

CRISTOFORO COLOMBO versus CRISTÓBAL COLÓN

Cristoforo Colombo, the weaver from Genoa, was not
Don Cristóbal Colón, the navigator from Iberia

Manuel da Silva Rosa

Doutoramento em
História Insular e Atlântica (Séculos XV-XX)



Ponta Delgada

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Dissertação de Doutoramento em
História Insular e Atlântica (Séculos XV-XX)



UNIVERSIDADE DOS AÇORES
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ABREVIATIONS

CARTAS	<i>Relaciones y cartas de Cristóbal Colón</i> , CRISTÓBAL COLÓN, Librería de La Viuda de Hernando y C. ^a , Calle Del Arenal, Núm. 11, Madrid, 1892.
DIARIO	Online version of Colón's <i>Diary</i> at <i>Early Modern Spain</i> website, King's College London, http://www.ems.kcl.ac.uk/content/etext/e019.html .
HISTORIE	<i>Historie del S. Don Fernando Colombo: nelle quali s'ha particolare, & vera relatione della vita, & de' fatti dell'Ammiraglio Don Christoforo Colombo, suo padre: et dello scoprimento, ch'egli fece dell'Indie Occidentali, dette Mondo Nuovo, hora possedute dal Sereniss. Re catolico</i> : FERNANDO COLÓN; ALFONSO DE ULLOA; RAMÓN PANÉ, In Venezia, MDLXXI: Appresso Francesco de' Franceschi Sanese, [1571].
LAS CASAS	<i>Historia de las Indias</i> , FRAY BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS, Imprenta de Miguel Ginesta, Madrid, 1875.
NAVARRETE	<i>Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde el fin del siglo xv</i> , MARTÍN FERNÁNDEZ DE NAVARRETE, de Orden de S. M. Madrid en la Imprenta Real, 1825.
RACCOLTA	<i>Raccolta di documenti e studi pubblicati dalla R. Commissione colombiana</i> , MINISTERO DELLA PUBBLICA ISTRUZIONE, Roma, 1892-1896.
TEXTOS	<i>Cristóbal Colón Textos y documentos completos: relaciones de viajes, cartas y memoriales</i> , CRISTÓBAL COLÓN and CONSUELO VARELA, Alianza Editorial, 1989.
THACHER	<i>Christopher Columbus: his life, his work, his remains, as revealed by original printed and manuscript records</i> , JOHN BOYD THACHER, New York and London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903-4.

DEDICATION

Passam as certezaas e passam as incertezas
Passam os gostos e passam as modas
Passam as alegrias e passam as tristezas
Só tu Tempo não passas, apenas rodas

Correm Sóis e Luas pelo Firmamento
Aumentando as saudades da Pátria mãe
O Universo mantém o seu movimento
Sem se importar com as Saudades de ninguém

Minha alma errante não conhece sossego
Lembrando dias de criança e de amizades
Afastado no Espaço e Tempo que jamais chego
A preservar nada de criança senão estas Saudades

Dedicated to Margarita, Malena, and Elena, the three beautiful roses in my garden.

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Three decades have passed since I first came across the uncertainties in the history of “Columbus.” Many hundreds of days spent on trips, in archives, museums, and in libraries. More than 4,000 books, chronicles and documents composed in half a dozen languages, read and reread. Half a lifetime employed in search of the answer to a puzzle that was constructed more than five centuries ago, and which still does not have a verifiable and acceptable resolution.

Changing a narrative that is more than 500 years old is not simple, but in the end the facts and documents speak for themselves; and these are the ones in which everyone must rely on to rewrite this piece of history. As an independent researcher, I was forced to be self-funded. No one thought it was worthwhile investing any resources in the investigation of a topic that had been accepted as resolved more than a century ago.

Sometimes I am asked, “Why do you waste so much time and resources researching the past? In the end, you will not change a thing of what has already occurred!” My reply is that the truth, whatever it may be, is always worthwhile seeking and that no one should want a lie to remain standing.

During these three decades, I have found friendly strangers in so many foreign nations, always ready to help me in this search for the truth. At the same time, I have come across many opponents so convinced that the presently accepted version was correct, that, through their persistence on this point of view, also helped a great deal in the search for the truth. I thank you all, on both sides of the Atlantic, because it would have been much more difficult to get here without your participation.

Reaching the point of writing this dissertation would not have been possible without the help of several key persons. I am especially grateful to Professor Susana Paula Franco Serpa Silva, Coordinator of the Department of History, Philosophy and Arts, Deputy Director of CHAM-A, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at the Universidade dos Açores. A big thank you to her and all the staff at Universidade dos Açores for all the support provided in my return to university life.

I would like to thank all those academics from the Americas to Europe who have reacted encouragingly towards my research, including a heartfelt goodbye to the following three exemplary scholars:

- Professor Francisco Contente Domingues, to whom I will forever be grateful for his openness and honesty in the debate of this subject.
- Professor Rui Pinto Researcher and Trainer of Teachers, former President of the Geographical Society of Lisbon, and a friend. My gratitude for the invitations to lecture on my research.
- Professor Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão, the first Portuguese academic to speak up in support of my research as soon as he became aware of it in 2006. Thank you for always being there.

All three are now part of the pages of History. May their souls rest in peace.

Sometimes, for an investigation to succeed, the opponents are more important than the proponents. Therefore, a respectful tip of the hat to João Silva Jesus for his constant skepticism and for never being missing in action during the past 15 years, always arriving with cannons armed with opposing information, forcing me to dig deeper and deeper into the facts and to return with more and more evidence. This opposition helped me immensely in the struggle for the historical truth.

Many thanks to my skillful and knowledgeable advisors for their valuable help and experienced guidance in this process. It is a daunting task to return to university life, but it was a happy moment for me when Professor João Paulo Oliveira e Costa replied “Yes” to my request to guide me in the writing of this work. I have always looked up to him with respect and admiration. As a Full Professor of History in the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, João Paulo Oliveira e Costa’s expertise in the Early Modern history of Portugal was a valuable asset in this whole process.

As for Professor Avelino de Freitas de Meneses, in our very first meeting, in Madalena, Pico, I understood him to be a rational person with a good sense of humor and respect for science. Although the topic I investigate seemed mystifying, he agreed it was important to separate the facts from the fiction. Furthermore, I am glad to have another Azorean partake in this project. I was extremely lucky in obtaining this pair of Aces to be my advisors. Their valuable experience helped greatly in fine-tuning the writing and presenting of the evidence herein.

The peer review panel was composed of Doctor Manuela Rosa Coelho Mendonça de Matos Fernandes, Full Professor (retired) at Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa and President of the Academia Portuguesa de História. Doctor Luís Miguel Ribeiro de Oliveira Duarte, Full Professor at Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto. Doctor Susana Maria Goulart Pereira

da Costa, Associate Professor at Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade dos Açores. Doctor Mário Paulo Martins Viana, Assistant Professor at Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia da Universidade dos Açores. Doctor Rute Isabel Rodrigues Dias Gregório, Assistant Professor at Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade dos Açores. Doctor Maria Barreto D'Ávila, PhD in História da Expansão Portuguesa from Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa. I extend my gratitude to all of them for undertaking the review of this work and for proposing modifications to improve its readability and reliability.

Luis Rendeiro provided fundamental assistance in the reviewing of the English version of this text. To all the Members of Associação Cristóvão Colon (Cuba, Portugal), of which I am a founding member, I would like to acknowledge their ongoing fraternity in our common goal of seeking the truth.

To Piotr Chomczynski, scientist and inventor, a very special thank you for all the support provided in the final stages of this grueling 30-year process.

Finally, I wish I could discover some magic formula to return the endless hours of coexistence that this investigation has stolen from my wife. For now, I can only ask your forgiveness for all the stormy paths through which this obsession of mine has dragged me, with you in tow. Love has no science, just as science has no love. In the end, everything gets balanced by unfair methods, where time is the only victor.

May the work speak for itself and let the story of Don Cristóbal Colón, and never Columbus, begin to be rewritten with more truth and less invention. If so, then everything was worth it, and the old saying “truth will rise above falsehood as oil above water” (Cervantes) will be affirmed, even after 500 years of being covered by censorship, fabrications, deviations, and lies.

Manuel da Silva Rosa,
CHAM – Centro de Humanidades, UAç
St. Augustine, Florida, USA, June 28, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Format, Methods, and Considerations

In the interest of clarity and consistency we will write the navigator's name, whom the English call *Christopher Columbus*, as *Don Cristóbal Colón* (1455?-1506). Colón is the surname he used while living in Castile - see Figure 1. Colón is also the surname utilized for five centuries in all the Spanish-speaking countries, and the surname by which his Spanish descendants are presently known. We will employ this name when quoting texts and only use a different form of the name if it becomes necessary to clarify a document. Therefore, phrases such as “*uno che se dimanda Coloma, grandissimo marinaro, nepote del grande Coloma de Francia*”¹ may be corrected to “*uno che se dimanda Colón, grandissimo marinaro, nepote del grande Colombo de Francia*.”

We will designate the navigator's two brothers by their Castilian names *Bartolomé Colón* (1457?-1514) and *Diego Colón* (1459?-1515). Although Don Cristóbal's first-born son is called Diego Colón in Spain, we will use his Portuguese name *Diogo Colón* (1480-1526) to differentiate him from his uncle Diego. As for Don Cristóbal Colón's other son, we will call him Don Hernando Colón (1488-1539), the name on his tomb in the Cathedral of Seville.

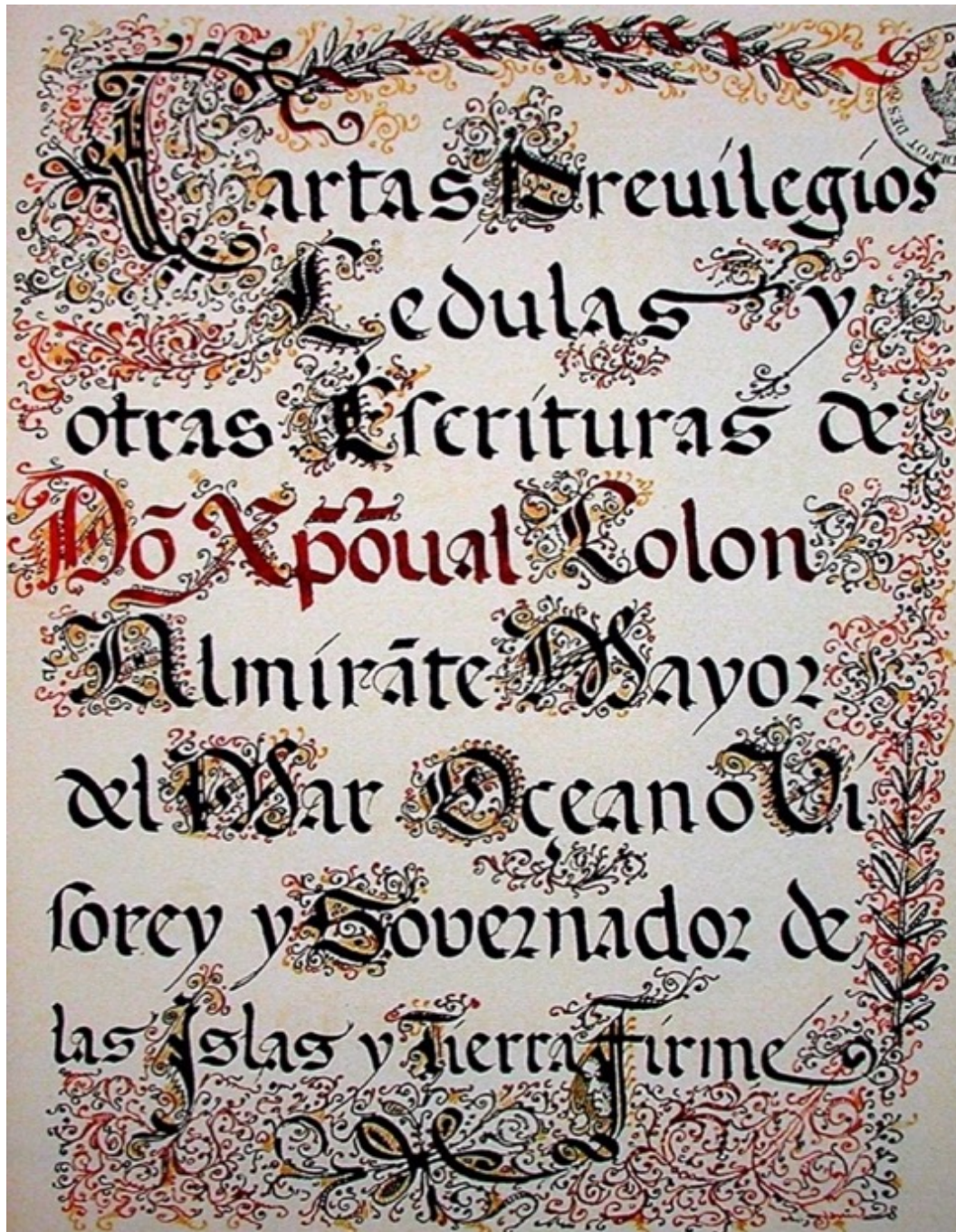
In our view, proper names should never be translated and there should be a rule, especially when dealing with surnames, to keep them in their original language format. When a name is translated it ceases to be the person's actual name and becomes a pseudonym. For example, the Portuguese name *Fernão de Magalhães* started to be written as Ferdinand Magellan in Spanish-speaking countries and most of the world knows him by this Spanish name. Few know who we are talking about if we call him Fernão de Magalhães, his birth name.

It also happens that the modification/translation of names from one language to another does not follow a standard rule. George Washington, the First President of the United States of America, is not usually translated into other languages.

¹ RUZZIN, Valentina, *Tante cose se dicono che pareno incredebele, Lettera sulla scoperta dell'America*, Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, Ser. NS, Vol. 56, 2016, 339.

Figure 1

The title page from Cristóbal Colón's *Book of Privileges* prepared by the discoverer in 1502 reads *Cartas Preuilegios Cedula y otras Escrituras de Dō Xpōual Colon Almirāte Mayor del Mar Oceano Visorey y Governador de las Islas y Tierra Firme* [Letters, Grants, Bonds, and other Documents of D. Cristóbal Colón, Admiral Major of the Atlantic, Viceroy and Governor of the Islands and Continent.] (Note the blonde-haired face behind the *F* of *Firme*.)



Source: University of North Carolina at Chapell Hill, Rare Books Collection, RBC folio E114.S84c.1.

One may also not find Vincent van Gogh, Sir Francis Drake, Hitler, Churchill, Barack Obama or Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa translated, as is the case with many other famous personalities in human history.

A problem that occurs by modifying proper names is that we often corrupt the meaning of the original name. The modification of a name to another language, typically, modifies the pronunciation of that name, and not a translation. When modifying a name one ends up with a corruption because the original meaning is not transmitted. Many Portuguese who emigrated to the United States of America had their names *Americanized*. Pereira, for instance, was changed to Perry and not to Pear Tree, the translation of Pereira to English. Neither *Perry* nor *Pear Tree* can substitute *Pereira* as one's proper name.

It often happened in old documents that a person's name was written in various forms, even in manuscripts from the same author.

This circumstance caused confusion with the name of the navigator's sister-in-law, who is usually called Violante in Portugal. Her name has been written in various ways, such as Birolante, Brigulaga, Briolanza, Briolanja [...] and her last name as Muñiz, Muniz, Moniz.² Don Cristóbal Colón wrote in a letter to his son in 1502, that, to "Violante Núñez [sic] give ten thousand *maravedís* each year in thirds."³ The navigator lived in Portugal, where Violante was most certainly born since she was the sister of the navigator's wife; and Don Cristóbal should have known better than the Castilians how to write her name. Incidentally, Violante also seems to be the name by which Don Diego Colón called his brother's sister-in-law.⁴ We will call her Violante.

In writing this dissertation, we will always give priority to the contemporary documents written by Don Cristóbal, and documents from the courts, for they are primary sources. We will utilize other pieces of writing to clarify or counter the contemporary documents, where necessary.

² ARRANZ, Luis Márquez, *Don Diego Colón, almirante, virrey y gobernador de las Indias*, Vol. 1, Editorial CSIC, 1982, 43, note 64.

³ A Violante Núñez da diez mil maravedís cada año por tercios. TEXTOS, 309.

⁴ Mando que se pagen à Violante Muñiz diéz ducados de oro en limosna que el dicho Señor Don Diego Colón mandó que se le diesen, é mas en su nombre le fago gracia é suelta de siete ó ochomill maravedís que le debia al dicho Señor Don Diego. HARRISSE, Henry, *Christophe Colomb: son origine, sa vie, ses voyages, se famille et ses descendants, d'après des documents inédits tirés des archives de Gênes, de Savone, de Séville et de Madrid; études d'histoire critique*, E. Leroux, 1884, T. II, 473.

The identity and baptismal name of the so-called “Discoverer of America” is an actual puzzle yet to be solved. All the key pieces have not been found in the archives, presuming they even exist. The puzzle becomes even more complicated because there are no known documents in Portugal related to Don Cristóbal or his brothers that could help in this search for the historical truth. In addition, the presence of forged or suspicious documents in the Italian and Spanish archives, some of which we will present in this current work, make the task of truth-seeking much more difficult.

Our good fortune is that enough autograph letters, notes and other documents from the navigator and the Court of Castile have survived. These original documents help us understand who Don Cristóbal Colón was and what social class he belonged to.

The lack of contemporary documentation in Portugal related to the discoverer and his brothers has always been a high hurdle to overcome. What is clear today, from all the known documents, is that the man who sailed across the Atlantic in 1492 was not the weaver Cristoforo Colombo presented in the *Assereto Document*,⁵ a vital document for the Genoese theory. Furthermore, the writings of the Admiral Don Cristóbal demonstrate that he was someone else, with a completely different life, lineage, and year of birth. Don Cristóbal Colón declared himself to be some five years younger than the Cristoforo Colombo mentioned in the *Assereto Document*, as will be shown.

In the end, the navigator’s documents speak for him. These documents present us with a highly educated and respected person, who was influential and honored, well-traveled, experienced, knowledgeable in many sciences, and who mingled with kings and nobles for decades before he became famous. The documents present us with a person impossible to fit into the role of a common laborer, whether he be Italian or Portuguese.

The principal sources we rely on are the letters and notes written by the navigator and two contemporary chronicles - the *Historie*, written by the Admiral’s son Don Hernando,⁶ and *Historia*

⁵ Report from the Notary Gerolamo Ventimiglia in Genoa dated August 25, 1479, commonly known as *Assereto Document* in honor of Hugo Assereto, the man who found the manuscript and published it as *La data della nascita di Colombo accertata da un documento nuovo* in *Giornale storico e letterario della Liguria*, 1904, 5-16.

⁶ COLÓN, Fernando; ULLOA, Alfonso de; PANÉ, Ramón, *Historie del S. Don Fernando Colombo; nelle quali s'ha particolare, & vera relatione della vita, & de'fatti dell'Ammiraglio Don Christoforo Colombo, suo padre: et dello scoprimento, ch'egli fece dell'Indie Occidentali, dette Mondo Nuovo, hora possedute dal Sereniss. Re catolico*: In Venezia, MDLXXI: Appresso Francesco de' Franceschi Sanese, [1571].

de las Indias, by Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas.⁷ Another critical source is Don Martín Fernández de Navarrete, who aggregated many Castilian court letters and documents relating to the discovery of the New World.⁸ The *Raccolta Colombiana*, published by the City of Genoa,⁹ and several books by historians, such as “*El Portugués*” *Cristóbal Colón en Castilla*, by António Rumeu de Armas,¹⁰ will be essential to our elucidations. Some documents consulted are stored at the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, while others belonged to the House of Veragua, such as the Royal Grant of the Coat of Arms from 1493.

We will present an original document from Lisbon’s Commandery of All-Saints (Todos-os-Santos-o-Velho), where Don Cristóbal’s wife, Filipa Moniz, lived before their marriage. Some texts from our books, especially from *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, will be transcribed.¹¹

Some footnotes are translated from their original languages for speedier reference. Bold, italic, and underlining, essential for critical emphasis, have been applied when necessary.

⁷ LAS CASAS, Fray Bartolomé de, *Historia de las Indias*, Imprenta de Miguel Ginesta, Madrid, 1875.

⁸ NAVARRETE, Martín Fernández de, *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde el fin del siglo xv*, La Imprenta Real, Madrid, 1825.

⁹ *Raccolta di documenti e studi pubblicati dalla R. Commissione colombiana*, Ministero Della Pubblica Istruzione, Roma, 1892-1896.

¹⁰ RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *El “Portugués” Cristobal Colon en Castilla*, Ediciones Cultura Hispanica del Instituto de Cooperacion Iberoamericana, Madrid 1982.

¹¹ ROSA, Manuel da Silva, *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, Alma dos Livros, Portugal, 2019.

CHAPTER 1

COLUMBUS vs COLONUS

A problematic narrative

*I am not the first Admiral in my family;
give me, then, whatever name you want.*¹²

Don Cristóbal Colón

In a standard biography, one would start at the birth of the person, voyage through the youth and the professional years of their life, expound on their registered accomplishments, relive their glories or infamies, and end by reflecting on their death and the legacy left to humanity. However, the circumstances surrounding the life of Don Cristóbal Colón, First Admiral, Governor, and Viceroy of the Indies, are not normal circumstances; thus, it becomes impossible to follow this chronology.

The explorer that we learned about in our school days had his past life concealed when he moved to Castile. We know of his four great voyages, his struggles against the natives and Castilian rebels, against the elements, illness, and against the Court of Castile from his letters. We know very little about him personally and about his previous life outside of Castile. In 1484, when he was 28 years old,¹³ he moved from Portugal to Castile, where he began to propose his western voyage.

