

[2] Letter from the very magnificent and most prudent Don Christopher Columbus, admiral, viceroy and governor in perpetuity of the islands of the Indies and the mainland regions discovered by him, etc., to Father Gaspar Gorricio, etc.

[3] Reverend and very devoted father: [4] When I came here, I began to collect in a book excerpts from authoritative sources that seemed to me to refer to Jerusalem; I planned to review them later and to arrange them appropriately. [5] Then I became involved in my other activities and did not have time to proceed with my work; nor do I now. [6] And so I am sending the book to you so that you can look at it. [7] Perhaps your soul will motivate you to continue the project and our Lord will guide you to genuine *auctoritates*. [8] The search for texts should be continued in the Bible, and the *Commentary* is often useful and illuminating and should be used for clarification.

[9] 1501

[9] Granada, 13 September 1501

[002]

[1] Reply from the abovementioned

[2] My very magnificent and most excellent lord.

[3] Previously I wrote to you that I had received both your letter and the book of prophecies, sayings, and *auctoritates* referring to Mount Zion and Jerusalem and the island peoples and the nations of the universe and that, in order to comply with

your wishes to the best of my meager abilities, I would work on this book as much as I could. [4] I saw it principally as a spiritual exercise, hoping to instruct myself and to awaken my understanding by means of a salutary, consolatory, admonitory, and provocative project undertaken in the service of our Lord God for the advantage and the honor of our rulers and of the entire Christian religion. [5] Accordingly, through the grace of the Holy Spirit and guided by the work of your lordship, who had gathered all the choicest selections from so many *auctoritates*, opinions, sayings, and prophecies, I have gleaned some insertions and additions, figuratively speaking, from what remains on the grapevines, olive trees, and stalks after the harvest. [6] The result is that I am very satisfied with the main part as well as with the additions and have to some degree contributed to a work that I regret to say is quite removed from my own studies. I beg our Lord to carry out "what he said through the mouths of the prophets" and beseech his infinite mercy to accomplish this by fulfilling your lordship's holy wishes; there could be no other reason for the Lord to have directed your magnificence to bring us knowledge of the islands of the Indies and the mainlands. [7] My lord, you will see in my handwriting the few things that I have added and inserted. [8] I submit everything to the approval of your intelligence and your prudent judgment, as I have not tried to relate the sayings or the subjects, much less . . . the histories. [9] But I have inserted some relevant rules and sayings from the doctors of the Church so that a diligent reader can answer his own questions. [10] Moreover, I have been as concise as possible, supplying references rather than whole texts to avoid an annoying number of pages. Above all, I am certain that, even though your lordship and I have not included an enormous number of *auctoritates* and prophecies in this book, written for the purpose described above, [11] the collection is sufficient for the task and neither all the books of the Old and

New Testaments nor all that the saints and doctors have written will make it more so.

[12] I implore the Lord to make my mind willing and eager. That is sufficient. [13] If your lordship wishes me to do anything else, in this, as in the rest, you know that I will always be completely at your disposal.

[14] Monastery of Las Cuevas, 23 March 1502.

[003]

[1] This is the beginning of the book or collection of *auctoritates*, sayings, opinions, and prophecies concerning the need to recover the holy city and Mount Zion, and the discovery and conversion of the islands of the Indies and of all peoples and nations, for Ferdinand and Isabella, our Spanish rulers.

[004]

[1] From the *Summa angelica*, under the rubric "exposition"

[2] Sacred Scripture is interpreted in four ways. [3] First, as history, which is the narration of events; the word is derived from *hystriion*, meaning "to see" or "to experience," for in previous times no one wrote the history of an event who had not been present at it. [4] Second, as allegory, from *leon*, which means "something else," and *gore*, meaning "to say" or "speech"; through allegory, a text reveals a truth of doctrine. [5] Third, tropologically, from *tropos*, meaning "change," and *logos*, meaning "a group of words conveying some meaning"; a tropological interpretation of a given text reveals a moral truth. [6] Fourth, anagogically, from *ana*, which means "upwards," and *goge*, which means "leading"; an anagogical interpretation of a text reveals something to be desired, for example, eternal felicity.

[005]

[1] Additionally, from Jean Gerson in the *Decrees*

[2] A literal reading teaches the facts; allegory, what should be believed; a moral reading, what should be done; anagogy, what one should desire.

[006]

[1] Moreover, in *Rationali divinatorum officiorum*.

[2] A fourfold meaning of Scripture exists in the word, "Jerusalem." [3] Historically, it signifies the earthly city to which pilgrims travel; [4] allegorically, the Church Militant. [5] Tropologically, it signifies any faithful soul. [6] Anagogically, it signifies heavenly Jerusalem, the country or kingdom of heaven.

