

May 19th, 1945.

The Curator,
Dard Hunter Paper Museum,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology,
Boston, U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

I have in my possession the log-book of a Spanish ship for the years 1793-1795. Her home port was La Guayra (Venezuela) and she sailed between that port and ~~San~~ Santander, Spain, with calls at Havana, Vera Cruz, and Cadiz.

I attach two crude sketches of the watermarks on the paper in this log-book, and wonder if you could tell me something about them and the origin of the paper. One appears to be the name of the papermaker. The other has three circles containing anchors and the fleur-de-lis, the upper one surmounted by a cross, and flanked by what seems to be a pair of mis-shapen hands.

Please forgive this intrusion on your time and patience. The book is of historic value here, for the ship was taken by a Nova Scotia privateer during the Napoleonic wars, and I am making a study of this relic of the time. I am informed that the Dard Hunter collection is unique in America and the only possible source of information on these ancient watermarks.

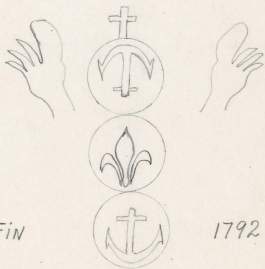
Enclosed is a stamped envelope for your reply, if you will be so kind.

Sincerely,

Watermarks in the paper of the logbook,
Spanish brig "El Ercoles".

B I G O R R E

FERRAN



FIN

1792

According to David Hunter this paper was made in France, but in a common practice of the time the watermarks are those of Genoese papermakers, whose product had the highest reputation in Europe.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DARD HUNTER PAPER MUSEUM

May twenty-fourth mcmxlv

*Ans'd
May 27*

Mr. Thomas H. Raddall
Liverpool
Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Raddall:

Your letter and the tracings of two watermarks have been received and we will tell you what we can regarding these paper marks.

Without an examination of the paper, it would seem that the marks are French, made in imitation of Genoese watermarks. This was probably done to trade on the reputation of the Genoese papermakers. While we have located the name "Bignor" there is nothing to indicate where the name originated. There are watermarks very much like the ones you have sent in papers housed in the St. Martin's Monastery, Santiago di Compostella, Spain.

During the eighteenth century there was a tendency to imitate watermarks, one mill duplicating the marks of another more prosperous one. For this reason it is difficult to determine just where the paper originated. As you doubtless know, there are literally hundreds of thousands of watermarks and to attempt a search for a particular mark is an almost endless undertaking. We have much material here, but it means going through dozen of books and just at the present time we do not have any one who could undertake such a search. You may be sure that the paper is of the period specified and it was made either in Italy or France, with a bare possibility of Spain.

Very truly yours,

Dard Hunter Paper Museum of MIT

Dard Hunter
Curator

Dr. Dard Hunter / m