He had lived, sailed, and married in Portugal, but we still have no idea where he was born and who his parents were. His wife had many noble relatives entrenched in the Portuguese court. Some of these Portuguese nobles, Colón's relatives, sought refuge in Castile at the same time as Don Cristóbal did due to their involvement in a plot of treason against King João II.¹⁴

¹² Io non sono il primo Ammiraglio della mia famiglia. Mettanmi pure il nome che vorranno, che in ultimo David, Re sapientissimo, fu guardiano di pecore, e poi fu fatto Re di Gierusalemme; e io servo sono di quello istesso Signore, che mise lui in tale stato. HISTORIE, Cap. II, 7.

¹³ Carta escrita al 7 de Julio de 1503 a los “Serenísimos y muy altos y poderosos Príncipes Rey Reina, Nuestros Señores... Yo vine á servir de veintiocho años.” CARTAS, 380.

¹⁴ Uma segunda tentativa para matar D. João II, liderada pelo duque de Viseu, atingiu o clímax em agosto de 1484. O rei, porém, descobriu novamente o plano. Reunira-se um exército de traidores em Setúbal para o aniquilar, raptar o seu filho, o príncipe D. Afonso, e tomar posse da Coroa [...] D. João II frustrou os planos para o seu assassinio,

The navigator was a prominent figure in his days, trusted by the court of Castile to lead four fleets, including one with 17 ships and 1500 men, a feat not for the faint of heart. He was granted titles and posts of authority over Castilian nobles. However, he was not naturalized as a Castilian citizen, nor had he sworn vassalage to the crown of Castile before his voyage,¹⁵ although all his titles over the New World were awarded to him by the Castilian crown.¹⁶ As Admiral,

apunhalando ele próprio o duque de Viseu e ordenando a morte de outros participantes. Alguns foram exilados e outros perdoados, e até a esposa, a rainha D. Leonor, foi ameaçada com prisão por traição, caso continuasse a chorar o irmão, que o rei acabara de apunhalar. Uma vez mais, a Corte de Castela foi o exílio preferido dos muitos nobres que buscavam refúgio, incluindo D. Lopo de Albuquerque, outro primo* importante de Cristóbal Colón que era conde de Penamacor [...] D. João II tentou chegar a um acordo com D. Lopo, para que este pudesse permanecer no reino, mas o conde preferiu fugir de Portugal com a família. Neutralizada a traição, em **fins de agosto de 1484**, o rei e o conde de Penamacor terão passado alguns meses a discutir um possível perdão, após o que este último fugiu, possivelmente, em outubro ou novembro, a mesma altura em que o primo* D. Cristóbal Colón também «fugiu» de Portugal com o filho Diogo, «uma criancinha» de uns quatro anos. Com o conde de Penamacor exilaram-se, em Castela, a esposa, D. Catarina de Noronha, filha de Branca Dias Perestrelo, tia* de Cristóbal Colón, e, ainda, Diego Méndez de Segura [...] O caso de D. Lopo é interessantíssimo, devido às muitas semelhanças com o de Cristóbal Colón. **Ambos fugiram no fim de 1484**, de Portugal para Castela, onde a rainha D. Isabel os protegeu e apoiou. E ambos assumiram identidades novas, o navegador chamou-se a si próprio *Cristóbal Colón*, e o conde, D. Lopo de Albuquerque, adotou o nome de *Pedro Nunes*, para melhor se esconder de D. João II. ROSA, *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, 103-104, [*corrected from uncle to cousin].

¹⁵ Es notorio quel Almirante mi padre vino nuevamente a servir vuestra Alteza con la empresa de las Ynidas e ge las dio, no siendo su vasalo ni súdito ni pertenesçiendo la conquista dellas a vuestra Alteza [...] Mi padre, no hera **vasallo ny súbdito de sus Altezas**, salvo que por les servir les ofresçió la empresa destas partes e, seyendo esto asy verdad, los dichos previlejos e Capitulaciones fueron echos entre sus Altezas e mi padre como entre príncipe y no súbdito. COLÓN DE CARVAJAL, Anunciada and PÉREZ-PRENDES MUÑOZ-ARRACO, José Manuel, *La herencia de Cristóbal Colón: estudio y colección documental de los mal llamados pleitos colombinos, 1492-1541*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas; Fundación Mapfre, Madrid, 2015, Vol. 1, I-88.

— ¿Quién creará que un pobre estrangero se oviese de alçar en tal lugar contra Vuestras Altezas sin causa ni sin braço de otro Príncipe y estando solo entre sus basallos y naturales y teniendo todos mis fijos en su Real Corte? TEXTOS, 329.

— Yo suplico a Vuestra Alteza que non me tenga en esto ni en otra cosa alguna por parte salvo por servidor suyo ... si le aplaz de me expirimentar como a tal en esto de las Indias y del otro e la Casa Santa; y como digo, sea como a criado y non como a contrario. TEXTOS, 303.

— No se obligó á D. Cristóbal Colón á que se naturalizase como se hizo con Vespuccio, Magallanes y otros. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?*, *Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 274.

¹⁶ Podades tener é tengades los dichos oficios de Almirante, é Visorey, é Gobernador del dicho mar Océano, é islas é tierra-firme, que así habeis descubierto é fallado, é descubrieredes, é fallaredes de aquí adelante, con todas aquellas facultades, é preeminencias, é prerogativas de que han gozado é gozan los nuestros Almirantes, é Visoreyes, é Gobernadores que han sido é son de los dichos nuestros Reinos de Castilla é de Leon: é vos sea acudido con todos los derechos é salarios á los dichos oficios anejos é pertenecientes, usados é guardados á los dichos nuestros Almirantes, Visoreyes, é Gobernadores; é vos mandásemos proveer sobre ello como la nuestra merced fuese: E Nos acatando el arrisco é peligro en que por nuestro servicio vos posistes en ir á catar é descubrir las dichas islas, é en el que agora vos poneis en ir á buscar é descubrir las otras islas é tierra-firme, de que habemos sido é esperamos ser de vos muy servidos; é por vos facer bien é merced, por la presente vos confirmamos á vos é á los dichos vuestros hijos é descendientes subcesores. NAVARRETE, T. II, 59-60.

Governor and Viceroy, he had absolute authority over civil and criminal matters in the New World since October 12, 1492.¹⁷ Nevertheless, he was arrested and deposed by a crown inquisitor in 1500.

He achieved great fame and glory;¹⁸ yet, when he died, he was battling King Fernando to reinstate all the prerogatives that he had worked for and that the crown had taken away. Colón's descendants had to continue the fight against the crown for decades and eventually settled for a lot less than the crown had agreed to in 1492.

The chroniclers informed us about his great deeds but often misinformed us about the man himself. Were they misled? Or were they misleading us? It's not an easy question to answer.

However, one thing is certain: Don Cristóbal's life was a target of court censorship on both sides of the Portugal-Castile border. That censorship was not for his own benefit, but for the political benefit of others. The inevitable conclusion is that the two Iberian crowns had a major diplomatic reason for hiding the navigator's Portuguese past.

This censorship resulted in the life of Don Cristóbal Colón becoming a labyrinth difficult to navigate and easy to get lost in. This research has not been an easy task. Not only has it been

¹⁷ April 30, 1492: D. Fernando é Doña Isabel, por la gracia de Dios, Rey é Reina de Castilla, de Leon, de Aragon, de Cecilia, de Granada [...] Por cuanto vos Cristóbal Colon vades por nuestro mandado á descobrlr é ganar con ciertas fustas nuestras, é con nuestras gentes ciertas Islas, é Tierra-firme en la mar Océana, é se espera, que con la ayuda de Dios, se descubrirán é ganarán algunas de las dichas Islas, é Tierra-firme, en la dicha mar Océana, por vuestra mano é industria; é así es cosa justa é razonable que pues os poneis al dicho peligro por nuestro servicio, seades dello remunerado; é queriendos honrar é facer merced por lo susodicho, es nuestra merced é voluntad, que vos, el dicho Cristóbal Colon, despues que hayades descubierto é ganado las dichas Islas, é Tierra-firme en la dicha mar Océana, ó cualesquier dellas, que seades nuestro Almirante de las dichas Islas, é Tierra-firme que asi descubriédes é ganáredes; é seades nuestro Almirante, é Visorey, é Gobernador en ellas, é vos podades dende en adelante llamar é intitular Don Cristóbal Colon, é así vuestros hijos é sucesores en el dicho oficio é cargo, se puedan intitular é llamar Don, é Almirante, é Visorey, é Gobernador dellas; é para que podades usar é ejercer el dicho oficio de Almirantazgo, con el dicho oficio de Visorey, é Gobernador de las dichas Islas, é Tierra-firme, que así descubriédes é ganáredes por vos é por vuestros Lugarestienientes, é oir é librar todos los pleitos, é causas civiles é criminales tocantes al dicho oficio de Almirantazgo, é Visorey, é Gobernador, segun falláredes por derecho, é segun lo acostumbran usar y ejercer los Almirantes de nuestros Reinos; é podades punir é castigar los delincuentes; é usedes de los dichos oficios de Almirantazgo, é Visorey, é Gobernador, vos é los dichos vuestros Lugartenientes, en todo lo á los dichos oficios, é cada uno dellos anejo é concerniente: é que hayades é llevedes los derechos, é salarios á los dichos oficios, é á cada uno ellos anejos é pertenecientes, segun é como los llevan é acostumbran llevar el nuestro Almirante mayor en el Almirantazgo de los nuestros Reinos de Castilla, é los Visoreyes é Gobernadores de los dichos nuestros Reinos... Idem, 9.

¹⁸ Armándole caballero de espuelas doradas, y que se pudiese llamar D. Cristóbal Colon, él y sus sucesores. LAS CASAS, T. 1, 219.

— Insígnia honorífica de cavalaria exclusiva de concessão reservada aos reis, sendo imperativo que o sujeito fosse, “nobre, ou de estripe militar, com gozo e posse de foro militar por seu pai e avô”. MORALES ROCA, Francisco José, *Caballeros de la Espuela Dorada del Principado de Cataluña: dinastía de los Trastámara, 1412-1555*, Ediciones Hidalguia, 1988, 8.

impossible to confirm his place of birth, but it is also impossible to uncover his actual name, as well as where he spent his adolescence and teenage years. All of this information appears to have been concealed by the Portuguese crown with the aid of the Castilian crown.

Court censorship is the monumental reason for which the life of the man who we erroneously call **Christopher Columbus** has remained embedded in such a colossal mystery. Suppressing the personal information of the three Colón brothers appears to have had one intent, and that was to sow confusion amongst the public in order to hide, from the world at large, their true identity so that their father's identity would also remain hidden. They succeeded, as we will explain further along.

Those chosen few who knew the truth about the three Colón brothers and their father took the secret to their graves. As a result, Don Cristóbal's life became a hazy jumble of facts and falsehoods that have confused and betrayed writers for more than 500 years. The lack of documental proof and clear facts led some researchers to accept well-planned lies as truths and to discard important truths as lies.¹⁹

Over the last five centuries countless biography books, chronicles and articles about the navigator were published. Yet, we can guarantee that not a single piece of work contains all the truth about Don Cristóbal. In fact, in several hundred biography books reviewed during this investigation, it was easy to pick out information contradictory to proven facts and contrary to documents found in the archives. Even careful writers with access to the archives, such as Martín Fernández Navarrete, in his *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde el fin del siglo XV*, inserted errors that caused other historians to write inaccurate or even false conclusions, as will be demonstrated in this dissertation.

Investigating history and retelling a correct version of it, especially for those events buried deeper in the past and less detailed in the contemporary sources, is virtually impossible. But in the

¹⁹ In 1902 Henry Vignaud, in his book *Toscanelli and Columbus*, said: Colón never spoke one word of truth on what related to himself personally; and his family, on this point, has carefully followed his example. Throughout his letters and writings he has sprinkled incorrect statements, skillfully devised, with the object either of obscuring certain portions of his life or of hiding traces of his origin; and, in fact, these statements have resulted in the creation of a sort of conventional history as to the formation of his ideas and the causes which led to his discovery. The principal disseminators of this history were Las Casas and Hernando Colón and criticism today is destroying fragment by fragment this falsification. Henry Vignaud wrote this in 1902 and was right to say that admiral Colón and others were lying, but when Vignaud wrote that he was “destroying fragment by fragment,” what he saw as the falsification, Vignaud was convinced that the noble Admiral was in fact that peasant wool-weaver Colombo presented in the *Raccolta*. That Colombo ended up depicted in all our history books, but we now can tell the man named Colombo was the wrong person. ROSA, *Columbus, The Untold Story*, 144.

navigator's case, it becomes even less possible to do so when the sources themselves testify that there is doubt in the information they are writing down.

Such is the account by Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474?-1566), who, after claiming that Colón was Genoese, writes that “**where he was born** or what was the name of the birthplace, **it is not factually known.**”²⁰ In his *Ásia*, João de Barros does not claim to know where the navigator was born, he merely writes that “according to what **everyone affirms**, Cristóbal Colón was of the Genoese nation.”²¹

What is evident and logical is that many influential people in Portugal and Castile knew the navigator's true identity long before he became famous. And, after becoming world-famous in March of 1493, who would not have known of him?

The famous discoverer did not live isolated. Then, as now, countless things were taking place simultaneously, not only in his society but also in other societies of his world. Then, as now, there were heroes and villains, friends and foes, spies and counterspies, warmongers and peace proponents, people who were sacrificed for a cause, and people who sacrificed themselves for a cause.

Don Cristóbal was hailed as the greatest Castilian hero of his time. The fame and glory he acquired was surpassed by no other in his day and continued for centuries after his death. It appears that in Portugal the explorer was mainly disparaged and ignored. The only information available today relating to the Portuguese life of Don Cristóbal are accounts written after the fact. If it weren't for the success of the epic 1492-93 voyage, almost certainly, the navigator would have died without his existence ever being revealed in any Portuguese writings of his time.

Instead of a forgotten existence, as may have been preferred by all those concerned, Don Cristóbal ended up registered in Portuguese history as Cristóvão **Colombo**, a surname he never utilized. The pseudonym **Cristóbal Colón**, the name he adopted in Castile, was not his birth name, as can be understood from his son's clarification, stating that “by consequence, it came to him

²⁰ Fué, pues, este varón escogido de nación genovés, de algún lugar de la provincia de Genova; cual fuese, donde nació ó qué nombre tuvo el tal lugar, **no consta la verdad dello** [...] Una historia portuguesa que escribió un Juan de Barros, portugués que, llamó “Asia” en el lib. III , cap. 2.º de la primera década, haciendo mencion deste descubrimiento **no dice sino** que, según todos afirman, este Cristóbal era genovés de nación. LAS CASAS, T. I, 42.

²¹ Segundo todos afirmam, Christovão *Colom* era Genoez de nação, homem esperto, eloquente, e bom Latino, e mui glorioso em seus negocios. BARROS, João *da Ásia*, Regia Officina, Portugal, 1778, 247.

appropriately the surname of Colón, which he renewed.”²² The Admiral’s actual name was censored for some yet undiscovered reason.²³

A Latin language publication, translated by Aliander de Cosco and published April 29, 1493, in Rome announced the epic discovery of the New World. Commonly known today as *Colón’s First Letter*, it was such a sensational piece of news that it spread like wildfire all over Europe.²⁴ Today we can attribute to that publication the distinction of being the world’s First International Press Release.²⁵

Had Colón’s voyage taken place just a few decades earlier, before the establishment of the printing press, he would not have garnered so much worldly fame; and less confusion would have been created around his identity. Instead, that letter published in Rome has the infamy of being the first time the new Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies, Don Cristóbal Colón, was given the corrupted surname of **Columbo** - see Figure 2.²⁶

²² Et per conseguente **gli venne a proposito il cognome di Colon**, ch’ei ritornò a rinnovare, percioche in greco vuol dire **membro**: accioche, essendo il suo proprio nome Christoforo, **si sapesse di chi era membro**, cioè di Christo, per cui a salute di quelle genti egli haveva ad esser mandato. Ed appresso, se cotal suo nome noi vogliamo ridurre alla pronuncia latina, ch’è **Christophorus Colonus**. HISTORIE, Cap. I, 3-4.

— Pero este ilustre hombre, dejado el apellido introducido por la costumbre, **quiso llamarse Colon** [...] **Llamóse**, pues, por nombre, **Cristóbal**, conviene á saber, *Christum ferens*, que quiere decir traedor ó llevador de Cristo [...] **Tuvo por sobrenombre Colon**, que quiere decir poblador de nuevo, el cual sobrenombre le convino en cuanto por su industria y trabajos fué causa que descubriendo estas gentes. LAS CASAS, T. 1, 43.

²³ Così quello che tocca alla varietà di cotal **nome e cognome** non avvenne senza mistero. HISTORIE, Cap. I, 3.

²⁴ La *Carta de Colon* fué traducida al latín, (de cuya versión se conocen nueve ediciones diferentes; tres de ellas impresas en Roma, 1493; una en Amberes, 1493; una en Basilea, 1493; tres en París, 1493; y una en Basilea, 1494). También se tradujo al italiano y versificada en octava rima por Giuliano Datí, de cuya versión conocemos cinco ediciones: Roma, 15 de Junio 1493; Florencia, 25 Octubre 1493; 26 Oct. 1493; 26 Oct. 1495; y otra edición distinta a la anterior y también del 26 Oct. 1495. Finalmente citamos la traducción alemana de Estrasburgo, 1497. En el mismo año 1497 apareció una segunda edición en castellano. SANZ, Carlos, *La carta de Colon: anunciando el descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo 15 Febrero-14 Marzo 1493*, Talleres Hauser y Menet, Madrid, 1956, 23.

²⁵ Cristóbal Colón’s 1493 announcement of the success of his voyage westward across the Atlantic Ocean quickly became one of the earliest ‘best sellers’ of European publishing. No less than eleven editions were published in 1493! They were issued across western Europe, in Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, University of Southern Maine, <https://oshermaps.org/special-map-exhibits/columbus-letter/iv-diffusion-columbuss-letter-through-europe-1493-1497>.

— La *Carta de Colón* a pesar de lo que dice esta nota editorial, no tiene carácter personal, y bien podríamos llamarla CARTA ABIERTA o noticiario. Precisamente, el primer noticiario impreso que en lengua castellana circuló por España y por Europa. SANZ, Carlos, *La carta de Colon: anunciando el descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo 15 Febrero-14 Marzo 1493*, Talleres Hauser y Menet, Madrid, 1956, 29.

²⁶ Epigranma R. L. de Corbaria, Episcopi Montispalusii ad invictissimum Regem Hispaniarum. Iam nulla Hispanis tellus addenda triumphis: atque parum tantis viribus orbis erat. Nunc longe Eois regio deprensa sub undis auctura est titulos, Bēthice magne, tuos. Unde repertori merito referenda **Columbo** gratia, sed summo est maior habenda

As the international fame was immediate, so was the corruption of his chosen name. The corrupted name became so ingrained in the public sphere that, since 1493, Colón became known, in every nation where Spanish was not spoken, by the corrupted name of **Columbo** or some derivate of this Italian word. On the contrary, in all Spanish-speaking countries his surname remains Colón until the present day, as it was in 1493.

This printing error in the 1493 Latin letter has been fundamental in confusing chroniclers, investigators, and historians until our days and requires more explications, which we will present further on. The confusion surrounding his correct surname makes it harder to investigate his life.

Most history books claimed that having been born a commoner named Cristoforo Colombo in Genoa, the future admiral arrived in Portugal at the age of 25 by swimming ashore from a shipwreck, empty-handed and illiterate.²⁷

Thus, arriving shipwrecked in a new kingdom, the official biography claims that Colombo set about learning to read and write not only Portuguese but also Castilian and Latin. Not being satisfied with languages alone, the weaver decided to teach himself cosmography, geography, algebra, geometry, cartography, theology, and navigation, among other sciences.²⁸

Having been self-instructed in many of these subjects, some argued that he ended up with crucial flaws in his reasoning, thus imagining that America was India.²⁹

Deo, qui vincenda parat nova regna tibi que sibi que teque simul fortem præstat et esse pium. Library of Congress, Control Number: 46031077

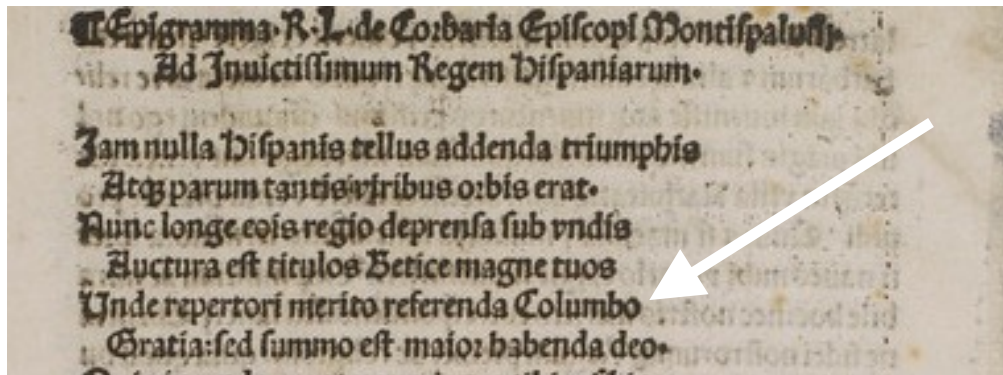
²⁷ La primera cuestión que salta a la pluma es el **analfabetismo** del futuro almirante de las Indias cuando pisa por primera vez Portugal. No sabía leer ni escribir ninguna lengua, aunque se nos achaque reincidencia en la afirmación. RUMEU DE ARMAS, *El Portugués...*, 41.

²⁸ Consiguió la médula y sustancia necesaria de las otras ciencias, conviene á saber, de la geometría, geografía, cosmografía, astrología, ó astronomía y marinería. Esto todo se colige muy claro de lo que escribía en los viajes que hizo á estas Indias, y de algunas cartas suyas que escribió á los Reyes, que vinieron á mis manos; en las cuales, como era hombre temeroso de Dios y moderado, y consideradas las personas Reales á quien escribía, es de creer que de lo que fuese verdad no excedía, de las cuales aquí determino poner algunas cláusulas, porque juzgo de que sean á todos manifestas son dignas. LAS CASAS, T. I, 47.