[007]

[1] After these preliminaries, let us pray.

[2] O God, who instructs the minds of men with ease and in silence, who clarifies the speech of stammerers, and who is near whenever needed, consider our intent and be favorable to our

requests. [3] Because we are not learned, we place ourselves in your power: blessed is the man whom you instruct, O Lord, and to whom you teach your law. [4] We ask, therefore, that you lead us to understand, through the same spirit that inspired them, the discussions, books, and prophecies about you and your holy place. Amen.

[008]

[1] In Sacred Scripture one tense is often used in place of another; for example, the past tense instead of the future, etc. [2] "All that I have heard from my father, I have made known to you." [3] St. Augustine writes in a sermon on this text, which is read by some on the feast of St. Thomas the apostle: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who did things that were going to happen, says that he has already done what he is going to do. Thus he says through the prophet: 'They have pierced my hands and feet,' not 'they will pierce,' " speaking of past events but foretelling the future. [4] Similarly, in the cited passage he says that he told his disciples all the things that his complete knowledge told him he was going to do. Other examples can be found by anyone who wishes to look.

[009]

[1] The same topic is discussed by St. Isidore in chapter 25 of book I of *De summo bono*.

[2] In a certain usage of tense, things that are about to happen are related as if they had already taken place. For example: "They have pierced my hands and feet and they have counted out all my bones," and "they have divided my garments among themselves," and other similar passages. [3] But why are events that have not yet happened described as if they have already taken place? [4] Because those things which are presently in our future have already taken place in God's eternity. And so on, throughout the entire chapter in the preceding and subsequent text.

[1] Note

[3] Augustine
in a sermon
[3] Psalm 21

[1] Isidore

[2] Psalm 21

[010]

[2] [cross]
[hand]

[1] From the commentary on chapter 8

[1] Nicholas of
Lyra of Daniel.
[2] 1
Corinthians 10

[2] To understand the following passage, it must be kept in mind that Sacred Scripture often has a double literal meaning: events in the Old Testament prefigure events in the New Testament. For example, the apostle Paul writes in chapter 10 of the first letter to the Corinthians, "All these things happened to them as a warning." [3] Therefore, when in the Old Testament it is said that something has been fulfilled in an Old Testament person and it is more truly and completely fulfilled in the New Testament, there exists a double literal meaning: a primary meaning and another more fundamental sense related, of course, to the person who seems to fulfill the prediction more completely. [4] Consider this example from 1 Chronicles 22: "I shall be a father to him and he will be a son to me." This is the word of God speaking about Solomon, who was adopted as a son of God at the beginning of his reign and was called "beloved of the Lord," as told in chapter 12 of the second book of Kings. [5] Clearly this passage is literally fulfilled in Solomon; [6] but it is fulfilled more perfectly in Christ, who is the natural son of God prefigured by Solomon. [7] The text refers literally both to Solomon and to Christ, but more fundamentally to Christ. Thus the Apostle in the first chapter of the letter to the Hebrews alleges that this passage is a reference to Christ in the literal sense. [8] In the same way Daniel discusses the battle between the kingdoms of the Greeks and the Medes through the metaphor of the ram and the goat. [9] His principal purpose is to discuss the battle of the Antichrist, or of his followers, with the Christians; and so there exists a twofold literal meaning, as is evident from the things mentioned above, etc.

[4] 1
Chronicles 22
[4] 2 Kings 12

[7] To the
Hebrews 1

[011]

[1] Letter from the admiral to the king and queen

[2] Most Christian and Supreme Rulers: my plan for the restitution of the holy temple to the holy Church Militant is the following:

[3] Most exalted rulers: At a very early age I began sailing the sea and have continued until now. [4] This profession creates a curiosity about the secrets of the world. [5] I have been a sailor for forty years, [6] and I have personally sailed to all the known regions. [7] I have had commerce and conversation with knowledgeable people of the clergy and the laity, Latins and Greeks, Jews and Moors, and with many others of different religions. [8] Our Lord has favored my occupation and has given me an intelligent mind. [9] He has endowed me with a great talent for seamanship; sufficient ability in astrology, geometry, and arithmetic; and the mental and physical dexterity required to draw spherical maps of cities, rivers and mountains, islands and ports, with everything in its proper place.