²⁹ It has been widely accepted by most modern historians that Colón had been self-educated. Edmund S. Morgan, Sterling Professor emeritus at Yale University, wrote in the *Smithsonian Magazine*, that, “Colón was not a scholarly man. Yet he studied these books, made hundreds of marginal notations in them and came out with ideas about the world that were characteristically simple and strong and sometimes wrong, the kind of ideas that the **self-educated person** gains from independent reading and clings to in defiance of what anyone else tries to tell him.” MORGAN, Edmund S., *Columbus’ Confusion About the New World*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 2009.

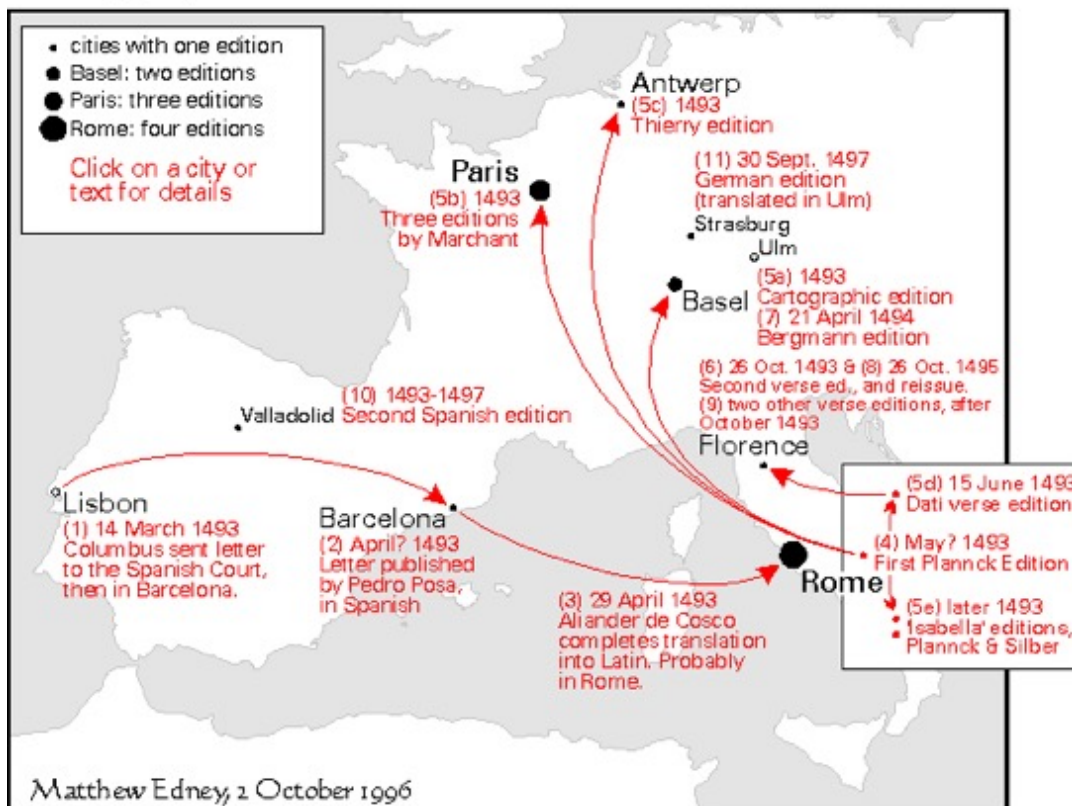
Figure 2

At top is a section of the *First Letter* printed in Rome, showing the printing error of the name as “Columbo” (arrow). Below is a Map of the places where the Latin version was published in 1493, thus publicizing the mistake over a large area.



Source. Library of Congress, Control Number: 46031077
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbc0001.2012incun31077/?sp=14>.

Geographical Diffusion of Columbus's First Letter



Source: Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, University of Southern Maine,
<https://oshermaps.org/special-map-exhibits/columbus-letter/iv-diffusion-columbuss-letter-through-europe-1493-1497>.

Part of the weaver's grandiose plan would be to marry into aristocracy in Portugal. As a result, he conquered the heart of a Portuguese knight's daughter. Some proclaimed that the woolworker achieved this marriage by pretending to be a nobleman, a lie which took him to the highest social tiers in Castile. There the monarchs styled him **Don** Cristóbal Colón, made him Admiral, Governor, Viceroy and even granted him a Coat of Arms that included elements of the royal arms of the Kings of Castile and Leon.

Through incredible strength of will, persistence, deceitfulness, and ignorance, along with a dash of luck, the weaver Cristoforo Colombo is said to have become admiral and viceroy upon the world stage in 1493, rubbing elbows with kings and the elite nobility.

As fantastic as this story may sound, it shows how Don Cristóbal Colón's life story became steeped in mystified conclusions due to disinformation, unreliable sources, and methodical counterintelligence.

Some investigators have taken Genoese and Iberian facts, which were not related, and tried to pass them off as if they were linked. They had accepted the Admiral as being an Italian Colombo. But Don Cristóbal could not speak any Italian language, being that "the surprising linguistic anomaly of Cristóbal Colón was his ignorance of the Italian [...] he never knew how to write in Italian," wrote Rumeu de Armas.³⁰

On the other hand, Consuelo Varela, defending Colón's nonexistent knowledge of his supposed mother tongue, and in a phrase quite unfitting for describing a woolworker,³¹ called him a "man of the sea," accustomed to "parroting a thousand languages without being able to express himself well in any of them."³²

However, we must disagree with the illustrious investigator when she postures that Colón learned the Castilian language after 1484, when he was already living in Castile.³³ Consuelo must remember that one of the future Admiral's notes is written in Castilian already in 1481.³⁴

³⁰ Sorprendente anomalía lingüística de Cristóbal Colón era su **ignorancia del italiano** [...] nunca supo escribir el italiano, RUMEU DE ARMAS, *El Portugués...*, 42.

³¹ Savona, 20 marzo 1472: Christoforo de Columbo **lanerio** de Ianua. RACCOLTA, Parte II. Vol. I, 120.

³² TEXTOS, xxiii.

³³ Por pura lógica se há de concluir que la etapa castellano-parlante de Colón [...] se abre con su venida a España. TEXTOS, xxv.

³⁴ Esta es la coenta de la criación del mundo segundo lo judíos. Vivio Adán 120 años y entonces ingendró Aset (sic). Vivio Aset 105 años y entonces ingendró Enos... Y desde la destrución de la 2.^a Casa [fasta] segundo los judíos, **fasta agora**, (siendo) el año del nacimiento de Nuestro Señor de **1481**, son 1413 años. Autograph apostille in the

Regardless of what countless history books claim, Don Cristóbal Colón never declared where he was born to anyone outside his trusted circle, neither what his true lineage was nor the name he had during his life in Portugal. Not a single document exists, written by the navigator's hand, with such information.

The seeds of confusion were sown about ten years before he lifted anchor to captain his three ships across the Atlantic in 1492. Don Cristóbal Colón had assumed this name as an *alias* for himself after entering Castile, circa 1484. As early as 1487, the alias **Colón** was miswritten by the Castilian court as **Colomo**.³⁵ His nationality appeared only once in the official Castilian court documents, and there they described him as "Portuguese."³⁶

It is astonishing that a man so connected to the Portuguese court and its navigational discoveries has not deserved much research by Portuguese academia, leaving his biography in the hands of foreigners who, in our view, were much less competent.

During a debate broadcast on January 22, 2008, on RTP2, the Portuguese historian José Manuel Garcia, author of a vast bibliography on the History of Portugal, but unfamiliar with Don Cristóbal Colón's biography, insisted that the official version of history, as it pertained to the discoverer of America, was correct. That it resulted from a careful work of "speculation and deduction," he said. Defending the integrity of the wool weaver's tale he insisted that the navigator was Genoese, as proven by various documents, such as the *Mayorazgo of 1498* and the *Assereto Document*, although confessing that he had never seen nor analyzed these documents. He did acknowledge that "all the knowledge and experience of Cristóbal Colón was acquired during the years of his life lived in Portugal."³⁷

book *Historia rerum ubique gestarum*, Institución Colombina, Sevilla. Transcribed by RUMEU DE ARMAS, *El Portugués...*, 81.

³⁵ En dicho día (5 do Mayo de 1487) dí á Cristóbal *Colomo* [*sic*], extrangero, tres mil maravedís, que está aquí haciendo algunas cosas complideras al servicio de sus Altezas, por cédula de Alonso de Quintanilla, con mandamiento del Obispo (de Palencia). NAVARRETE, T. II, 4.

³⁶ Este es el **Portugués** que estava en El Real. Esto fue a la partida de Linares. *Libro de los maravedies que por mandado de la Reyna nuestra Señora, recibió y gastó Pedro de Toledo, su Limosnero. De Alcalá de Henares, año de LXXXVI fasta Çargoça, fin de LXXXVII*, fl. 6. Original conservado en el instituto "Valencia de Don Juan" de Madrird (signatura 26-I-29 de la mencionada Biblioteca). Facsimile in *Isabel la Católica en la Real Academia de la Historia*, 2004, 129.

³⁷ TV debate of January 22 of 2008 on RTP2's *Sociedade Civil* program, hosted by Fernanda Freitas with historian José Manuel Garcia, ten.-coronel Brandão Ferreira, and reporter José Rodrigues dos Santos, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BVj0qp9dK8>.

When confronted with the predicament of the accepted **weaver Colombo**, an impoverished laborer who would have married a Portuguese noble dame in 1479, he did what many others have done - he envisioned that “the weaver must have received a social promotion” in Portugal, in order to marry nobility.³⁸ However, not only do we lack documents with such a promotion, but also the Portuguese archives have not given up a single document with the name **Colombo** in them.

As a whole, the official account had presented the navigator as a simple and uneducated medieval woolworker who, arriving in Lisbon at the age of 25, seems to have known nothing about everything. It is said that in 1476 he did not read or write, did not know anything about Atlantic navigation, and did not even know how to speak the Italian language of his supposed homeland.³⁹

What will it take for the academies of the world to abandon a theory based on “speculation and deduction” that presents a humble illiterate commoner, documented as a “lanerio de Ianua” (weaver of Genoa) in 1472-73,⁴⁰ whose arrival in Portugal is said to be at the age of 25, and who, in a very short time, became an educated and experienced pilot who captained ships for the kings of Portugal and even took part in consultations of navigation, cartography and geography with King João II and his experts, at this king’s request?⁴¹

Many biographers admitted that some documents from Genoa and Spain, which support the narrative of the weaver theory, are suspicious.⁴² Yet, the manifest oddity of a marriage between a commoner and a noble is still being conveyed by some scholars as correct.

³⁸ O Collegio de Nobreza esteja dividido em trez classes [...] *Nobreza Theologica*, a que também chamao nobreza de animo, he huma prática de virtudes pela qual o homem se faz grato, e bem acceito a Deos; *Nobreza natural*, a que outros chamao hereditária, e de linhagem, he huma Dignidade derivada dos pais aos filhos; *Nobreza Civil*, ou Politica, he huma qualidade concedida pelo Principe expressa, ou tacitamente, ou adquirida por prescrição em consequência de riquezas antigas. OLIVEIRA, Luiz da Silva Pereira, *Privilegios da nobreza, e fidalguia de Portugal*, Na nova officina de João Rodrigues Neves, 1806, 10-11.

³⁹ Christopher undoubtedly left home almost if not completely illiterate [...] When illiterate people, such as the Colombos were, made an agreement or settled a dispute or concluded an important business transaction, they went to a public notary [...] No signatures or marks were made. MORISON, Samuel Eliot, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, Time Incorporated, New York, 1962, 13, 6-7.

⁴⁰ Savona, 20 marzo 1472, Cristoforo Colombo è testimonio al testamento di Nicolò Monleone ... Bernardo Sambaldo sartore, **Christoforo de Columbo lanerio de Ianua** et Dominico Vigna sartore, civibus Saone, testibus ad hec vocatis et rogatis ore proprio ipsius testatoris. RACCOLTA, Parte II.Vol. I, 120.

⁴¹ Vos rogamos e encomendamos que vossa vinda seja loguo. *Letter of King João II to Colón*, written in Avis, March 20, 1488. PATRONATO, 295, N.1, Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla.

⁴² El verdadero mayorazgo **no se conoce** en la actualidad, que la copia presentada en el pleito tenía **el valor de “un papel blanco”** según el Almirante de Aragón. GANDIA, Enrique de, *Historia de Cristobal Colon Análisis crítico de las fuentes documentales y de los problemas Colombinos*, Buenos Aires, 1942, 51.

Simply because one or another author wrote, at some time or another, that the navigator was Genoese does not make it a fact. Also, if someone reported erroneously that the navigator's name was Colombo, it does not make it his actual name.

Some writers who attempted to convince their readers the Cristoforo Colombo from Genoa was the Don Cristóbal Colón from Iberia have done so with details that are not found in Colón's documents. As an example, let us look at this quote from Luís Filipe Thomaz:

*It seems that in 1502 the Admiral decided to replace those “arms that you are accustomed to having,” with **five gold anchors**, arranged in aspa or saltire, in a blue field, in the last quarter of his shield, which, according to an engraving reproduced by HARRISSE, used to be a blue band in a field of gold with a red chief.*⁴³

In 2015 this Portuguese academic still utilized as his source Henry HARRISSE⁴⁴ (1829-1910), who had never seen Colón's *Royal Grant of Arms* dated 1493. This grant, awarding the new coat of arms to the navigator, signed by the Catholic Kings in 1493, had already been published in *Cuadernos de Ayala* in 2006.⁴⁵ The publication confirmed that the five gold anchors were part of the Admiral's shield in 1493, negating what Thomaz wrote in 2015. In our 2006 publication, we discussed the idea of the Admiral inserting the five gold anchors into his coat of arms and showed that it had no documental support.⁴⁶

⁴³ Parece que em 1502 o Almirante decidiu substituir no derradeiro quartel do escudo por cinco âncoras douradas, dispostas em aspa ou sautor, em campo azul, “as armas que soía usar”, que, segundo uma gravura reproduzida por HARRISSE, eram uma banda azul em campo de ouro com chefe de goles. THOMAZ, Luís Filipe F. R, *Cristóvão Colón: português, natural de Cuba, agente secreto de Don João II?*, Anais de História de Além-Mar XVI, 2015, 490.

⁴⁴ Ces changements ne sont pas les seuls que Colón se soit cru en droit d'introduire dans son blason. Au deux, par exemple [...] Enfin, on relève aussi dans un quartier supplémentaire, d'azur avec cinq ancres d'or couchées et posées deux, une et deux. [...] Le blason se termine à la pointe par une division portant les meubles et émaux qui, d'après Colón, auraient constitué **les armes de ses ancêtres**. HARRISSE, Henry, *Christophe Colomb, son origine, sa vie...*, T. II, 169-170.

⁴⁵ MARTÍNEZ LLORENTE, Félix, *El escudo de armas de Cristóbal Colón. Estudio de un acrecentamiento heráldico*, Revista de la Federación Española de Genealogía y Heráldica, Cuadernos de Ayala 26 – Abril 2006. Universidad de Valladolid, 9-25.

⁴⁶ Discordamos com os outros historiadores que aceitam de braços abertos o campo dourado com faixa azul, porque nessa altura, teríamos de explicar de onde vieram as âncoras do quartel inferior. Ninguém pode ter certezas sobre isto porque Colón não as podia colocar lá por sua autocriação e se as colocasse ter-lhe-iam mandado que as retirasse por não pertencerem ao seu brasão. ROSA, Manuel da Silva and STEELE, Eric James, *O Mistério Colombo Revelado*, Ésquilo, Lisboa, 2006, 517.

This example shows how the new works published on the subject of the First Admiral of the Indies are not being read by those who set about writing articles and books related to the same. Many writers continue to base their arguments on authors from the 19th and 20th centuries, as did Luís Thomaz, quoting Henry Harrisse.

Harrisse was an investigator who discarded and minimized the writings of Don Cristóbal Colón and his son, Don Hernando, in an attempt to force a mere weaver from Genoa to fit into the life of a nobleman in Iberia:

But in the list of the authentic noble Genoese families from 1459, 1468, 1475, 1486 and 1489, there is not a single one named Colombo [...] The assertion that the ancestors of Colón were sailors from father to son is all imaginary.⁴⁷ The Colombos from Genoa were all plebeians of origin and condition [...] Christopher himself, were all manual laboring weavers.⁴⁸

Harrisse accepted, erroneously, that the discoverer was named Colombo.⁴⁹ Not finding any noble Colombo families in Genoa, instead only commoners, Harrisse chose to describe Don Cristóbal and his son as liars for claiming they sprang from ancient nobility with a long history of seafaring. Historians assumed that the Genoese documents exposed a low birth that Colón had tried so industriously to conceal in Castile with his identity change.

The inconsistencies that resulted from forcing Admiral Colón to fit into the Genoese weaver documents, accepting those as the truth about his life, are very discernable today.

⁴⁷ Mais la liste authentique des familles nobles génoises en 1459, 1468, 1475, 1486 et 1489. Il n'y en a pas une seule du nom de Colombo [...] L'assertion que les ancêtres de Colomb auraient été marins de et père en fils est tout aussi **imaginaire**. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, Son Origine, Sa Vie...* T. I, 161.

⁴⁸ Quant à n'avoir jamais exercé de profession manuelle, nous publions en appendice une série de cinquante actes authentiques montrant que Domenico, père de Christophe, les deux frères de ce dernier, Barthélemy et Diego, son oncle maternel, Guglielmo Fontanarossa, son cousin Antonio de Amico, Giovanni, Raffaele et Battista Fontanarossa, autres parents de sa mère, enfin, **Christophe lui-même, furent tous ouvriers tisserands**. *Idem*, 163.

⁴⁹ Before proceeding any further, let me inform you that this declaration of the great navigator that he was born in the city of Genoa, has just been confirmed by the discovery of authentic documents preserved in the archives of the Palazzetto. We were already in possession of notarial acts showing that his father Domenico continued to live and work as a wool weaver within the city from 1439 until the close of the year 1470, when he removed to Savona. Now, as late as yesterday, my friend the Marquis Marcello Staglieno discovered a legal document containing a notarial declaration to the effect that on the 30th of October, 1470, Cristoforo Colombo had attained the majority of 19 years: Christofforus de Columbo filius Dominici, maior annis decemmovem. This fixes the date of his birth between 1446 and 1451, of course in the city of Genoa, where his father was then settled for at least six years. HARRISSE, *Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George*, 3.

Continuing with Luís Filipe Thomaz's article, we read the following affirmation regarding André, a relative of Don Cristóbal Colón who many accepted as having been another plebeian Colombo from Genoa:

*It should be noted, however, that in another document, the discoverer's letter to Friar Gaspar de Gorricio, dated January 4, 1505, from Seville, which was carried by a certain André **Colombo**, who is referred to as brother of the aforementioned Juan Antonio.⁵⁰*

However, that is not what Don Cristóbal Colón's letter to Gorricio says. The Admiral never wrote the surname Colombo, as can be verified in Figure 3, which reads:

*Reverend and very devout Father; Diego Méndez has come from the Court. Don Diogo remains well. The Lord-Lieutenant and Don Hernando had not yet arrived. I will send them to you with news of everything. I do not know what else to say of my desire to see you in person and discuss things that are best not written down. I would like to see my documents that you are keeping, and I would like to order a box made of cork and lined with wax to hold the privileges and grants. I ask you as a favor, if Donato, that honest man, is coming here, send me everything with him, or with **Andrea**, brother of Juan Antonio, bearer of this letter. As for my illness, I am getting better each day, thanks to our Lord. I commend myself to the favor of the Father Prior and to all those religious members. Done today, Saturday, January 4. I am at the command of your Reverence.*

.S.

.S. A .S.

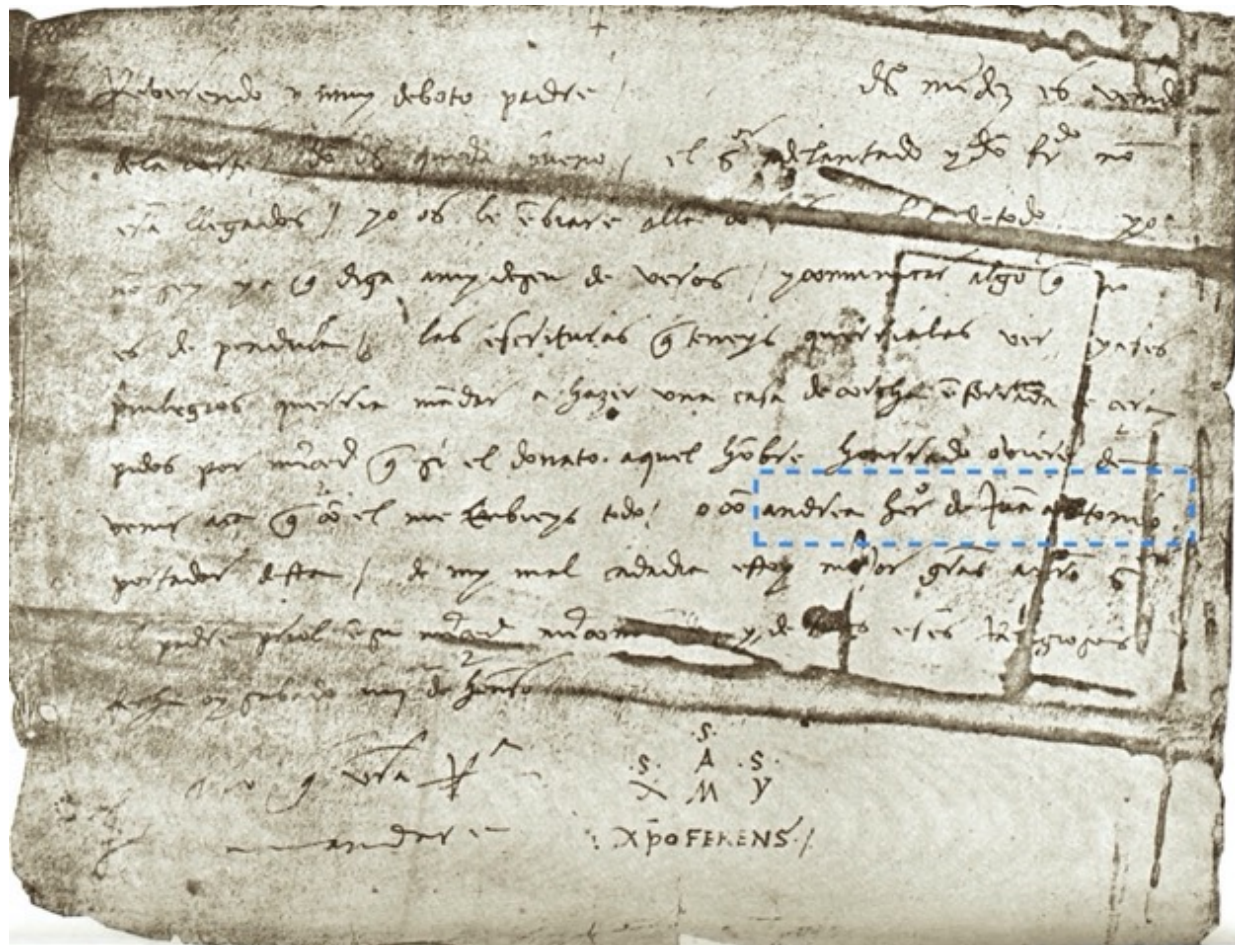
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⁵⁰ Há que notar, contudo, que num outro documento, a carta do descobridor a Frei Gaspar de Gorricio, de Sevilha, 4 de Janeiro de 1505, de que foi portador um certo André **Colombo**, este é referido como irmão do sobredito Juan Antonio. THOMAZ, *Cristóvão Colón: português...*, 501.

Figure 3

Letter of January 4, 1505, from Don Cristóbal Colón to “Reberendo y muy deboto padre” where he mentions Andrea and his brother, Juan Antonio, without giving them any last name.⁵¹



Source: THACHER, Tomo III, 386 - Archivo General de Indias, PATRONATO,295,N.57

⁵¹ Reberendo y muy deboto padre. diego mendez es venido// de la corte. Don Diogo queda bueno. el señor adelantado y Don Hernando non// eran llegados. yo os le enbiare alla con las nuebas de todo yo// non sey ya que diga a my deseú de veros y comunicar algo que non// es de pendula. las escrituras que teneys querrials ver y esses// priuilegios querria mandar a hazer vna casa de corcha enforrada de çera// pidos por merçed que si el Donato aquel hombre honrrado oviere de// venir aca que con el me enbieys todo o con **andrea hermano de Juan antonio**// portador desta. de my mal cada dia estoy mejor gracias a nuestro señor// al padre priol en su merçed mencomiendo y de todos eses religiosos// fecha oy sabado. iiiii. de henero// alo que vuestra Reuerencia// mandare// .S. // .S. A .S. // X M Y// : Xpō FERENS/. THACHER, Vol III, 387.

As another example of a transcript with details that do not exist in the original, Muro Orejón and Hernández Díaz wrote that “on April 30, 1509, Juan Antonio (**Colombo**), a servant of the Admiral who formed part of his entourage, gave a power of attorney to Pedro de Arana.”⁵² These authors augmented the surname *Colombo* to Juan Antonio’s name. The document says only that “whoever sees this letter that I, **Juan Antonio**, servant of the Admiral,” without any last name of Colombo.⁵³

In the *Testament* of Don Diego Colón, we read the name only as “to **Juan Antonio** one hundred pesos from the gold that is in the Indies,” also without giving him any last name.⁵⁴

There is a certain inconsistency between what has been accepted as factual evidence by researchers, relative to Admiral Colón’s life, compared to what can be proven with the documents. It is common to see facts rejected when they do not fit the preconception, while undocumented details were added to support the Genoese weaver story.

These maneuverings have helped maintain the myth that the explorer started his life as the poor and ignorant weaver Colombo, to the detriment of the facts. Many facts contradictory to the official tale are in Don Cristóbal’s own documents. And these very facts could have served to lead us to the truth had they been taken more seriously; instead, they have been ignored, devalued, or discarded altogether.

Although it is generally accepted that Juan Antonio and his brother André were sometimes called *Colombo*, this is, in no way, proof that Colombo was their actual family surname.⁵⁵ *Colombo* appears to be a nickname attributed to these two brothers, as will be explained in Chapter 3.

Far from being another weaver, André was one more man of the sea, who, aside from captaining ships for his relative, the Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón, also served in the Indian Ocean fleets for the King of Portugal.⁵⁶

⁵² HERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ, José and MURO OREJÓN, Antonio, *El testamento de Don Hernando Colón y otros documentos para su biografía*. Spain, Impr. editorial de la Gavidia, 1941, x.

⁵³ Sepan quantos esta carta vieren como yo **Juan Antonio** criado del señor almirante mayor de las yndias del mar oceano otorgo e conosco que do todo mi poder conplido asy como lo yo he e tengo e de derecho mas deve valer. *Idem*, 6.

⁵⁴ À **Juan Anton** cient pesos de oro de los que tiene en las Indias. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, Son Origine, Sa Vie...*, T. II, 470.

⁵⁵ El tercero, para el otro navio, fué Juan Antonio *Columbo*, ginovés, deudo del Almirante, hombre muy capaz y prudente, y de autoridad, com quien yo tuve frecuente conversación. LAS CASAS, T. II, 221.

⁵⁶ Roncinoto desideroso di ritornare in Colocut, rimasi in Lisbona citta del re di Portugallo, e acconciatomi con uno messer **Andrea Colombo**, nipote di quel tanto honorato e animoso Capitano **Cristóbal Colón** primo inuentore

After reading the following extract from Don Hernando Colón's *Testament*, we should seriously consider whether the legendary Juan Antonio, sometimes designated as *Colombo*, was not a subject of the King of France:

*I order that it be determined through French or Burgundian merchants, by what secure way nine thousand four hundred and sixty-one maravedís can be sent to the heirs of **Juan Antonio**... who died in my home, who was from Fontenoy, a place belonging to the Duke of Lorraine, located towards Burgundy.*⁵⁷

Note that Juan Antonio was from Fontenoy-le-Château, in France, a town belonging to Lady Philippa de La Mark, great-granddaughter of Prince George Bissipat, who was better known by his pirate nickname of *Colombo the Younger*, as we will show. Here is a clue that may prove that Juan Antonio of Fontenoy was the same Juan Antonio nicknamed *Colombo*, not only a ship's captain but also the Lord Chamberlain of Second Admiral Don Diogo Colón and his relative.

As all the available documents prove, the Genoese Cristoforo Colombo that lived in Genoa was a common laborer who described himself as a "weaver," belonging to a family so poor that his father was unable to pay an insignificant debt of fifteen *liras*.⁵⁸

The famous Leonardo da Vinci wrote down the cost of various products of his day. With four *liras* da Vinci could buy six shirts. To buy four pairs of pants, da Vinci paid seven *liras* and eight *soldos*.⁵⁹ By da Vinci's calculations, the weaver Colombo was taken to a notary to confirm

delle nauigazioni de l'Indie occidentali, luoghi dagli antichi in modo alcuno conosciuti; Alli xvij di marzo, l'anno soprascritto, si partimmo da Lisbona per Colocut con una carauella del detto [Andrea] Colombo. *Viaggi fatti da Vinetia, alla Tana, in Persia, in India, et in Costantinopoli: con la descrizione particolare di città, luoghi, siti, costumi, & della Porta del gran Turco: & di tutte le intrate, spese, & modo di gouerno suo, & della ultima impresa contra portoghesi*, Nelle case de figliuoli di Aldo, 1545, 116.

⁵⁷ Mando que se sepa por via de mercaderes franceses ó borgoñones, por que via segura se podrán inuiar y se envien nueve mill é quatrocientos é sesenta é un mrs. á los herederos de Juan Antonio, dotor en leyes, criado mio que falleció en mi casa, que era de Fontaneto, lugar del duque de Loringe, que es házia Borgoña. HARRISSE, Henry, *Don Fernando Colon Historiador de su Padre*, Sevilla, 1871, 130.

⁵⁸ Os documentos da *Raccolta* mostram, ainda, que a família a que pertencia o tecelão Colombo era tão pobre que, no seu conjunto, não conseguira reunir 15 libras (equivalente a 83 euros em 2010). ROSA, *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, 116.

— A lira veneziana equivalia a 20 soldos. O ducado equivalia a 124 soldos. 15 libras equivaliam a 2,4 ducados. O ducado tinha 3,545g de ouro. 2,4 ducados são 8,5 gramas x €51 por grama = €433,50 no ano de 2020.

⁵⁹ RICHTER, Jean Paul, *Scritti Letterari di Leonardo da Vinci*, Londres, 1883, 439.

a debt as insignificant as the value of eight pairs of pants.⁶⁰ Most of the Genoese documents relate to the meager debts the weaver's family owed to other common laborers of their ilk.⁶¹ It may also be noted that many Colombo families were living in Genoa at that time.⁶²

We concur with the opinion of those who say it is not credible that a 25-year-old arriving in a foreign land from a shipwreck, as the official story claims, would begin studying Portuguese, Spanish, and Latin, plus all the other necessary sciences like math, astronomy, geography, theology, and simultaneously being able to master navigational instruments, navigation itself and even secret cyphers.⁶³ It just seems too much for any human being. He would have learned all these languages and sciences in only seven years, from August 1476 to the end of 1484, the period of time he supposedly lived in Portugal.

In 1861 more than 75% of Italy's population was illiterate.⁶⁴ In the 1460s, the illiteracy rate of lower classes would be much higher.⁶⁵ Not only would the weaver Cristoforo Colombo have managed to master all these subjects in Portugal, but so would his weaver brother Bartolomeo Colombo.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Genoa, July 5, 1464. Domenico Colombo si confessa debitore di **quindici lire** verso Girolamo delle Vigne. RACCOLTA, Parte II - Vol. I, 99.

⁶¹ En 1472 están en Savona el padre y el hijo. El 20 de Marzo Cristóforo de **Columbo, lanero de Génova**, es testigo en un testamento otorgado en aquella ciudad. Los demás testigos, cuyo oficio también se indica, son tres sastres, un tundidor y un zapatero. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón y Cristóforo Columbo, Estudio Crítico Documental*, Madrid, Imprenta del Patronato de Huérfanos de Intendencia e intervención Militares, 1921, 8.

⁶² On y rencontre plusieurs Domenico Colombo, contemporains du père de Christophe, mais ils sont fils d'Antonio ou d'Andrea, même de Giovanni, sans avoir aucun rapport avec le Domenico qui nous intéresse. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, Son Origine, Sa Vie...* T. I, 28.

⁶³ No parece probable el que aquellos humildes artesanos costearan estudios literarios ni científicos á sus hijos, cuando de su trabajo manual necesitaban para atender á la subsistencia de la familia. ASENSIO, José María, *Cristóbal Colón: su vida, sus viajes, sus descubrimientos*, Espasa y Compañía, Barcelona, 1888, T. I, 21.

⁶⁴ DICKIE, John. *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan US, 1999, 15.

— SILVA, Francisco Ribeiro da, *História da Alfabetização Em Portugal: Fontes, Métodos, Resultados*, Encontros Ibéricos de História da Educação, vol. 1º Encontro, 1992, 101.

⁶⁵ Savona, 20 marzo 1472: **Christoforo de Columbo lanerio d e Ianua**. (Archivio Notarile Municipale di Savona, *Atti del notaro Lodovico Moreno*, bastardello 921-26, c. s.n.). RACCOLTA, Parte II - Volume I, 120.

⁶⁶ The Raccolta published some documents that mention Bartolomeo Colombo along with Cristoforo Colombo, Giacomo Colombo, Bianchinetta, and Giovanni Pellegrino, “quattro maschi ed una femmina: Cristoforo, il maggiore, nato verso il **1447**, Giovanni Pellegrino, solo noto per l'atto del **7 agosto 1473**, Bartolomeo e Giacomo, in Ispagna detto Diego, dei quali parleremo più avanti. La femmina chiamavasi Bianchinetta.” RACCOLTA, Parte II, Vol. I, 18.

They contended this weaver Bartolomeo was the same nobleman Don Bartolomé Colón, who, upon arriving in Iberia, would have become a learned mariner and scientist like his older brother, from whom Bartolomé received letters written in secret code:

*That new Governor said that he had forwarded letters to the court, written by the Admiral's hand in **unknown characters**, in which he alerted his brother, the Lieutenant, who was absent, to bring people with weapons, so that if the new Governor was to attack him, he could be defended from such harm.*⁶⁷

Additionally, according to the *Historie*, this brother lived in Lisbon, and aside from being a ship's pilot, Bartolomé was also a cartographer. Las Casas confirmed this by stating that "Bartolomé Colón, ... knowledgeable about seafaring, and knew very well how to make navigational maps, globes and other instruments of this profession."⁶⁸

— Genova, 22 settembre 1470: Qui Dominicus de Columbo et **Christofforus** eius filius, volentes in totum observare sententiam ferendam per dictum arbitrum et arbitratorem. *Idem*, 108.

— Genova, 31 ottobre 1470: **Christofforus de Columbo** filius Dominici, maior **annis decemnovem**, et in presentia, auctoritate, consilio et consensu dicti Dominici eius patris presentis et autorizantis. *Idem*, 112.

— Savona, 20 marzo 1472: **Christoforo de Columbo lanerio de Ianua** et Dominico Vigna sartore, civibus Saone, testibus ad hec vocatis et rogatis ore proprio ipsius testatoris. *Idem*, 120.

— Savona, 26 agosto 1472: Dominicus Columbus **lanerius**, habitator Saone, **et Cristoforus eius filius**, patre consentiente &c. sponte confitentur Iohanni de Signorio, presenti. *Idem*, 123.

— Savona, 4 giugno 1473: Dominicus de Columbo de Ianua, habitator Saone, **lanerius**, constitutus in presentia mei notarii et testium infrascriptorum, sponte, consulte, deliberate, ipsius certa scientia, fuit confessus et confitetur, ac publice et in veritate. *Idem*, 127.

— Savona, 16 giugno 1480: «Domenico Colombo fa procura in **Bartolomeo** suo figlio». [Negli atti del notaro Ansaldo Basso.] Quest'atto che doveva essere fra quelli del notaro Ansaldo Basso, **non fu trovato**. *Idem*, 147.

— Savona, 10 settembre 1484: **Iacobus de Columbo** Dominici, civis Ianue, sponte &c. dedit et locavit se pro famulo et discipulo cum Luchino Cadamartori, presenti &c. per menses viginti duos, ad addiscendam artem **textorum pannorum**, promittens non recedere, ac servire et furtum non committere. *Idem*, 149.

— Genova, 25 agosto 1487: et **Iacobo de Columbo textore pannorum lane in Ianua**, Dominici, specialiter ad premissa vocatis et rogatis. *Idem*, 150.

⁶⁷ Novus ille gubernator ad reges præfecti dextera exaratas, **ignotis characteribus** scriptas literas misisse dicitur, quibus Adelantatum fratrem absentem armata manu, ut se si vim gubernator inferre pareret, ab eius injuria tutarentur, venire propere hortabatur monebaque. ANGHIERA, Pietro Martire d', *De Orbe Novo, Petri Martyris ab Angleria Mediolanensis protonotarii cesaris senatoris decades*, Logart Press, 1530, Prime Decadis, Caput Octavum, Fol. xvii verso.

⁶⁸ Chiamato Bartolomeo Colon: il qual quantunque non hauesse lettere Latine, era però huomo pratico, & giudicioso nelle cose del mare, & sapea molto bene far carte da navigare, & sfere, & altri instrumenti di quella professione, come dall'Ammiraglio, suo fratello, era instrutto. HISTORIE, Cap. XI, 31.

Making navigational maps and nautical scientific instruments implies an extraordinary amount of scientific study and required years of experience. These skills and knowledge would not suddenly be picked up by someone who had spent their prior 20 years behind a loom.

In 1488 Bartolomé Colón visited the King of England and the King of France, both of whom gave him their letters of intent to support the Atlantic voyage. On his trip to England and France, Bartolomé Colón carried maps and a globe of his own making, props that helped convince those two kings to provide the financing letters for the ambitious project, as explained in the *Historie*,⁶⁹ and in Las Casas's *Historia*.⁷⁰

Bartolomé Colón was, thus, not only his brother's ambassador to those monarchs, but also Cristóbal's right arm in the discovery enterprise.⁷¹ Bartolomé had expert knowledge of geography and navigation at the level of his older brother. The letters of funding he procured from the two kings were later shown to Queen Isabel, alongside a letter of support from King João II of Portugal.

The letters of support from these three kings were utilized to encourage Queen Isabel to sponsor the voyage. These three letters of sponsorship are mentioned at least three times, twice by the navigator and once by his son Hernando, as his own writings reveal:

*I, with love continued in this, and I replied to France and to England and to Portugal, that for the King and Queen, my Lords, were those lands and Lordships. Their offers were not few nor empty, (written in 1500 shortly after being arrested, see Figure 4.)*⁷²

⁶⁹ Bartolomeo Colon suo fratello, quello, che era già andato a trattare accordo col Re d'Ingliterra sopra lo scoprimento delle Indie, come di sopra habbiam detto. Questi poi, ritornandosene verso Catliglia com capitoli conceduti, haveva inteso in Parigi dal Re Carlo di Francia. *Idem*, Cap. LX, 121.

⁷⁰ Recibidos, pues, por el rey de Inglaterra los versos y el mapa-mundi, mostró desde adelante al Bartolomé Colon siempre alegre cara, y holgaba mucho de platicar en aquella materia con él y, finalmente, según se dijo, la **empresa de buena voluntad aceptaba**, y enviaba por el Cristóbal Colón. LAS CASAS, T. I, 226.

⁷¹ Porque este testigo (él, Bartolomé) andovo con el dicho Almyrante D. Cristoval Colon, solicitando con el Rey e la Reina nuestros señores, e porque el dicho Almyrante fué el primero que descubrió esas tierras, e Paria, e nunca otro avya venido hasta entonces, antes al tiempo quel dicho Almyrante lo solicitava, **facían burla** del dicho Almyrante e **deste testigo** (Bartolomé), diciendo que querían descubrir outro mundo nuevo... e **firmolo de su nonbre**. Don Bartolomé Colon. MURO OREJÓN, Antonio, *Pleitos Colombinos Probanzas del Almirante de las Indias (1512-1515)*, Edición de Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, Sevilla, 1984, Vol. 3, 100.

⁷² Yo con amor proseguí en ello, y respondí **á Francia y á Inglaterra y á Portugal**, que para el Rey y la Reina, mis Señores, eran esas tierras y Señoríos. Las promesas no eran pocas ni vanas. *Archivo General de Indias*, PATRONATO, 295, N. 41.

Letter to King Fernando, May 1505: *God, Our Lord, miraculously sent me here to serve [only] Your Highnesses [...] because there were offer letters from **three Princes** that the Queen, may God have her, saw and were read to her by Doctor Villalón.*⁷³

*To serve [only] Your Highnesses, I did not want any agreement with France, nor with England, neither with Portugal, from which Princes Your Highnesses saw the letters by the hand of Doctor [Alonso de] Villalón, [of the Royal Council] (quoted by Don Hernando.)*⁷⁴

From these excerpts, we may see how the official historiography wrongly propagated the idea that the Kings João II of Portugal, Henry VII of England, and Charles VIII of France rejected sponsoring Colón's Atlantic Voyage. It was the opposite; according to Don Cristóbal Colón's own words, he rejected the offers from those three kings in order to focus solely on getting support from Queen Isabel of Castile.

It also becomes clear that Don Bartolomé Colón, like his brother Don Cristóbal, was an expert in several sciences and mastered several languages. As Lieutenant in the New World, he led a battalion where he demonstrated his war expertise in the use of the lance.⁷⁵

Turning our focus to the Admiral's second brother, it was accepted and expounded that he was the weaver Giacomo Colombo. Genoese documents show Giacomo was indentured as a lowly apprentice to the craft of weaving in 1484, at the age of 16.⁷⁶ Giacomo was born around 1468.

⁷³ Muy alto Rey: Dios nuestro Señor milagrosamente me envió acá porque yo sirviese á Vuestra Alteza; dije milagrosamente porque fuí á aportar á Portugal, donde el Rey de allí entendía en el descubrir más que otro; él le atajó la vista, oído y todos los sentidos, que en catorce años no le pude hacer entender lo que yo dije. También dije milagrosamente, porque hobe **cartas de ruego de tres Principes**, que la Reina que Dios haya, vido, y se las leyó el Doctor Villalón. CARTAS, 413.

⁷⁴ Per servir le Altezze vostre io non ho voluto impacciarmi con Francia, ne con Inghilterra, ne con Portogallo, de'quali Principi le Altezze vostre videro le lettere per mano del Dottor Viglialano. HISTORIE, Cap. XII, 35.