[10] During this time I have studied all kinds of texts: cosmography, histories, chronicles, philosophy, and other disciplines. Through these writings, the hand of Our Lord opened my mind to the possibility of sailing to the Indies and gave me the will to attempt the voyage. [11] With this burning ambition I came to your Highnesses. [12] Everyone who heard about my enterprise rejected it with laughter and ridicule. [13] Neither all the sciences that I mentioned previously nor citations drawn from them were of any help to me. [14] Only Your Highnesses had faith and perseverance. [15] Who could doubt that this flash of understanding was the work of the Holy Spirit, as well

my own? [16] The Holy Spirit illuminated his holy and sacred Scripture, encouraging me in a very strong and clear voice from the forty-four books of the Old Testament, the four evangelists, and twenty-three epistles from the blessed apostles, urging me to proceed. Continually, without ceasing a moment, they insisted that I go on. [17] Our Lord wished to make something clearly miraculous of this voyage to the Indies in order to encourage me and others about the holy temple. [18] I spent seven years here in your royal court discussing the project with many people of great authority and with learned men from all disciplines, and they finally concluded that it was all in vain and abandoned it. But finally, what Jesus Christ Our Redeemer said and had previously said through the mouths of his holy prophets came to be. [19] And so one should believe that the other thing will also happen; and as witness to that, if what has been said is not enough, I offer the holy gospel in which Jesus Christ said that all things would pass away, but not his miraculous word. [20] He also said that everything that had been said by him and written by the prophets must be fulfilled.

[21] I said that I would present my argument for the restitution of the holy temple to the holy Church. [22] I am not relying on my lifetime of navigation and the discussions that I have had with many people from many lands and religions, or on the many disciplines and texts that I spoke of previously. [23] I base what I say only on holy and sacred Scripture, and on the prophetic statements of certain holy persons who through divine revelation have spoken on this subject.

[24] Perhaps Your Highnesses and all the others who know me and to whom this letter may be shown will criticize me, publicly or privately, as an uneducated man, an uninformed sailor, an ordinary person, etc.

[25] I respond with the words of Saint Matthew: "Oh, Lord, how many things you have kept secret from the wise and have made known to the innocent!" And again from Saint Matthew, "As our Lord entered Jerusalem, the children sang, 'Hosanna, son of David!'" [26] In order to test him, the scribes asked him if he had heard what they were saying; and he answered that he had, saying, "Don't you know that truth comes from the

mouths of innocent children." Or consider the apostles, who wrote such profound things, in particular St. John, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the word was God,*" etc.; such great words from uneducated men.

[27] I believe that the Holy Spirit operates in Christians, Jews, Moors, and in all others of any religion, not only in the wise, but in the ignorant as well. I met a villager who describes the heavens and the stars and their paths better than others who paid to acquire this knowledge. [28] And I say that the Holy Spirit not only reveals the future to rational creatures, but shows us by means of signs in the heavens and the air and through beasts, however he wishes, as was the case with the ox in Rome during the time of Julius Caesar, and in many other ways too numerous to list and well-known to the entire world.

[29] Holy Scripture attests in the Old Testament, through the mouths of the prophets, and in the New Testament through our redeemer Jesus Christ, that this world will end. The signs of when this must happen are described by Matthew and Mark and Luke, and the prophets frequently predicted the event.

[30] St. Augustine said that the world would end in the seventh millenium after its creation; the holy theologians agree with him, in particular, the cardinal Pierre d'Ailly in Statement XI and in other passages, as I will indicate below.

[31] From the creation of the world or from Adam until the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ there are 5,343 years and 318 days, according to the calculation made by King Alfonso (the Wise), taken to be the most accurate by Pierre d'Ailly in statement X of his *Elucidario astronomice concordie cum theologica et historica veritate*. [32] Adding to this number 1,500 years, and one not yet completed, gives a total of 6,845 years counted toward the completion of this era.

[33] By this count, only 155 years remain of the 7,000 years in which, according to the authorities cited above, the world must come to an end.

[34] Our Redeemer said that before the consummation of

[29] Seneca, book 7 of the tragedy of Medea, from the chorus "Audax nimium"; 'During the last years of the world'

this world all that had been written by the prophets would have to be fulfilled.

[35] The prophets wrote about the future as if it were the past and about the past as if it were yet to happen, and similarly with the present. Sometimes they spoke figuratively, other times more realistically, and on occasion quite literally. One says more or less than another or expresses it in a better way.

[36] Isaiah is the prophet who is most highly praised by St. Jerome and St. Augustine and the other teachers and is appreciated and greatly revered by all. Concerning Isaiah, they say that he was not just a prophet, but also an evangelist; he put all his efforts into describing the future and calling all people to our holy Catholic faith.

[37] Many holy teachers and sacred theologians have written about the prophecies and the other books of holy Scripture. They have greatly enlightened us about things that we did not understand, although they often disagree. Some things are beyond the reach of human intelligence.

[38] I repeat my objection to being called presumptuous and uneducated and allege that I am following the wishes of St. Matthew, who said, "Oh Lord, how many things you have kept secret from the wise and have made known to the innocent!" I offer this on my behalf, along with the benefits of personal experience.