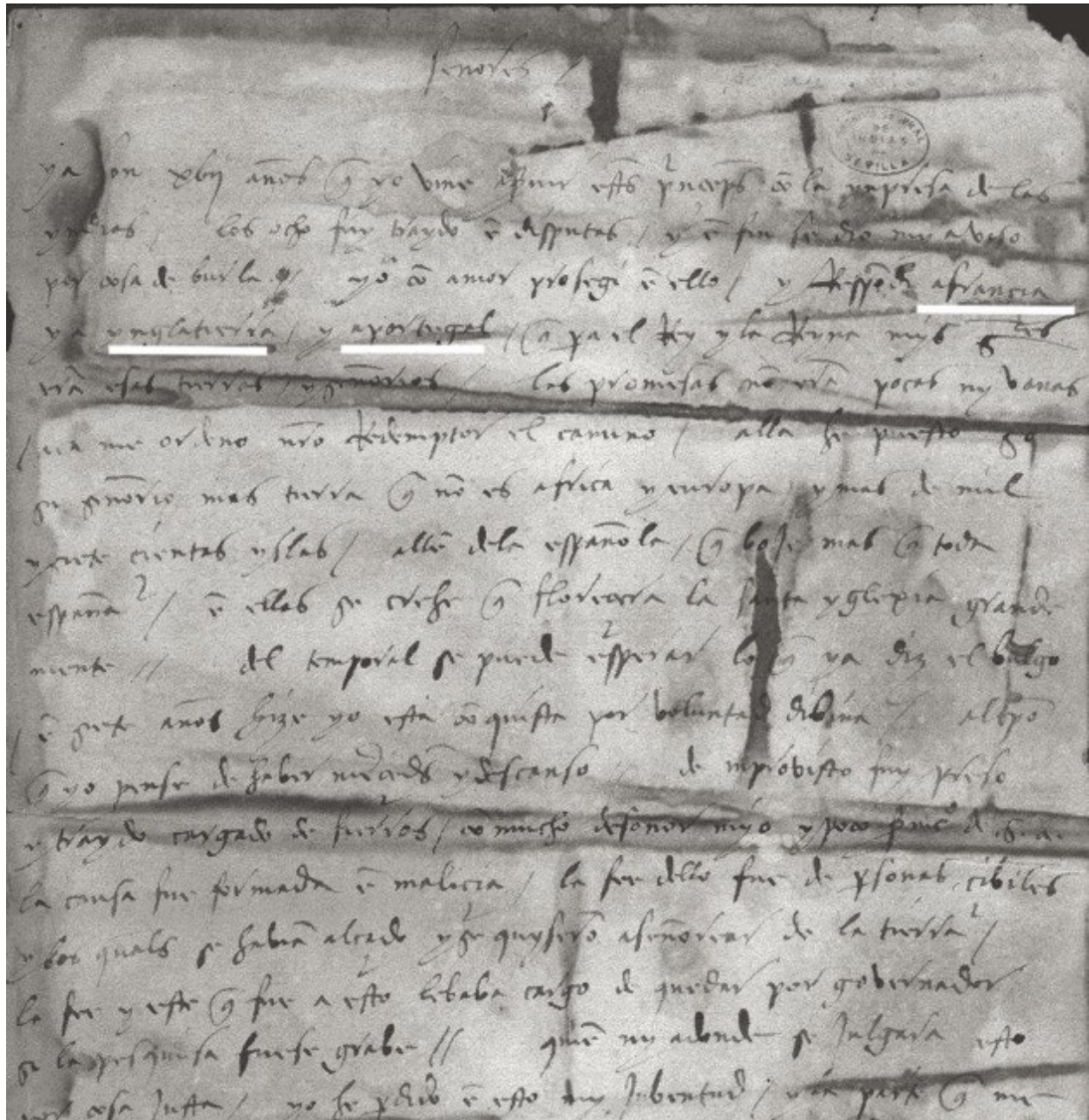
— **NOTE:** This version of the *Historie* has several misnumbered pages, for example, between 41 and 42 there is another page 35. In this part the pages are numbered 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 30, 43, 35, 45, 32, 47, 40, 49, 50, 51, 52...

⁷⁵ Il Prefetto era huomo di gran cuore, si oppose a'nemici con una lancia, inanimando i suoi, e assaltando animosamente gl'Indiani con sette, ouero otto, che lo seguivano. HISTORIE, Cap. XCVIII, 223.

⁷⁶ RACCOLTA, Parte II - Vol. I, 149.

Figure 4

Undated letter most, likely from 1500, where Colón states that he refused the offers of support from France, England and Portugal (underlined).



Source: Archivo General de Indias, PATRONATO, 295, N.41

If this weaver Giacomo Colombo were the same Don Diego Colón, sibling of the Admiral who resided in Castile, we would need to explain why he changed his name to Diego, and how he too learned to read and write, not the native Genoese language in Genoa but the Castilian language. This fact is revealed by the following autograph letter in Castilian from Don Diego Colón to King Fernando:

Although Your Highness has little familiarity with me, nor have I written to thee before now, because there was no occasion to have needed to write to Your Highness, I have served here in all things that have been needed. In the year of '93 I came with the Admiral, my brother, when Your Highness ordered this island to be populated, and I remained for seven years at my own expense.⁷⁷

The three brothers wrote to others and between themselves in Castilian, not Italian. It does not seem rational to accept the three Genoese men arriving in a new kingdom would not be speaking to each other in their Genoese mother tongue. They would each have had to study and learn to speak and write Castilian at around age 25 in Iberia. Again, we do not find such possibilities convincing.

I first learned that the most famous navigator in the world had married in Portugal in 1491. My astonishment at that time was not merely because Colón's wife was Portuguese, but more because she was the daughter of the Captain of the Island of Porto Santo.

At that moment, it appeared clear that History had attributed a wrong husband, or a wrong wife to this couple, because it would have been socially intolerable for simple commoners to marry nobles in the 15th century in Portugal. Even if couples wanted to court or marry, the parents, the siblings, and other family members prohibited it. In 1479 such a marriage would have been typically forbidden.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Aunque vuestra altesa tenga de my poco conoscimyento, ni yo le haya scrito hasta agora, por no se aber ofrescido cosa que uviere de scriver a vuestra altesa, yo he servido acá en todo lo que se ha ofrescido. año de nonventa y tres vine con el almyrante, mi hermano, quando vuestra altesa mandó poblar esta ysla, y stuve en ella siete años a my costa... FALCÓ Y OSORIO, María del Rosario, Duquesa de Berwick y Alba, *Nuevos Autógrafos de Cristobal Colón Relaciones de Ultramar*, Madrid, 1902, 20.

⁷⁸ Ponho por ley pêra senpre que todo homem que viuer co senhor por solldada de quem quer ou a bem-fazer seendo seu gouernado ou seu manteudo por seu e se casar com filha ou com jrmaam ou prima com-jrmaam ou com segunda com-jrmaam ou com madre ou com filha de cada hum destes ou com segunda com-jrmaam de seu senhor ou de sa molher que tenha em sa casa. ou com criada ou com mançeba que more por solldada ou sem solldada casar com ella **sem grado de seu senhor** que **moyra pore**m. e esta meesma pena aja aquell que jouuer

However, to settle the constant uncertainties and come up with an accepted “official biography,” historians suggested solutions that can only be described as farfetched. They accepted something inadmissible as admissible and presented as logical something that goes against logic, imposing the idea that a marriage between a foreign commoner and a noble lady in the Portuguese society of 1479 was acceptable, and perfectly natural.

It turns out that the Portuguese wife of the navigator was not just a noble captain's daughter. Filipa Moniz was also the sister, aunt, and sister-in-law of three other Captains. She was so privileged that she was granted a residency at the Commandery of All-Saints of the Order of Santiago in Lisbon, where she was one of the twelve lady commanders⁷⁹ of the order, as will be shown below.

A noble Lady marrying a commoner was an intolerable action that could put such a couple at the risk of death. Even marriages within the noble class could cause many deaths if the bride's relatives disapproved.⁸⁰

It was, therefore, the learning of such a unique marriage between a common weaver from Genoa and the daughter of a noble Portuguese captain that sparked this investigation. The intent was to verify if such a bizarre union was factual. If, contrary to everything known about the Portuguese society of the 15th century, a newly arrived commoner without a cent, in just two short years, be allowed to marry the privileged daughter of a noble Captain and Knight of the House of Viseu⁸¹ without such a weaver having a single accomplishment recorded at the service of the

com cada huã das sobreditas ajnda que com ella nom case e esto se entenda tam bem nos **filhos dallgo como hos villaãos**. ALBUQUERQUE, Martim de and NUNES, Eduardo Borges, *Ordenações del-Rei D. Duarte*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisboa 1988, 187.

⁷⁹ Comendador/a [Commander (English)] was a knight/lady of a military order who held a commandery. A Commandery was a district or a manor with lands and tenements appertaining thereto, under the control of a member of an order of knights who was called a commander; also called a preceptory. Preceptory was historically the regional seat of any of the various orders of Knights within a given geographic area. A preceptor or commander, who answered to the Grandmaster of the respective order, governed these areas. A commandery's main properties, which could be vast holdings, would be its house of worship, accommodations for the brethren and income producing lands, buildings, grants and privileges.

⁸⁰ Per razom destes casamentos se seguiam dapnos a essas molheres, **casando aas vezes com taaes que as nom mereciam**, ficando ende alguãs defamadas ... e demais recreciam **muitas mortes, e omizios antre os parentes dellas**, e aquelles que casavam. *Ordenações Afonsinas*, Livro Quinto, Título XIII: Do Que Casa Com Molher Virgem, Ou Viuva, Que Esta Em Poder De Seu Padre, Ou Madre, Avoo, Ou Tetor Sem Sua Voontade, 46.

⁸¹ Para a Casa de Viseu, a concessão dos senhorios dos arquipélagos da Madeira, Açores e Cabo Verde [...] integravam o seu senhorio, proporcionavam rendas e direitos, e acrescentavam prestígio social e dignidade. DÁVILA, Maria Barreto, *A Mulher dos Descobrimentos*, Esfera dos Livros, Portugal, 2019, 60.

Portuguese crown. Martin Behaim, for instance, was married to the daughter of the First Captain of Faial, Jos Dutra (Josse van Hurter). Not only was Martin from a noble Nuremberg family, but he was further knighted by King João II in 1485.⁸²

Not only is there nothing registered in the History of Portugal about a commoner Colombo being granted noble status, in order to be offered the hand of such a lady in marriage, but there is not even a Colombo mentioned in the Portuguese archives. Neither Cristóbal nor his two brothers are mentioned in any Portuguese manuscripts prior to Rui de Pina's chronicle in 1504.

As the investigation progressed, a history fraught with uncertainties and based on unfounded assumptions came to light. After a decade of delving deeper and deeper, we found that there were more existent doubts than facts. Not only was the lack of evidential support apparent, but forged documents had been utilized to support the weaver's legend. The biography books have thus become untrustworthy in the face of contradictory facts that we will present here.

Putting together all the documental evidence available today, we can declare that, contrary to what has been stated from ancient chronicles to modern history books, the actual surname of the Admiral and Viceroy Don Cristóbal Colón was never Colombo, nor was he ever a "lowly weaver" from Genoa, or any other place.

As others have mentioned, including Don Hernando, it seems likely that the pseudonym *Cristóbal Colón* was utilized in Castile by the future viceroy and admiral with the sole intention of keeping his true identity and nationality hidden from the public.⁸³ This false identity served its purpose so perfectly that today we still struggle to know who Colón was or where he was born.

Nevertheless, the errors and uncertainties propagated by the press at the end of the 15th century, calling him "Columbo" instead of Colón, became an unforeseen benefit, greatly favoring the Colón brothers' desire to keep their true identities' secret. As the confusion over the correct surname was solidified, and as outsiders insisted that the surnames Colón and Colombo were one and the same, Don Cristóbal's invented persona took over so successfully that his real identity still remains hidden five centuries later.

⁸² RAVENSTEIN, E. G., *Martin Behaim, His Life and His Globe*, London, 1908, 30.

⁸³ Cristóvão Colon, que sem a menor dúvida trabalhou imenso para encobrir a sua origem, criou um apelido, adoptando a alcunha "Colon" que representava todo o seu desejo. Era um pseudónimo. DORNELAS, Afonso, *Elementos para o estudo etimológico do apelido Colon*, Centro Tipográfico Colonial, Lisboa, 1926, 15.

If the accepted version of history that gave the hand of a noble Portuguese lady to a plebeian weaver had been questioned earlier by the Portuguese academics, perhaps the truth would have been discovered. The 100% verifiable answer to this enigma may only be found in some yet unknown document in some Portuguese archive.⁸⁴ However, Portuguese researchers have never shown much interest in this topic, as Alfredo Pinheiro Marques already declared in 1992:

*Strange as it may seem, given that the Colón question is so essential, so controversial and so obviously and closely connected to Portugal, the fact is that, so far, it has not received any special attention from Portuguese historians. The deficiency is truly strange, because it is undeniable that no one should be more interested in such work than the Portuguese themselves.*⁸⁵

Luis Filipe Thomaz just released a 900-page book which aggregates quotes of third parties describing the navigator as Genoese. The book continues to misrepresent the Admiral's original coat of arms as if the anchors were not there in 1493, and wrongly claims the shield is "not drawn on any document that has come down to us."⁸⁶ Filipa Moniz and her family are described as insignificant nobles, giving her as the "daughter of a Lombardic adventurer," even though Bartolomeu Perestrelo was not from Lombardia.⁸⁷ At the same time, Thomaz follows the dubious *Assereto Document* to portray the weaver as "an agent of powerful Genoese commercial houses who held the monopoly of the exportation of sugar" in Madeira;⁸⁸ although there is no such documentation in Portugal to support that the weaver ever visited Portugal. The book continues

⁸⁴ Ricardo Beltrán y Rózpide, no seu trabalho *Cristóbal Colón genovés?*, 1925, negou ser Génova o lugar do nascimento de Colón. E mais ainda: segundo nos diz Armando Cortesão, o cientista espanhol, antes de morrer, revelou a Afonso de Ornelas que num arquivo particular em Portugal, entre os documentos relacionados com João da Nova, encontram-se documentos que esclarecem de maneira definitiva a nacionalidade (portuguesa) de Colón. KLAWE, Janina Z., *Bartolomeu Dias e a viagem de Cristóvão Colón*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época. Actas, Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1989, Vol. II, 267.

⁸⁵ MARQUES, Alfredo Pinheiro, *Portugal and the European Discovery of America. Christopher Columbus and the Portuguese*, ED. INCM, 1992, 2.

⁸⁶ THOMAZ, Luis Filipe, *Cristóvão Colombo, o Genovês, meu tio por afinidade*, Academia de Marinha, Lisboa, 2021, 98.

⁸⁷ *Idem*, 170, 176.

⁸⁸ *Idem* 183.

the traditional weaver story and does not present any new documents that help in our understanding of the Portuguese life of the Admiral.

What is certain is that, until the present day, not a single contemporary document about either a Cristóvão Colombo, Cristóbal Colón, or his two brothers, has been found in Portugal. Everything written after Rui de Pina's 1504 chronicle already has the navigator's mistaken identity of Colombo, well-entrenched and disseminated.

What we can show today is that the commoner weaver Colombo, documented in some Genoese notary deeds, and the navigator Colón who married the daughter of the captain of Porto Santo in Portugal were two different people; they were born in two different kingdoms, travelled two different life paths, had very different educational experiences, and sprung from different social statuses.⁸⁹

Far from being commoners, as were the Colombos presented in the Genoese documents,⁹⁰ Don Cristóbal Colón and his brothers were of noble birth, baptized with different names than those we know them by. However, we believe that they were forced to hide their true lineage by compulsion of their father. Behind this fact there must have been a monumental family secret of social and political importance for both Iberian kingdoms at the time.

Was Don Cristóbal Colón's father such an important and powerful person, both in Portugal and Castile, to the point that he could request so many people, including friends and family, to keep the true identity of his children hidden? And why would the two courts submit to this? Did these same political forces coerce the Italian Pietro Martire d'Anghiera and his friend, Giovanni Borromei, the Count of Arona, to spread false information about Colón's true identity, as we can read in the excerpt below?

I, Giovanni dei Borromei [count of Arona], have undertaken to never reveal the truth confided to me by Mr. Peter of Angleria. But so that some memory of it remains, I confess to history that Cristóbal Colón was born on Majorca and not in Liguria. And the named Peter of Angleria added that such secret was for political and religious reasons to obtain

⁸⁹ 'La geometria, geografia, cosmografia, astrología y marineria' para não falar já de teologia (Colón era versado em profetas, como sabemos) e de línguas: portuguesa, latina, castelhana, grega e hebraica. KLAWE, Janina Z., *Bartolomeu Dias...*, 262.

⁹⁰ See note 64.

*the aid of ships from the Spanish king, which induced Juan Colon to this deceit. And moreover, I want to say that Colom and Colon are identical because a Cristobal Columbus Canajola was uncovered in Genoa, son of Domenico and Susanna Fontanarossa, not to be confused with the navigator of the Indies. Bergamo, in the year of our Lord 1494.*⁹¹

Was this text genuinely written by the Count of Arona? We do not believe it was even written in 1494, because it appears to have been forged to support the theory of the Majorcan Colón. According to several authors, this Majorcan theory attributes the Colom surname as the navigator's birth name. They claim he belonged to the noble House of Colom from Barcelona.⁹² Amidst so many uncertainties in this tale, how probable is it today to separate the truth from the inventions?

What we know today for certain about the discoverer is that he lived in Portugal and sailed for the kings of Portugal before moving to Castile; that he married Filipa Moniz in Portugal and had a Portuguese-born son who inherited his titles and posts in Castile; that he changed his birthname to *Cristóbal Colón* in an attempt to hide his true origins;⁹³ that the courts assisted him in some ways with this identity cover-up; that he was an expert navigator on par with the great Portuguese navigators of his day, such as Bartolomeu Dias and Duarte Pacheco Pereira; that he

⁹¹ This extract serves only as an example of the confusion that has existed for many centuries. The authenticity of this document is disputed by some historians (such as Juan Gil in *Cristóbal Colón, Textos e documentos...*, page 31) and accepted by others. But it appears to be a forgery made by supporters of a *Colom* from Mallorca, "Io, Giovanni dei Borromei, [Count of Arona] mi sono impegnato a non rivelare mai la verità confidatami dal signor Piero de Angliera. Ma, poichè ne rimanga il ricordo, confesso alla storia che Cristobal Colon è nato a Maiorca e non in Liguria. E il nominato Piero de Angliera aggiunse che il consiglio di serbare tale segreto per motivi politici e religiosi, onde ottenere l'aiuto di navi dal re spagnolo, avrebbe indotto Juan Colon a questo inganno. E inoltre voglio ancora dire che Colom e Colon sono identici perché fu scoperto a Genova un Cristobal Colombo Canajola, figlio di Domingo e di Susanna Fontanarossa, che non va confuso con il navigatore delle Indie. Bergamo, nell'anno del Signore 1494.." (This note was accepted as authentic by WIESENTHAL, Simon in *Sails of Hope: The Secret Mission of Christopher Columbus*, Nova Iorque: Macmillan, 1973, page 113) - BARTOCCI, Umberto, *La vera identità di Cristoforo Colombo Osservazioni e congetture*, <http://www.cartesio-episteme.net/episteme/epi6/ep6-col.htm>.

⁹² En 1927, el Colón catalán tuvo en Luis de Ulloa y Cisneros a su principal mentor. El historiador peruano [...] defendía el origen catalán del descubridor de América. Partía del apellido Colom, originario de Cataluña para diferenciarlo del genovés Colombo, con el que nada tenía a ver. El apellido Colom se extendió por el Mediterráneo español, especialmente por Valencia y Mallorca [...] Para Ulloa el descubridor no se llamaba Cristóbal, sino Juan; tampoco Colombo, ni Colón, sino Colom [...] la tesis del Colón Mallorquín, defendida en los años sesenta del siglo XX por Renato Llanas de Niubó [...] era hijo del príncipe de Viana, Carlos y de Margarita Colom, y nació en la Alquería de Roja de Felanitx (Mallorca) [...] El Colón ibicenco tiene en Nito Verdera su principal defensor [...] era nacido en Ibiza. ARRANZ MÁRQUEZ, Luis. *Cristóbal Colón: misterio y grandeza*. España, Marcial Pons, 2006, 99-102.

⁹³ Tanto la sua patria e origine volle che fosse men certa, e conosciuta. HISTORIE, Cap. I, 3.

had received an extensive education and had personal connections with various scientists in many kingdoms who lauded him, revered him and offered their assistance in various tasks; that he was put in charge of captaining four fleets which he led across the Atlantic, having been responsible for the planning and provisioning of these same fleets.

The first fleet had 3 ships, the second 17, the third 6, and the fourth 4. Much of his life story is still unknown, and the first 28 years of his life have certainly been purposefully obscured and sidestepped. Modern-day science is currently trying to shed light on this through DNA testing at the University of Granada.⁹⁴ And while we expect these results will bring us a step closer to the truth, they will not be the end of all the uncertainties. The DNA tests may not tell us who Don Cristóbal Colón was at birth, but they should provide us with enough solid evidence to say who he was not.

Facing a lack of reliable documents dated prior to 1484 and adding the censorship and misinformation propagated by the subject himself after 1484, it will be necessary to apply a large amount of logic and unwavering common sense. Ongoing slashes with Occam's razor will also be required during this process of truth seeking about an individual who never wanted the truth about his identity and lineage to be discovered, and who had the help of the courts with that task.

After this first step on the path to the truth presented in this dissertation, we hope that many questions related to the First Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies for Castile will come to be answered and the facts better clarified. One day we may arrive at a verifiable truth. A truth that is grounded in science and in the documents and not in speculation and deduction.

⁹⁴ *DNA testing underway to find out where explorer was born*, <https://www.euronews.com/2021/05/26/christopher-columbus-dna-testing-underway-to-find-out-where-explorer-was-born>

CHAPTER 2

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Colón's noble connections to the center of power during the reigns of Kings Afonso V and João II

We will start by presenting the information made available after Don Cristóbal Colón's death and then work back to the beginning of his life, as far as the documents will allow us to do so. We cannot deny that the key fact that will counter centuries of presumptions about this famous personality is his Portuguese marriage. We are forced to rely on documentation from Spain to prove this important union, since, to date, no documents have been found in Portugal relating to Filipa Moniz's marriage to the navigator.

A marriage is more than a union between two people. Marriage integrates the couple into two extended families. When a man gets married, he usually becomes part of the wife's family and the wife becomes part of the husband's family. In this sense, the family is not only parents and siblings, but also cousins, uncles, grandparents, grandchildren, nephews, brothers and sisters-in-law, and so on.