[39] Most of the prophecies of holy Scripture have already been fulfilled. The Scriptures say this and the Holy Church loudly and unceasingly is saying it, and no other witness is necessary. I will, however, speak of one prophecy in particular because it bears on my argument and gives me support and happiness whenever I think about it.

[40] I have greatly sinned. Yet, every time that I have asked, I have been covered by the mercy and compassion of Our Lord. I have found the sweetest consolation in throwing off all my cares in order to contemplate his marvellous presence.

[41] I have already said that for the voyage to the Indies neither intelligence nor mathematics nor world maps were of any use to me; it was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. [42] This is what I want to record here in order to remind Your Highnesses and so that you can take pleasure from the things I am going to tell you about Jerusalem on the basis of the same authority. If you have faith in this enterprise, you will certainly have the victory.

[43] Your Highnesses, remember the writings of the evangelists and the many promises that Our Redeemer made to us, and the extent to which all this has been tested. When St. Peter stepped into the sea, he was able to walk on its surface, as long as his faith was firm. [44] Whoever has as much faith as a grain of mustard seed will be obeyed by the mountains. Whoever has faith has only to ask for something in order to receive it. Knock and it will be opened to you. [45] No one should be afraid to

undertake any enterprise in the name of Our Saviour, as long as it is just and appropriate to his holy service. He helped St. Catherine after testing her. [46] Remember, Your Highnesses, that with very little money you undertook the reconquest of the kingdom of Granada. [47] The working out of all things has been left by Our Lord to individual free will, although he advises many. [48] He lacks nothing that the people can give to him. [49] Oh how good is the Lord who wishes the people to do things for which he assumes the responsibility! [50] Day and night and at all times the people should give to him their most devoted thanks.

[51] I said above that much that has been prophesied remains to be fulfilled, and I say that these are the world's great events, and I say that a sign of this is the acceleration of Our Lord's activities in this world. I know this from the recent preaching of the gospel in so many lands.

[52] The Calabrian abbot Joachim said that whoever was to rebuild the temple on Mount Zion would come from Spain.

[53] The cardinal Pierre d'Ailly wrote at length about the end of the religion of Mohammed and the coming of the Antichrist in his treatise, *De concordia astronomice veritatis et namationis historie*; he discusses, particularly in the last nine chapters, what many astronomers have said about the ten revolutions of Saturn.

[012]

[1] Psalm 2

[2] He has made me king of Zion, his holy mountain, and I preach his holy commandment. [3] The Lord said to me: "You are my son; today I have begotten you. [4] Ask of me, and I will give you the peoples as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your possession." Etc.

[013]

[1] Psalm 5

[2] I will enter your house; I will worship at your holy temple in fear of you. Etc.

[014]

[1] Psalm 8

[2] Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is your name throughout the entire earth. Etc.

[015]

[1] Psalm 9

[2] You have rebuked the peoples, and the impious one has perished; you have erased his name for ever and ever. Etc. [3] Sing hymns to the Lord, who lives in Zion; make his wishes known among the peoples. Etc. [4] Have mercy upon me, Lord; behold my humiliation by my enemies, you who lift me up from the gates of death so that I may recount all your praises at the gates of the daughter of Zion. I will rejoice in your salvation. [5] The peoples are immersed in the destruction that they have created; etc. [6] Let the sinners be sent to hell, all the nations who forget God. Etc. [7] Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you. [8] Appoint, O Lord, a lawgiver over them so that the peoples know that they are human. Etc. [9] The Lord will reign for ever and ever. Vanish, heathens, from his earth. Etc.

[016]

[1] Psalm 17

[2] You will place me at the head of the nations. [3] A people whom I did not know has served me, and hearing, has obeyed me. [4] Therefore, I will praise you to the peoples, O Lord, and I will sing a psalm to your name. Etc.

[017]

[1] Psalm 18

[2] The heavens tell the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the works of his hand. [3] Day speaks the word to day, and night reveals knowledge to night. [4] There is neither speech nor language in which their voices are not heard; their voices have gone out to the whole land and their words to the ends of the earth.

[018]

[1] Psalm 19

[2] May the Lord hear you on the day of tribulation; may the name of the god of Jacob protect you. [3] May he send you help from his sanctuary and protect you from Zion. Etc.

[019]

[1] Psalm 21

[2] All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before him. [3] Because the kingdom is the Lord's, he will be the sovereign of all peoples. Etc.

[020]

[1] Psalm 23

[2] The earth and its abundance belong to the Lord, the world and all who live in it. Etc.

[021]

[1] Psalm 25

[2] Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house, and the dwelling place of your glory. Etc.