In most cases, it is unlikely for close related households not to come to know the identity of a person who marries a member of their family. They will also come to know the children that the couple will have, and the couple's children and grandchildren will also come to know their extended relatives, both on the mother's and the father's side. More importantly, a marriage between the noble classes of Colón's time, in general, was a political and an economic contract that united the strengths of two houses for the benefit of one house, or both.

This must be the approach and the method taken regarding Don Cristóbal Colón's marriage to the Portuguese noble dame Filipa Moniz, circa January 1479.⁹⁵ The logical deduction is that

⁹⁵ Since no document has yet been found in Portugal on Filipa Moniz's marriage, we are forced to deduce the date on which it took place. Diogo Colón was considered a toddler when he arrived at La Rábida in Palos at the end of 1484, thus he must have been only about 3 or 4 years old. According to the study by Joel Silva Ferreira Mata in his Master's Dissertation in Medieval History, presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto, 1991

many members of Filipa Moniz's family would have known her husband 14 years before he achieved world fame in March 1493. We must also accept that the navigator knew intimately some of the Moniz and Perestrelo relatives of his wife. There are documents that prove that many of them knew Don Cristóbal very well.

No dowry document, property deeds, or inheritance transmittals, for example, have been found in Portugal to confirm this marriage. The only known references to Don Cristóbal's marriage to Filipa Moniz are all dated after the navigator's departure from Portugal. However, there is no reason to doubt that the navigator was married in Portugal to one of the daughters of Bartolomeu Perestrelo, First Captain of Porto Santo.

The first mention of Filipa Moniz as the wife of Don Cristóbal is perhaps the *First Testament* of Don Diogo Colón. In this document, written in Seville on March 16, 1509, Don Diogo declares himself as "son of Don Cristóbal Colón, First Admiral Major and Viceroy, and of Dona Filipa Moniz, his wife."⁹⁶ Don Diogo was the only identified child from this couple and succeeded his father with the titles of Second Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies.

In *Item XXVI* of his First Testament, he mentions Violante Moniz as his aunt. This aunt of Don Diogo was Filipa Moniz's sister. Violante is documented as living in Seville at that time.⁹⁷ In a letter that the First Admiral wrote before the Fourth Voyage, which set sail on May 11, 1502, Don Cristóbal commands his son to give his aunt Violante Moniz a sum of money each year.⁹⁸ In a ledger from 1510 found in the *Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla* we read that the said Violante Moniz, resident of Seville, granted a receipt of payment to Gaspar Gorricio, monk of the monastery of Santa Maria de las Cuevas "in the amount of 100,000 *maravedís*; that the Admiral Major of the

entitled *A Comunidade Feminina da Ordem de Santiago: A comenda de Santos na Idade Média*, Filipa Moniz still resided at Todos-os-Santos on 1479.01.20. (A.N.T.T., *Mosteiro de Santos*, cx. 19, m. 3, n° 10). Many historians accept that the wedding must have taken place in early 1479.

⁹⁶ En el nombre de Dios. Amen. — Sepan cuantos esta carta de testamento vieren, como yo Don Diogo Colón, Almirante mayor y Visorey y Gobernador perpetuo de las islas de las Indias y de la tierra firme de Asia descubiertas y por descubrir, y Capitán general del Mar oceano, hijo de D° Cristóbal Colón primero Almirante mayor y Visorey, y de **Dª Philipa Moñiz su mujer**, difuntos que Dios haya. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, Son Origine, Sa Vie...*, T. II, 455.

⁹⁷ Manda veintiseis: *Item* mando que á mi tia Brigulaga Moniz (*) serán dados por sus tercios veinte mil maravedís en cada un año mientras que viviere para sus necesidades, computados los diez mil maravedís que le solia dar.
(*) Ou Briolanja, apparemment une sœur de Philippa Moniz, puisque Diego l'appelle sa tante. *Idem*, 460.

⁹⁸ A Violante Nuñez (debió leerse Muñiz) da diez mil maravedís cada año por tercios. CARTAS, 355.

Indies pays her, through the said monk, every year for her sustenance.”⁹⁹ This shows that Don Cristóbal knew his sister-in-law so well that he gave her regular stipends, and furthermore, that Violante’s nephew, Don Diogo, kept taking care of her after his father’s death.

But it was not only the son and husband of Filipa Moniz who knew and supported her sister in Castile. The First Admiral’s younger brother, Don Diego Colón, in his *Testament* from 1515 rewards “Violante Moniz and two of her maids who accompany her.”¹⁰⁰ He also orders his executor to pay “Violante Moniz ten gold ducats as charity.”¹⁰¹

In *Item XXVIII* of the Second Admiral’s First Testament, there is mentioned a “Doña Ana [Moniz] my niece, wife of juror Barahona.”¹⁰² Ana Moniz received a marriage dowry from the Portuguese Count of Odemira, Don Sancho de Noronha, when she married Juan Barahona.¹⁰³ While this Count of Odemira was son-in-law to Diogo Gil Moniz, the uncle of Filipa Moniz,¹⁰⁴ he was also nephew of Don João de Bragança, Marquis of Montemor whose wife was Filipa’s cousin¹⁰⁵ - see Figure 5.

⁹⁹ Briolanga Muñiz, vecina de Sevilla, otorga carta de pago a Gaspar Gurriçio, monje del monasterio de Santa María de las Cuevas, por valor de 100.000 maravedís que el *Almirante mayor de las Indias*, por mediación del referido monje, le paga cada año para su mantenimiento. *Catalogo de los Fondos Americanos del Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla*, Publicaciones del Instituto Hispano-Cubano de Historia de América (Sevilla), T. I, Siglo XVI, 176.

¹⁰⁰ HARRISSE, Christophe Colomb, *Son Origine, Sa Vie...*, T. II, 472.

¹⁰¹ Á Violante Muñiz diéz ducados de oro em limosna [...] é mas en su nombre le fago gracia é suelta de siete o ochomill maravedís. *Idem*, 473.

¹⁰² Manda veintey ocho: *Item* mando, que por las buenas obras que yo he recibido de **Doña Ana mi sobrina**, mujer del jurado Barahona, le serán dados treinta mil maravedís, ó à sus herederos legitimos, ca [y] si fuere fallecida sin hijo ó hija que legitimamente le suceda, mando que se distribuyan en obras pias á la voluntad de mis albaceas ó heredero. *Idem*, 461.

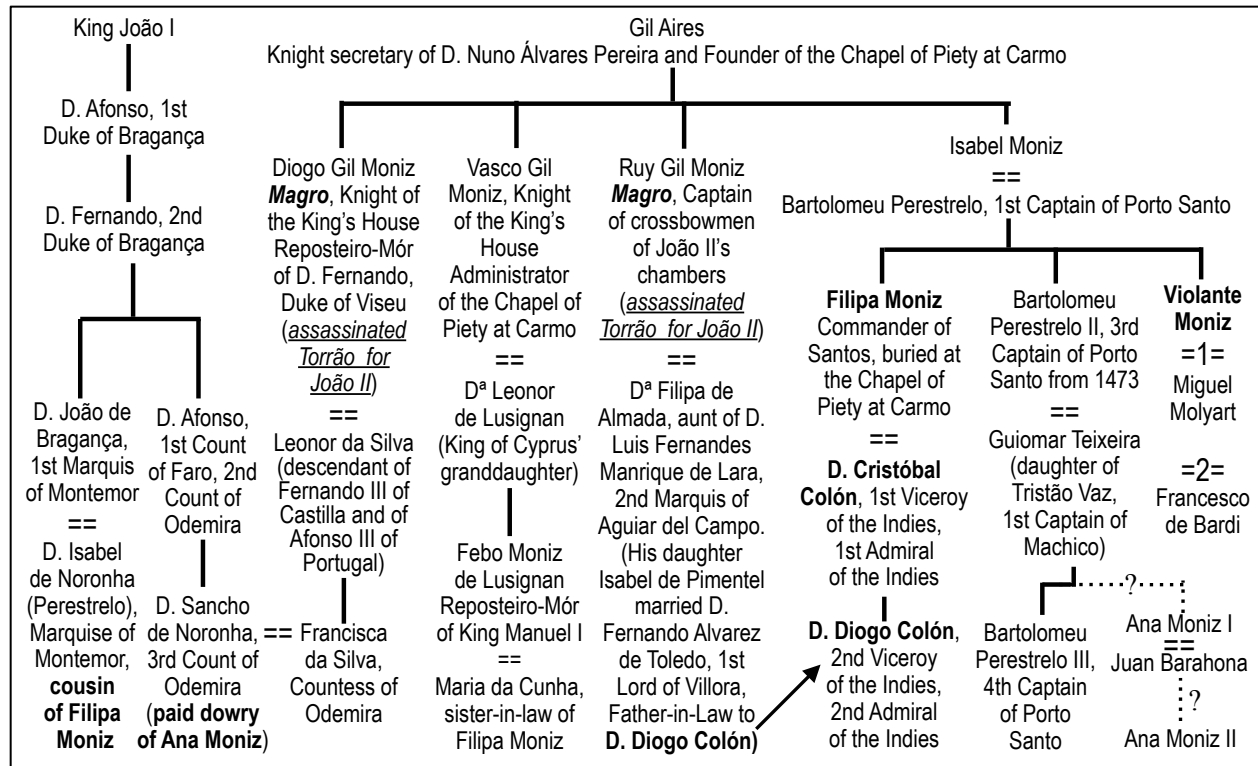
¹⁰³ Y aún cabe recordar que a Ana Moniz, la sobrina de Cristóbal Colón, la dotó el conde de Faro cuando contrajo matrimonio con el jurado Juan de Barahona: outra vez nos movemos dentro del mismo circulo de amistades. GIL, Juan, *El exilio portugués en Sevilla: de los Braganza a Magallanes*, Fundación Cajasol, Sevilha, 2009, 162.

¹⁰⁴ A dicta Jasabel Muniz sua madre e Diogo Gill Munjz, seu jrmãao, titores do dicto Bertolameu Palestrello. *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. XIII, 133.

¹⁰⁵ **NOTE:** In addition to the genealogy works cited, the Geneall website (<https://geneall.net>) contains the largest aggregation of genealogical data on Portuguese families extracted from old genealogy books and placed online. This site was used to confirm written accounts of many of the genealogies indicated in this work. Further clarification can be found in the online version of *Portugal, Dicionário Histórico, Corográfico, Heráldico, Biográfico, Bibliográfico, Numismático e Artístico* (<https://www.arqnet.pt/dicionario/index.html>).

Figure 5

The Moniz *Magros* and their family ties with the Count of Odemira and Don Cristóbal Colón. We are not certain where to fit Ana Moniz, she may be a daughter of Bartolomeu II.



<https://geneall.net/en/name/2079717/gil-aires-moniz/>

Bartolomeu Perestrelo (III),¹⁰⁶ Captain of the island of Porto Santo, was in Seville in 1508 with the juror Juan Barahona where they declared in a Power of Attorney to be brothers-in-law (see Appendix, Document I).

More details can be found in the Vicereine's *Testament* from 1548. By her marriage to the Second Admiral and Viceroy Don Diogo Colón, Dona Maria de Toledo became Vicereine of the New World. In her Testament she awards 1,000 ducats towards the marriage of "Dona Ana Moniz, who is Governess of my children."¹⁰⁷ It could be that Barahona and Ana Moniz had an unmarried daughter, also named Ana Moniz, who became Governess to her younger cousins, the children of Don Diogo Colón. It is doubtful that the Ana Moniz, wife of Barahona in 1508, would be getting money from the Vicereine for her future marriage.

The fact is that Bartolomeu Perestrelo (III) was brother-in-law of the juror Barahona and was in Seville, at the residence of the Second Admiral of the Indies in 1508. The Power of Attorney proves, not only that the Moniz/Perestrelo relatives from Madeira continued in close contact with their Colón relatives in Castille,¹⁰⁸ but that a Moniz from Porto Santo married a Barahona from Spain.

On September 18, 1523, in the city of Santo Domingo in Española Island,¹⁰⁹ Don Diogo Colón registered a *Second Testament*, sealed with the notary Fernando Berrio. This Second

¹⁰⁶ The document states that a Portuguese Knight, Yvan Texeyra de Mendonça, was also present. This is, no doubt, Hivão Teixeira Mendonça, brother of Yolanda Teixeira, second wife of Bartolomeu Perestrelo III. Hivão and Yolanda were children of Filipa Moniz's half-sister, Filipa de Mendonça, married to João Vaz Teixeira. <https://geneall.net/en/name/312573/hivao-teixeira-mendonca/>

¹⁰⁷ Iten digo, que me parece que á Doña Ana Muñiz, que es ama de mis hijos, que por quanto ella es muy buena, y ha estado siempre en mi compañía, que le debe dár el Almirante mi hijo mil ducados para ayuda en su casamiento, de aquello que se sacará de la decima, como à parienta necesitada. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, Son Origine, Sa Vie...*, T. II, 513.

— It is not likely that the Ana Moniz, wife of the Barahona in 1508 who received a dowry from the Count of Odemira for her marriage, be the same Ana Moniz that the Vicereine declared as single in her will of 1548 (40 years later), who would have been about 55 years old if she had married Barahona in 1508 when she was around 15 years old. The governess of the Vicereine's children was, perhaps, a daughter of Barahona and Ana Moniz.

¹⁰⁸ Yo Bartolomé Perestelo caballero portugués capitán de la ysla de Porto Santo que es en la ysla de Madera e vesino que soy de la dicha ysla de la Madera e yo el jurado Johan Barahona su cuñado vesyno que soy desta muy noble e muy leal cibdat de Sevilla en **la collación de santa maria**.(*) ALTOLAGUIRRE, Ángel de, *Algunos Documentos Inéditos relativos a Don Cristóbal Colón y Su Familia*, Madrid, Imprenta de Archivos, Olózaga, I, 1928, 15.

(*) According to several documents, it seems that the *collación de Santa Maria* in Seville was the neighborhood where Colón and several of their Portuguese relatives had their homes.

¹⁰⁹ Actual Haiti and Dominican Republic.

Testament was unsealed in Santo Domingo on May 2, 1526, due to Don Diogo's death at Vila de La Puebla de Montalbán, in Spain on February 23, 1526. It was transcribed in Santo Domingo on May 6 by the notary Esteban de la Rosa, and presented to the Council of the Indies at Granada by Francisco de Aguilar on August 14, 1526.

In this Second Testament, the grandson of Isabel Moniz and Bartolomeu Perestrelo I, First Captain of Porto Santo, again mentions Filipa Moniz several times. In the first paragraph, Don Diogo says that he is the "legitimate son of Don Cristóbal Colón, First Viceroy and Admiral and perpetual Governor of these Indies and Continent, and of Dona Filipa Moniz, his legitimate wife, deceased, may God have her."¹¹⁰

More interesting is the mandate in *Item II*, where the Second Viceroy asks that the remains of his father be brought from the Convent of Las Cuevas in Seville, where they were temporarily stored to Santo Domingo in the New World, and that in the same way they should bring the "body of Dona Filipa Moniz, his legitimate wife, **my mother**, that is in the Monastery of Carmo in Lisbon, in a chapel called *Piedade* (Piety) that belongs to the House of Moniz."¹¹¹

Again, in *Item IV*, the Second Viceroy asks that "a thousand masses be said for my soul and for the soul of the Admiral my Lord and my Lady, Dona Filipa Moniz, and Don Bartolomé Colón and Don Diego Colón my uncles."

In *Item XIII* Don Diogo further request that, after the construction of the religious temple in the New World, its main chapel should be "the tomb and burial place for the Admiral, my Lord, and mine, and that his body, which is deposited in the Monastery of Las Cuevas in Seville, should be brought to the said chapel, and the body of Dona Filipa Moniz, my Lady, his wife, may she rest in peace, which is in Lisbon at the Carmo Monastery, in a chapel called *Piedade* belonging to her family."¹¹²

We can add to the above declarations one more mention of this marriage, which is contained in the *Historie* by Don Hernando Colón. Don Hernando was Don Cristóbal's illegitimate son and half-brother of the Second Admiral. Known as *Historia del Almirante* in Spain, the

¹¹⁰ Hijo legítimo de Don Cristóbal Colón primero Visorrey é almirante e governador perpetuo destas dichas yndias e tierra firma e de **doña Felipa Muñiz** su legitima muger, defuntos que que Dios aya. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, Son Origine, Sa Vie...*, T. II, 486.

¹¹¹ *Idem*, 487.

¹¹² *Idem*, 492.

Historie was written not long before Don Hernando's death in Seville on July 12, 1539. Logic would suggest that the manuscript was kept for several decades with all the other documents of the House of Colón in the Monastery of Las Cuevas, by Don Cristóbal's grandson and heir Don Luis Colón (1522-72), the Third Admiral.

The First Admiral had a strongbox at the Monastery of Las Cuevas, initially overseen by Friar Gaspar Gorricio, which held all his documents; a practice that was continued by his son and grandson.¹¹³ Las Cuevas was the place where the House of Colón safeguarded its important documents until 1609, time at which Don Nuno Álvares Pereira Colón y Portugal (1570?-1622) took over the leadership of this noble house as Fifth Admiral.

Between the date of its writing and Don Nuno receiving the contents of the safe, the manuscript composed by Don Hernando Colón disappeared. However, in Italy Don Hernando's writings were published with the date of 1571, and printed with the title *Historie del S. Don Fernando Colombo: nelle quali s'ha particolare, & vera relatione della vita, & de'fatti dell'Ammiraglio Don Christoforo Colombo, suo padre: et dello scoprimento, ch'egli fece dell'Indie Occidentali, dette Mondo Nuovo* [...], referred to as *Historie*, for short.

This Italian edition, even with its various inaccuracies of translation and some confusion of facts, continues today to be the only source for many details of the navigator's life. In the *Historie*, we learn that the consort of the First Admiral was “a noble Lady called Dona Filipa Moniz, of noble blood, Dame of the Monastery of All-Saints, where the Admiral was accustomed to hearing mass.”¹¹⁴

In another chapter, Don Hernando Colón mentioned the “Island of Porto Santo that luck handed to his father-in-law,”¹¹⁵ thus clarifying that his father's father-in-law had been the Captain Perestrelo of Porto Santo. Don Hernando further states that a certain “Pedro Correia, married to a sister of the Admiral's wife, told him that at the Island of Porto Santo he saw another piece of

¹¹³ Reverendo y muy devoto padre (Fray Gaspar Gorricio) [...] Allá van por **mi arquita** para algunas escrituras. CARTAS, 359.

— La cual escritura dejé en el monesterio de las Cuevas en Sevilla á Frey Don Gaspar con otras mis escrituras é mis previllejos, é cartas que tengo del Rey é de la Reina, nuestros Señores. NAVARRETE, T. II, 312.

¹¹⁴ Una gentildonna chiamata **Donna Filippa Mogniz**, di nobil sangue, Cavalliera nel Monasterio d'ogni Santi, dove l'Ammiraglio usava di andare a messa. HISTORIE, Cap. V, 12.

¹¹⁵ Suo suocero, chiamato *Pietro Mogniz (sic)* Perestrelo [...] E poiché l'isola della Madera era maggiore, fecero di quella due parti, e la terza fu l'isola di Porto Santo, che toccò per sorte al detto Perestrello suo suocero il quale n'ebbe il governo, fin che venne a morte. *Ibidem*.

wood.”¹¹⁶ This brother-in-law was none other than Pedro Correia da Cunha, the Second Captain of Porto Santo and afterwards the Captain of Graciosa Island, in the Portuguese Archipelago of the Azores.

Furthermore, writing about Colón’s Fourth Voyage to the Americas in 1502, in which Don Hernando sailed along with his father, he declared that the First Admiral left Cadiz and promptly went to the aid of the Portuguese who were besieged by the Moors in Arzila. Arriving in Arzila, Don Hernando says that his father sent:

*His brother [Bartolomé] and I, ashore with the captains of the ships, to pay a visit to the Captain of Arzila, who had been wounded in the Moorish assault [...] the Captain of Arzila sent to Don Cristóbal Colón some Knights who were there with him, some of which were relatives of Filipa Moniz, who was **the wife** of the Admiral in Portugal, as we said.*¹¹⁷

Yet another work that can be used to confirm much of what was published in the *Historie*, since the original manuscript has disappeared, is *Historia de las Indias*, by Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Las Casas was a contemporary of the First and the Second Admirals and also had an uncle, Juan de la Peña, who took part in the First Voyage. Another uncle, Francisco de Peñalosa, a servant of the Queen, sailed with Admiral Colón in the Second Voyage as Captain of the Army, a post he held in the New World for three years.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Las Casas’s own father, Pedro de Las Casas, took part in the Second Voyage, which set sail from Cadiz on September 25, 1493. Friar Las Casas himself served as a priest in the New World for almost two decades, during Don Diogo Colón's reign. He was named Bishop of Chiapas in 1544. Writing about Don Cristóbal’s marriage, Las Casas asserts Filipa’s nobility bloodline:

¹¹⁶ Pietro Correa, maritato con una sorella della moglie dello stesso Ammiraglio, gli disse, nell'isola di Porto Santo aver veduto un altro legno, venutovi con gli stessi venti, ben lavorato come il sopradetto, e che medesimamente v'erano recate canne così grosse che dall'un nodo all'altro contenevano nove caraffe di vino. *Idem*, Cap. IX, 20.

¹¹⁷ Suo fratello, e me co' Capitani delle navi in terra a visitare il Capitan di Arzilla, che era stato ferito in un assalto dei Mori, il quale ringraziò molto l'Ammiraglio di cotal visita e delle offerte fattegli: e per tal effetto gli mandò alcuni cavalieri che erano seco, parte dei quali erano parenti della quondam Donna Filippa Mognis, la quale fu la moglie che noi dicemmo dell'Ammiraglio in Portogallo. *Idem*, Cap. LXXXVIII, 195.

¹¹⁸ LAS CASAS, T. I, 497-498.

*He himself [Cristóbal Colón] also went most of the time to hear the divine ceremonies at a monastery called Santos, where there were certain Commanders (of which order, I was not able to learn.) There he happened to talk and dialogue with one of those Commanders, called Dona Filipa Moniz, **who was not lacking in lineage**, and whom he ended up marrying. She was the daughter of a nobleman named Bartolomé Moniz [sic] Perestrelo, a Knight, servant of Prince João of Portugal, son of King João I of Portugal.¹¹⁹*

All these writings show us sufficient evidence that the noble Filipa Moniz, daughter of the First Captain of Porto Santo, married the future First Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies and was the mother of the Second Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies, as he declared in his two Testaments.

However, in all the writings that Don Cristóbal left behind, it is implicit how careful he was in hiding his wife's name. No manuscript is known where he reveals her name or nationality. In his codicil, dated 1506, it only says:

*To Don Diogo, my son, I order that as soon as you have income from the said Majorat and inheritance, that you can sustain a Chapel with three Chaplains, have them say three Masses every day. One in honor of the Holy Trinity, another to the Conception of our Lady, and the other for the souls of all the deceased faithful, and for my soul, and of my father, and mother, and **wife**.¹²⁰*

The navigator seems to have concealed, along with his nationality, the name of his parents and wife as well. This censored information could have led the public to discover his ties with Portugal and his previous life there, before becoming famous with his false identity.

Only one time, on March 4, 1493,¹²¹ did he come close to letting us glimpse into the secrets of his nationality. Returning triumphantly from his First Voyage to Lisbon, in Portugal, he wrote

¹¹⁹ LAS CASAS, T. I, 53.

¹²⁰ TEXTOS, 362.

¹²¹ Several authors insist that Colón's letter to the kings was written on March 14, which does not seem logical for two reasons. First, because in the letter published by Pedro Posa, the Admiral wrote that, "I ran here into this port of Lisbon **today**, that it was the most wonderous thing in the world, where I decided to write to Their Highnesses." This **today** referred to the 4th of March, as writtenn in the *Diario*. Second, because on the 14th Colón was no longer in Lisbon, but, according to the *Diario*, "before sunrise he found himself off Cape St Vincent which is in Portugal." Since the letter printed by Pedro Posa was "contained in another to Their Highnesses", as the note printed by Posa shows, it is clear that it was written on March 4th and not March 14. For further clarification we

to the Monarchs of Castile about the success of the voyage, asking the monarchs to remember how “I left wife and children and I came from **my homeland** to serve You.”¹²² The kingdom that Colón had left behind when he moved to Castile was Portugal. We believe that Portugal is inferred in his homeland reference.

Seven years later, in 1500, arriving shackled in Castile after being arrested in the New World by Francisco de Bobadilla, the admiral complained that he had come from so far to serve those princes, “leaving **wife** and children that I never again saw because of it.”¹²³

In a large number of letters, notes and documents in the archives that were written by the First Admiral, only the two words “my homeland” were left as a possible clue to where he may have been born.

Having, thus, verified the marriage between the navigator and the daughter of the Captain of Porto Santo, we can give it the due significance that seems to have been ignored previously. What consequences does this marriage have in the quest to solve the problem of the true identity of this famous, mysterious, and almost legendary character?

What might be the real story behind the censorship to his Portuguese life? This dissertation endeavors to better illuminate some of these points.

Filipa Moniz (Perestrelo) – Wife of Don Cristóbal Colón. Following the clues left by Las Casas and Don Hernando Colón that Filipa Moniz resided in All-Saints, the prestigious female Commandery of the Military Order of Santiago, it became imperative to locate documents from the 15th century relating to this same Commandery. The name of a Filipa Moniz is, in fact, written in the order's documents, just as Don Hernando Colón and Las Casas declared. One document, dated 1475, mentions Filipa Moniz living there as one of the twelve *Donas Comendadoras*, and taking part in the administration of that Commandery – see Figure 6.

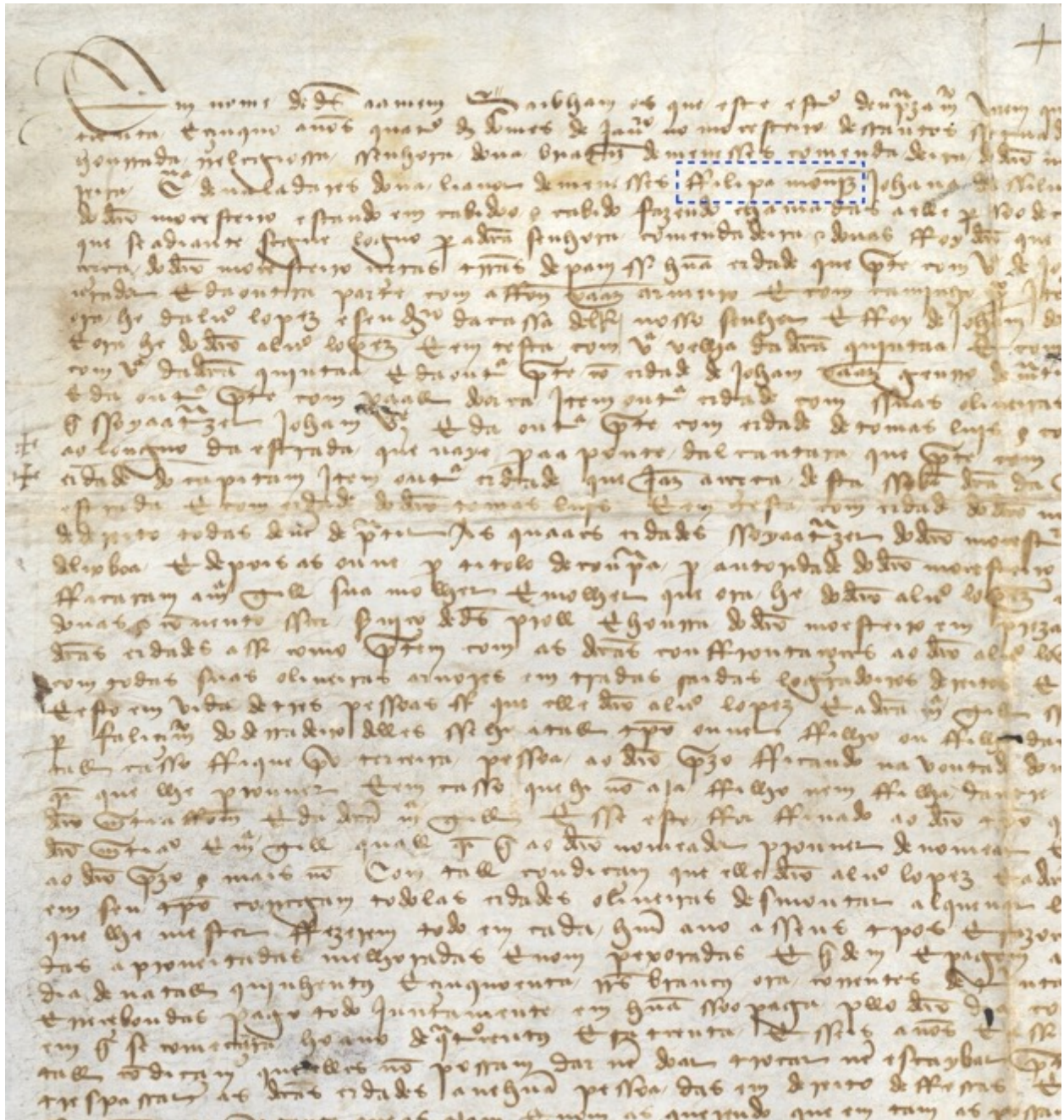
recommend the study of Carlos Sanz, *La Carta de Colon Anunciando el Descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo 15 Febrero - 14 Marzo 1493*, Talleres Hauser y Menet, Madrid, 1956.

¹²² Acuerde V. Al. que yo dexé muger y hijos y vine de **mi tierra** a les servir, adonde gasté lo que yo tenía y gasté siete años de tiempo y recibí mill oprobios con disfama y çofrí muchas neçesidades [...] a quatro días de março de mill y quatroçientos y noventa y tres años, en la mar. ZAMORA, Margarita, *Reading Columbus*, University of California Press, 1993, 187.

¹²³ NAVARRETE, T. II, 255.

Figure 6

Section of the document from Todos-os-Santos showing the name of Filipa Moniz, circled.



Source: TT, Convento de Santos-o-Novo, Doc. 477. Convento de Santos[-o-Velho], 4-1-1475.

This document had already been cited by Joel Mata in his master's thesis in 1992, but it seems that he failed to notice that Filipa Moniz was the wife of the famous navigator.¹²⁴

The document shows that Filipa Moniz was not temporarily housed there nor paying for her room and board, as many historians tried to assert; but instead, that she was one of the twelve commanders (just as Don Hernando stated) endowed with the right to live there and who took part in the decisions for the administration of the Commandery, as written in the excerpt below:

*Most honored, devout, Lady Dona Beatriz de Menenses, **comendadeira** [Abbess] of the said monastery and Graçia Estévez, Lianor Correa, Catarina Rodriguez, Susana Pereira, Catarina de Valadares, Dona Lianor de Meneses, **Filipa Moniz**, Johana da Silva, Johana de Lordello, Beatriz de Goes and Catarina da Rosa, all **donas** [comendadoras] of the said monastery being in committee.*¹²⁵

The above text confirms that Filipa Moniz was a member of the Portuguese elite Military Order of Santiago, a member of the ruling committee and one of only 12¹²⁶ *donas comendadoras*¹²⁷

¹²⁴ MATA, Joel Silva Ferreira, *A Comunidade Feminina da Ordem de Santiago: A comenda de Santos na Idade Média*, Dissertação de Mestrado em História Medieval, apresentada à Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 1991, 255.

¹²⁵ Na cassa do cabido estando hi a m[ui]to honrrada, relegiossa, senhora Dona Briatriz de Menesses comendadeira do dito moesteiro e Graçia Estevez Lianor Correa Catarina Rodriguez Sussana Pereira Catarina de Valadares Dona Lianor de Menesses **Filipa Monniz** Johana da Silva Johana de Lordello Briatriz de Gooes e Catarina da Rossa todas **Donas** do dito moesteiro estando em cabidoo e cabido fazendo chamadas a elle per soo de canpa tangida segundo seu bõ costume espeçiallmente pera este auto que se adiante segue loguo per a dita Senhora Comendadeira e Donas foy dito que he verdade que o dito moesteiro tem em Campolide [[...]] JESUS, João C. da Silva, *A Casa de Viseu, o Comércio da Guiné e os Genoveses*. A Herança do Infante, 287–303. Lisboa - Lagos: Câmara Municipal de Lagos/CEPCEP/Centro de História de Além-Mar. ISBN: 978-972-9045-28-8, 295.

¹²⁶ The monastery should be occupied by only thirteen “donas” [...] who came from the upper echelons of Portuguese families. MATA, Joel Silva Ferreira, *Around a theme. The female community of the Order of St. James in Portugal: a journey from the late 15th century to the 16th century*, e-JPH, Vol. 6, number 1, Summer 2008, 2.

¹²⁷ There is some confusion between the words *Comendadora* and *Comendadeira*. Joel Mata emphasizes that *Comendadora* was the Mother Superior's title. Therefore, the remaining ladies would be just *Donas*. Joel Mata says that the *Donas* were governed by a **comendadeira** (see note 126). The *Donas* of Santos were Owners in common of the Santos commandery. Since they were all owners of the commandery, they would all have the right to be described as Commanders. While the *Comendadeira* should be the one in charge of all the Commanders. I think here that we should give priority to Las Casas and Don Hernando when they describe Filipa as being “una Comendadora dellas,” thus, all of the *Donas* were *Comendadoras*.

with privileges to live there,¹²⁸ there was room allocated for only 12 *donas*, a Comendadeira, and their entourage of servants.¹²⁹

The date of the document and the name Filipa Moniz leave little doubt that she was Colón's future wife. It is hard to calculate the true national treasure that this document represents! This is the first document ever found in Portugal, minimally related to the discoverer of the New World, dated prior to his departure for Castile.

In some publications historians proposed that Filipa Moniz was from the family of a “poor nobleman,” who had no choice but to marry a commoner, and continuously minimized Don Hernando's description of her. Starting from the preconceived perspective that Don Cristóbal was from the plebeian family of Colombo, they saw Hernando's claims of nobility in the *Historie* as boasting, aggrandizement and even as a hoax.¹³⁰

Some harped on the fact that Filipa Moniz did not have the high nobility title of *Dona*, and therefore Don Hernando was dishonest in what he wrote.¹³¹ However, it is important to note that,

¹²⁸ Nós não podemos entender a História nem as figuras históricas fora do contexto, nem este casamento sem perceber que as Comendadoras de Santos não eram freiras. Santos não era um Convento e isto é muito importante! Era um local para onde iam as Senhoras que por qualquer circunstância precisavam de se recolher. MENDONÇA, Manuela, *Conferência de Encerramento*, Almirante Colon - um feito no Ponente, Chiado, 2019, 414.

¹²⁹ Por detrás das grades, das horas canónicas, estão uma multiplicidade de tarefas seculares que provavelmente não deviam estar à sua responsabilidade. Por isso surgem os róis das criadas, assim como a alusão a criados ligados a comendadeiras e às Donas [...] A memória do número é complexa e é questionada pelas próprias Donas. A lotação do cenóbio de Santos foi fixada pelo Mestre Don Paio Peres Correia, em 1266, o qual lhe atribui **doze Donas governadas por uma comendadeira**; contudo durante as centúrias de Trezentos e Quatrocentos, as Donas ascenderam a dezoito, justamente com a razão inicial atribuídas às doze. MATA, Joel Silva Ferreira, *A Comunidade Feminina da Ordem de Santiago: A Comenda de Santos em finais do século XV e no século XVI Um Estudo Religioso, Económico e Social*, Fundação Eng. António de Almeida, 2007, 42.

¹³⁰ To prove the descent of Cristóbal Colón from two great seamen of that name who flourished in the fifteenth century. He begins the first chapter of his *Historie* by referring to a fancied reaching of a root of his family tree back into Roman annals... We may not praise the son, but we can say that in his effort to increase the importance of his father he did what has been done in countless families before and since his time... Anxious to present to the world a rich and ancient genealogical tree, Hernando permits himself to claim for the Admiral a family relationship with two famous seamen. THACHER, Vol. I, 213, 214, 215.

— Ces *Historie*, que tout le monde s'accordait à regarder comme une sorte d'évangile colombien, fourmillaient d'erreurs et contenaient des **assertions absolument inacceptables**. VIGNAUD, Henry, *Études critiques sur la vie de Colomb avant ses découvertes: les origines de sa famille...* H. Welter, 1905, 8.

— Colón's biographer-son, Hernando Colón, who was mendacious or misrepresented, embellished. BRONNER, Fred, *Portugal and Columbus: Old Drives in New Discoveries*, Mediterranean Studies, Vol. 6, Penn State University Press, 1996, 53.

¹³¹ Felipa Monis, mulher de Cristóbal Colón, não seria nunca **Dona** Felipa, em quanto viveu. BRAAMCAMP FREIRE, Anselmo, *Brasões da Sala de Sintra*, Portugal: Impr. da Universidade, 1921, T. III, 55.

while in Portuguese *Dona* is a nobility title abbreviated as D.^a, *dona* is also the feminine form of *dono*, meaning owner. The ***donas*** *Comendadoras* of All-Saints were all in conjunction the owners of that Commandery.

To be in charge of a Commandery and/or to become a member of the Military Order of Santiago was neither trivial nor simple:

*Aside from the problems of blood lineage (the Military Orders excluded the descendants of Jews, Moors or Gentiles,) the questionnaire of the militias required the non-exercise of manual labor (not only of the candidate but his parents and grandparents), a legitimate birth, as well as an age no greater than 50 years and not less than 16.*¹³²

But a more important fact regarding the Order of Santiago is found in its rule book. All religious/military orders had their established statutes and the members were required to follow them:

*They accepted all the rigors and harshness of the Order's Rule, but they refused family separation and, therefore, marriage was allowed to those who were single, as well as those who were widowed, as long as they had the **consent** of the Master.*¹³³

The order's rules from 1175, and reconfirmed in 1509, stated that the marriages of the Santiago members required authorization from the Master of the order:

*The Order is governed by the Master, to whom the whole body of the militia owes obedience, as is determined by the Rules. Acts such as the authorization for matrimony in its dominions [...] are the jurisdiction of the Master.*¹³⁴ *Marriage is not entirely impossible,*

— Empolar a nobreza de D. Filipa Moniz, a primeira esposa de seu pai, chamando-lhe, com certo exagero, “senhora de nobre sangue, fidalga.” THOMAZ, 498.

¹³² OLIVAL, Fernanda, *Para Um Estudo da Nobilitação no Antigo Regime: Os Cristãos-Novos na Ordem de Cristo (1581-1621)*. As ordens militares em Portugal: Actas do 1.º Encontro sobre Ordens Militares, Palmela 3, 4 e 5 de Março de 1989, Coleção Estudos Locais, Câmara Municipal de Palmela, 1991, 234.

¹³³ MATA, Joel Silva Ferreira, *A Comunidade Feminina da Ordem de Santiago: A comenda de Santos na Idade Média*, Dissertação de Mestrado em História Medieval, apresentada à Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 1991, 7.

¹³⁴ *Idem*, 8.

*but once consummated the **comendadora** must leave the monastery.¹³⁵ If any of them wants to marry, let them make it known to the Master ... with his providence to marry.¹³⁶*

The 2nd Duke of Viseu, D. Fernando, had been Governor of the Order of Santiago from 1444 until his death in 1470. Filipa was most likely brought to Todos-os-Santos during Duke Fernando's governorship, since her family, as rulers of Porto Santo, belonged to his dukedom.

In 1479, when Filipa Moniz left All-Saints to marry, the Governor was none other than Prince João, future King João II.¹³⁷ Thus, we must conclude that Filipa Moniz only left Santiago in order to marry the man later known in Castile as Don Cristóbal Colón with the authorization of João II himself, as required by Santiago's rules. The last reference to Filipa Moniz residing at All-Saints was January 20, 1479.¹³⁸ According to the rules of society at the time, the Prince Heir would not authorize one of his subjects to leave her protected residency at the Todos-os-Santos commandery to go marry a commoner, as would not the House of Viseu approve of such a marriage for one of its noble affiliates.

The aforementioned facts show that Don Hernando Colón was correct in his details about Filipa and that all of his detractors were mistaken. These facts demonstrate that Don Cristóbal was already a member of the nobility in Portugal before his marriage. Colón would have to be a nobleman in 1479 to be authorized by João II, by the House of Viseu, and by Filipa's family to marry Filipa.

¹³⁵ Não se conhecem quaisquer preceitos que interditem peremptoriamente que uma freira ou comendadeira da Ordem de Santiago, não possa abandonar a comunidade religiosa a favor da vida matrimonial, quando devidamente autorizada pelo respectivo mestre [...] o casamento não é de todo impossível, mas uma vez consumado, a comendadeira deixará o mosteiro. *Idem*, 59.

¹³⁶ Et si alguna quisier casar, **digalo a so maestro** o a so comendador, que **con so mandado se case**. EUTIMIO, Sastre Santos, *La Orden de Santiago y su regla*, Madrid, 2015, 33.

— KEMPIS, Herman de, *Regra e Estatutos da Ordem de Santiago*, Setubal, 1509, viii verso.

¹³⁷ The members normally elected a Master from amongst themselves to govern them. However, in the early 15th century King João I put his sons in charge of several orders: Prince Henrique was put in charge of the Order of Christ, Prince John was put in charge of the Order of Santiago and Prince Fernando was put in charge of the Order of Avis. Because the princes had not been elected, they were considered to be Governors instead of Masters.

¹³⁸ MATA, Joel Silva Ferreira, *A Comunidade Feminina da Ordem de Santiago: A comenda de Santos na Idade Média*, Dissertação de Mestrado em História Medieval, apresentada à Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 1991, 255.

Future research may provide answers to whether Colón also belonged to the Order of Santiago. At the *Columbus Chapel*, an American museum which contents were inherited by Mathilde de Lagarde Boal, from her Spanish aunt Victoria Colón, we find what the museum believes to be the personal desk of the First Admiral and Viceroy.¹³⁹ The desk is all adorned with scallops, as shown in Figure 7; the scallop is the symbol of the Order of Santiago. Don Hernando wrote that his father would often attend mass at the Monastery of All-Saints.¹⁴⁰ All-Saints was not a typical public church, being principally for Santiago members.¹⁴¹

The Monastery of All-Saints (Todos-os-Santos-o-Velho), where the French Embassy in Lisbon is currently located, was, by definition, a well-kept convent, with heavy gates and stone walls so strong and thick that it still stands today. Because he attended mass inside a Monastery of the Order of Santiago, we are presented with the possibility that Don Cristóbal Colón was also a member of this Order. If so, then his marriage was arranged with another member of Santiago.¹⁴²

The desk at the Columbus Chapel may one day help to confirm if Admiral Colón was a member of the Portuguese Order of Santiago. Don Cristóbal's father-in-law, Bartolomeu Perestrelo, had a sister-in-law named Dona Violante Nogueira, great-granddaughter of Mestre João das Leis (Advisor to King Afonso IV).¹⁴³ This Violante, aunt to Izeu Perestrelo and Filipa's other half-sisters, had been a Lady-in-Waiting at the court of Princess Dona Catarina, daughter of King Duarte. Later, she would be appointed *Comendadeira* (Abbess) of All-Saints; that is, she would oversee the *donas comendadoras*.

¹³⁹ The Columbus Chapel is the most important Colón collection on the North American continent. It was part of the Colón Castle in Asturias, Spain, and was inherited in 1908 by Mathilde de Lagarde Boal from her Aunt Victoria Colón and imported to Boalsburg in 1909 by her husband, Colonel Theodore Davis Boal. <https://www.boalmuseum.com/columbus-chapel.html>.

¹⁴⁰ HISTORIE, Cap. V, 12.

¹⁴¹ Aqui houve um templo do século IV, sobre cujas ruínas Don Afonso Henriques mandou erguer uma nova capela, entregue por Don Sancho à Ordem Militar de Santiago da Espada, que a passou com o cenóbio anexo às Comendadeiras de Santiago, as quais o abandonaram em 1490. <https://www.quovadislisboa.com/pt/place/santos-o-velho>.

¹⁴² Iba por la mayor parte á oír los divinos officios á un monesterio que se decia de Santos. LAS CASAS, T. I, 53.

¹⁴³ SOVERAL, Manuel Abranches de, MENDONÇA, Manuel Lamas de, *Os Furtado de Mendonça portugueses. Ensaio sobre a sua verdadeira origem*, Porto, 2004, 64.

— Membro mais influente dessa geração pela sua qualidade de privado de Don Afonso IV e membro do seu Conselho. Embaixador do monarca à Cúria pontifícia em 1345-6, MENDONÇA, Manuel Lamas de, *Ensaio Sobre A Origem dos Machado da Ilha Terceira*, Arquipélago • História, 2a Série, XIII (2009), 239.

Figure 7

The desk which the Columbus Chapel declares belonged to the Admiral is all adorned with scallops inside and out. A full scientific investigation of this piece still needs to be performed to verify its origins.



Source: Columbus Chapel, Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, USA. (Author photos 2013).

Unlike other Portuguese nobles who were not part of the Order of Santiago, Filipa Moniz had one more layer to overcome in order to contract marriage, because it was up to João II to authorize her to leave Todos-os-Santos in order to marry. There were innumerable Portuguese noblemen and descendants of Knights of Santiago at his disposal with whom to marry Filipa.

One could not court, nor contract marriage, with any noble lady if the members of her family, and often the king himself, did not approve of the marriage.¹⁴⁴

This argument is sustained by João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, who noted that “the rules of the time show us that a commoner never married a noblewoman, therefore Colón's true origins remain quite uncertain.”¹⁴⁵ Like Oliveira e Costa, other academics have struggled over the decades with the acceptance of a commoner's marriage for a daughter of a noble knight.

The status of Portuguese women was tied to the head of their household.¹⁴⁶ A noble woman who married a commoner would become a commoner; and Filipa Moniz would have lost her nobility by marrying a plebeian weaver.¹⁴⁷

Ladies of Filipa Moniz's caliber, such as the daughters of Captain Zarco in Funchal, for example, had marriages arranged by the King of Portugal. According to Henrique Henriques Noronha, King Afonso V sent four noblemen to Madeira carrying a letter addressed to Captain

¹⁴⁴ Quando ele casa com Filipa Moniz, e lá vamos nós a ter que recuar cinco séculos, não estamos a imaginar o jovem Cristóbal a passear aqui pela Baixa, a olhar para Santos e a ver se conquistava uma menina à janela. Foi um casamento obviamente arranjado e combinado entre as famílias, como assim era nessa época. MENDONÇA, Manuela, *Conferência de Encerramento*, Almirante Colon - um feito no Ponente, Chiado, 2019, 414.

¹⁴⁵ Cristóbal Colón continua a ser uma personagem semilendária sobre quem muito se especula e pouco se sabe quanto às suas origens. Apresentado como um mercador genovês de origens humildes, foi, sem dúvida, casado com Filipa Moniz, filha de Bartolomeu Perestrelo, capitão da ilha de Porto Santo e membro da nobreza da Casa de Viseu. As regras do tempo mostram-nos que um plebeu nunca se casava com uma nobre, pelo que a origem de Colón é assaz duvidosa [...] Importa registar que era um homem próximo da Casa de Viseu, que viveu na ilha de Porto Santo e que estava a par das navegações até ao golfo da Guiné. COSTA, João Paulo Oliveira, et al., *História da Expansão e do Império Português*, A Esfera dos Livros, 2014, 78.

¹⁴⁶ A mulher, quando casava, presumia-se que morria para a sua própria família e nascia para a do marido, onde ficava legalmente como filha. Em consequência, os únicos parentes reconhecidos eram os da linha paterna. GUIMARÃES, Elina, *A mulher portuguesa na legislação civil*, *Análise Social*, vol. XXII (92-93), 1986, 3.º-4º, 557.

¹⁴⁷ A mulher, por serviço das leis civis, fazia-se semelhante em qualidade ao seu marido, ou seja, se ele era nobre, a ela também competia a nobreza; ela usufruía das mesmas prerrogativas de seu cônjuge, mesmo que antes fosse plebeia. Todavia, isso não se aplicava ao marido, o homem não compartilhava da nobreza de sua esposa. Ao se casar ela retirava-se do seio da família e sujeitava-se ao poder do marido, seguindo em tudo a condição do mesmo, inclusive se ele pertencesse à plebe. SILVA, Karla Maria and LENI, Denis Carlos Moser, *A Ideia de Nobreza no Império Português em Fins do Século XVIII e Início do XIX*, *Revista Mosaico*, v. 13, p. 184-194, 2020, e-ISSN 1983-7801, 192

Zarco that read “I send you these four knights to marry your four daughters.”¹⁴⁸ It remains for us to imagine how the choice was made of which noble to marry which of Captain Zarco’s daughters, in case the King had not already chosen the respective fiancés. Why, then, was it accepted, or even believed, that Captain Perestrelo’s noble daughters would be treated any differently?

The Portuguese nobility of the time was very elitist and restrictive. Women who married below their ranks lived a life of dishonor.¹⁴⁹ There is a case, half a century later, where the Captain of Funchal, in Madeira, arrested his brother's widow just because she married, on second nuptials, a nobleman who was below her social status, considered a dishonorable marriage.¹⁵⁰

Likewise, the Captain of Machico, in Madeira,—Perestrelo’s counterpart—according to Gaspar Frutuoso looked after his daughters by marrying them with suitable nobles. He wrote that one daughter the captain “took to Lisbon where she married a fitting nobleman.”¹⁵¹

Another daughter, Guiomar Teixeira, married Captain Bartolomeu Perestrelo II, brother of Filipa Moniz; and this Guiomar Teixeira’s brother, João Teixeira, married Filipa de Mendonça, half-sister of Filipa Moniz. However, not having liked the noble Simão Barradas, who had already consummated a relationship with one of his daughters, the Captain of Machico not only had him arrested and castrated but kept him imprisoned in an underground dungeon for months. There “he was forced to perform the arduous and degrading penance of pulling a wheat mill like a mule,” as Frutuoso detailed.¹⁵²

The noble Simão Barradas ended up not marrying the captain's daughter, and it was the king himself who arranged a suitable husband for Ana Teixeira, a nobleman belonging to the

¹⁴⁸ Don Afonso V lhe enviou à Ilha da Madeira quatro fidalgos para que se casassem com as quatro filhas de Zarco: “Ahi vos mando quatro fidalgos para casardes vossas quatro filhas, que se vos os dotarei a elles segundo suas qualidades, eu vos haverei por muito honrado, e a elles por bem dotados, etc...” NORONHA, Henrique Henriques, *Nobiliario genealógico das familias que passarão a viver a esta Ilha d'a Madeira depois do seu descobrimento, que foi no ano de 1420*, Tít. Aguires, §1, nº 1.

¹⁴⁹ FARIA, Antonio Machado De, *Livro De Linhagens Do Seculo XVI*, Academia portuguesa da história, 1956, 317.

¹⁵⁰ Dona Maria de Noronha foi castigada de forma violenta e cruel pelo cunhado Martim Gonçalves da Câmara [...] a encarcerou numa prisão da Torre de Belém, como a expôs à vergonha de atravessar as ruas de Lisboa entre esbirros, sobre uma mula, com as mãos manietadas. FRUTUOSO, Gaspar, *Saudades da Terra*, Edição do Instituto Cultural de Ponta Delgada, 1984, 284.

¹⁵¹ FRUTUOSO, Gaspar and AZEVEDO, Álvaro Rodrigues de, *As Saudades da terra, Historia das Ilhas do Porto-Sancto, Madeira, Desertas e Selvagens* Typ. Funchalense, Funchal, 1873, 116.

¹⁵² *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. XI, Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do Quinto Centenário da Morte do Infante Don Henrique, Coimbra, Portugal. 1970, 142-143.

monarch's household. As a result of mistreating Barradas, reported Frutuoso, Captain Tristão “was exiled by sentence ... and before he left, the king married his daughter very honorably.”¹⁵³

Furthermore, Don Cristóbal's in-laws belonged to the House of Viseu,¹⁵⁴ the most important noble house in Portugal at the time.¹⁵⁵ The House of Viseu was started by Prince Henrique, *the Navigator*, and inherited by his adopted son and nephew, Prince Fernando, brother of King Afonso V, and then managed by his wife, Princess Beatriz, for over a decade, beginning in 1470.¹⁵⁶

Colón's in-laws were not poor bankrupt nobles, as some have written, who could not find a better husband for the noble Filipa other than a humble woolworker.¹⁵⁷ Yet, the idea that Filipa married a foreign pauper who descended from insignificant menial laborers was supported by Harvard professor Samuel Eliot Morison in 1942, in his book *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*.¹⁵⁸ It won the Pulitzer Prize and has been considered the must-read biography of the First Admiral, especially for Anglo-Saxon cultures. Morison presents us with the controversial question about the low birth of the Genoese Colombo when he writes as follows:

*To some writers this marriage appears to be a great mystery. How could a foreign **chartmaker** of low birth, who had been literally "on the beach" a few years before, marry into one of the noble families in the kingdom?*¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ FRUTUOSO, Gaspar and AZEVEDO, Álvaro Rodrigues de, *As Saudades da terra, Historia das Ilhas do Porto-Santo, Madeira, Desertas e Selvagens* Typ. Funchalense, Funchal, 1873, 116.

¹⁵⁴ Para a Casa de Viseu, a concessão dos senhorios dos arquipélagos da Madeira, Açores e Cabo Verde não aparentava destoar das outras doações de senhorios do reino. As ilhas, tal como os restantes territórios pertencentes ao ducado, integravam o seu senhorio, proporcionavam rendas e direitos, e acrescentavam prestígio social e dignidade. DÁVILA, Maria Barreto, *A Mulher dos Descobrimentos*, Esfera dos Livros, Portugal, 2019, 60.

¹⁵⁵ Seu casamento que – como por milagre – contrai por volta de 1479 com uma moça ‘emparentada con linajudos estripes lusitanas y con influencia en la Corte’ no dizer de A. Ballesteros Beretta. KLAWE, Janina Z., *Bartolomeu Dias e a viagem de Cristóvão Colón*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época. Actas, Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1989, Vol. II, 262.

¹⁵⁶ Essa mulher, Duquesa de Viseu, ela não é Governadora da Ordem de Cristo, mas a Ordem de Cristo está entregue à sua Casa e é ela que tudo movimenta. MENDONÇA, Manuela, *Conferência de Encerramento*, Almirante Colón - um feito no Ponente, Chiado, 2019, 415.

¹⁵⁷ Custa acreditar que a família de Filipa Moniz Perestrelo aceitasse o casamento da filha com um genovês qualquer, simples aventureiro. KLAWE, Janina Z., *Bartolomeu Dias e a viagem de Cristóvão Colón*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época. Actas, Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1989, Vol. II, 262.

¹⁵⁸ MORISON, Samuel Eliot, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, Time Incorporated, New York, 1962.

¹⁵⁹ MORISON, 34-35.

But while it was clear to some historians, as Morison wrote, the impossibility of such a marriage taking place between a noblewoman and a commoner, especially a poor one and a foreigner, Morison invented an answer, as the excerpt below demonstrates:

*Already about 25 years old when she caught young Christopher's roving eye, her mother was glad enough to have **no more convent bills to pay**, and as son-in-law to secure an **up-and-coming** young man of gentlemanly manners, who asked for **no dowry**.*

This second quote by Morison is a complete fabrication, written without any proof to support it. Note how Morison, contrary to the Genoese documents, claims that Colombo was now a cartographer and not a weaver. This epitomizes how authors have continuously imagined facts to fit the story into its pre-conceived conclusion. We do not know whether Don Cristóbal received a dowry or not, because no one has ever discovered documents related to his marriage in Portugal. But, while the 25 years old Filipa in 1479 was already "old" for Morison, how was it that Colombo, born in 1451 and already 28 years old, would still be "young"?

Furthermore, Filipa's mother would not be paying any bills at All-Saints. Filipa was living there with all expenses paid because All-Saints was given to the Order of Santiago in 1194, by King Sancho I, to house the wives and daughters of the Knights of Santiago. We don't even know the exact date of the wedding, nor do we know the name that Don Cristóbal was known by in Portugal when he got married. Samuel Morison went as far as inventing that the weaver Colombo was a promising catch, "up-and-coming", as if Isabel Moniz foresaw at the end of 1478 that her soon-to-be son-in-law was going to be a famous discoverer in 1493!

Many pieces of the official story, such as the statement made by Morison, were written contrary to facts, out of context, against social customs, without any documentary support, and continue to make no logical sense. Unfortunately, Morison's fabled book has received ongoing praise and characterized as the best biography book about Colón since 1942. This fact has not helped to clarify, but instead to hinder the historical truth for 75 more years. Miles Davidson, in his book *Columbus Then and Now: A Life Reexamined*, reacts with disbelief at the unfounded assumptions made by Morison and others, as shown below:

Neither Morison nor Wilford presented any evidence, not even a reasonable possibility ... Morison offered undocumented details [...] Unfortunately, this was also one of those occasions on which Morison allowed his lively imagination to run away,

Morison changing Colón's own statement [...] [Kirkpatrick] Sale [...] found Morison's book to be "seriously flawed" and "erroneously certain stating as facts" [...] Recently the unsupported assumptions made by Morison and others.¹⁶⁰

Many wrong opinions were accepted in the past as truths. What we know today is that at the time that Filipa resided in that fortified Monastery of the Military Order of Santiago, its Governor was none other than the future king of Portugal, João II. Therefore, Filipa Moniz lived in a prestigious place under strict rules. Filipa's relatives were such high Portuguese aristocracy that they included descendants of the kings of Portugal, and through them the kings of Castile, England and France.

The president of the Portuguese Academy of History, Manuela Mendonça, lecturing about Filipa Moniz in 2013, stated:

Cristóbal Colón married a Lady from the House of Viseu. He was a respected navigator; otherwise, he would never have been allowed to marry Filipa, daughter of an important man, as was the case of Captain Perestrelo. A Lady who belonged to a military order of the most important and prestigious one's in Portugal, the Order of Santiago. She was a Dona of Santos, member of the Military Order of Santiago. As we have already said, she was not a poor orphan in some shelter. This does not correspond in any way to the truth. She was a Lady. A Noblewoman who lived in All-Saints. A Lady who was installed there and protected in her own right, due to her high social status.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ DAVIDSON, Miles, *Columbus Then and Now: A Life Reexamined*, U. of Oklahoma Press, 1997, 22, 33, 34, 78, 86.

¹⁶¹ MENDONÇA, Manuela, *O encontro entre Don João II e Cristóvão Colón*, televised lecture from Vale do Paraíso, March 8, 2013, during the Congress commemorating the 520th Anniversary of the arrival in Lisbon of Cristóbal Colón on his return from the First Voyage of Discovery.
<http://colombo-o-novo.blogspot.com/2013/06/cristovao-colon-em-vale-paraiso.html>

This verification of the importance of the Commandery of All-Saints as it pertains to Filipa Moniz was presented, probably for the first time, in our 2006 book.¹⁶² The president of the Portuguese Academy of History, in 2013, already valued the manner that this information could take us towards a path of truth. Manuela Mendonça affirmed Filipa's relevant nobility and the prominent social status that the future Admiral would need to possess in 1479 in order to marry Filipa, as the social norms of their time required.

The circle of power around Filipa Moniz

Having established that the navigator's wife was the daughter of Bartolomeu Perestrelo, First Captain of Porto Santo, we will delve further into the social positions of her father and other family members, thus demonstrating how elite nobility were Don Cristóbal Colón's in-laws and how connected they were to the court of Portugal.

Bartolomeu Perestrelo I, in addition to being named First Captain of the Island of Porto Santo on November 1, 1446,¹⁶³ was also a Knight of the House of Viseu, led by Prince Henrique *the Navigator*, Duke of Viseu and Governor of the Order of Christ. This fact elevates Filipa's father to a level that few Portuguese knights had managed to achieve in their time. But before having this position at the House of Viseu, Bartolomeu Perestrelo had already been a Knight of the House of Prince João of Avis, the previous Governor of the Military Order of Santiago (1418-1442).¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² ROSA and STEELE, *O Mistério Colombo Revelado*, 254.

¹⁶³ Eu, o jfante dom Enrique, regedor e gouernador da hordem da caualaria do meestrado de Noso Senhor Jhesu Christo, duque de Ujseu e ssenhor de Coujlhaa, faço saber a quantos esta mjnha carta virem e o conhecimento dello pertencer, que eu dou carrego a Bertollameu Peroestrello, **caualleiro de mjnha casa**, da minha filha do Porto Santo. Que elle, dicto Bertollameu Perestrello, a mantenha por mjm, com justiça e djreito; e, morrendo elle, a mjm praz que sseu filho primeiro ou segundo, se tall for, tenha carrego polla gisa suso dicta; e asy de deçendente [em deçendente], per linha djreita. E, semdo em tall hidade o dicto seu filho que a nom posa reger, eu ou meus herdeiros poeremos hi quem a rega, atee que elle seja em hidade pera a reger [...] E, per esta presente, encomendo e rogo a todollos meus herdeiros e soçesores que despos mjm vierem ajam por firme esta mjnha carta e a conpram e façom conprir e gardar em todo e per todo e pella gisa que em ella he conthudo, porque eu fiz esta merçee ao dicto Peroestrello por elle ser o primeiro que, per meu mandado, a dicta ylha pobrou e por outros muitos seruiços que me fez; polio quail ffiz a dicta merçee a elle e a seus herdeyros e soçesores, segundo dicto he [...] Em testemunho de verdade, lhe mandey dar esta mjnha carta, asynada de mynha maa e asellada do meu seelo das mjnhas armas. Dada em a mjnha Ujlla, primeiro dia do mes de nouenbro. Gill Fernandez a fez. Ano do naçimento de Noso Senhor Jhesu Christo de mjll iiijº Rbj anos. *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. IX, Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do Quinto Centenário da Morte do Infante Don Henrique, Coimbra, Portugal. 1968, 208-210.

¹⁶⁴ COSME, João Ramalho, MANSO, Maria de Deus, *A Ordem de Santiago e a Expansão Portuguesa no Século XV*, As ordens militares em Portugal: Actas do 1.º Encontro sobre Ordens Militares, Palmela 3, 4 e 5 de Março de 1989, Coleção Estudos Locais, Câmara Municipal de Palmela, 1991, 45.

Bartolomeu Perestrelo was born in Portugal circa 1396 and had at one time been a member of the Senate for the City of Lisbon. His noble pedigree already gave him certain privileges and status before receiving the captaincy of Porto Santo, to the detriment of all the other knights of Prince Henrique, *the Navigator*'s house.

It has not been ascertained how many times Don Cristóbal's father-in-law married, but we know of at least three wives. First, there was Margarida Martins, of whom there appears to have been no descendants. Then, Brites Furtado de Mendonça, from whom he had at least three daughters (Catarina Furtado, married to Mem Rodrigues de Vasconcelos, Commander of Seixo; Filipa de Mendonça, married to João Teixeira, son of Tristão Vaz Teixeira, First Captain of Machico; and Izeu Perestrelo, married to Pedro Correia da Cunha, Second Captain of Porto Santo and later Captain of Graciosa Island, who was also one of King João II's Royal Guards). The third documented wife of Captain Perestrelo was Isabel Moniz, Admiral Colón's Mother-in-law.

The Moniz Clan

With Isabel Moniz Captain Perestrelo had at least one son and two daughters; Filipa Moniz, Violante Moniz, and Bartolomeu Perestrelo II. One daughter became wife of the now famous navigator, and the other was the abovementioned Violante Moniz, who lived in Seville.

Violante had been married for the first time to Miguel Molyart,¹⁶⁵ with whom she lived in Seville at the end of 1484. It was at her home where Don Cristóbal intended to leave his son Diogo when he crossed into the neighboring kingdom.¹⁶⁶ It is not known for certain who Miguel Molyart was. Some historians speculate that Molyart was a French or Flemish nobleman, a reasonable assumption because he spoke French, although Consuelo Varela considers him to have been Aragonese.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Most authors call him Muliarte, however, in a letter to Colón he signed his name as *Molyart*. FALCÓ Y OSORIO, María del Rosario, Duquesa de Berwick y Alba, *Autógrafos de Cristóbal Colón y Papeles de América*, Madrid 1892, 47.

¹⁶⁶ VARELA, Consuelo and AGUIRRE, Isabel, *La caída de Cristóbal Colón, el juicio de Bobadilla*. Marcial Pons Historia, 2006, 126.

¹⁶⁷ Cuando Cristóbal Colón llegó a Andalucía por primera vez procedente de Portugal en 1485, la Muñiz estaba casada con un aragonés, Miguel Muliart, y residía en San Juan del Puerto, muy cerca de Huelva, y al ladito del Monasterio de La Rábida. VARELA, Consuelo, *Cristóbal Colón, Retrato de un hombre*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1989, 85.

Molyart must have been sufficiently noble to contract a marriage with a captain's daughter. Not only the fact that he knew how to read and write different languages, namely French and Castilian,¹⁶⁸ but also the marriage that he made shows that Molyart belonged to the nobility. Under Portuguese custom, if a noble woman married a non-noble, the husband would not become noble; instead, the wife would give up her noble status to take on her husband's inferior status.¹⁶⁹

We know almost nothing about Miguel Molyart. It is not possible to ascertain if his marriage to Don Cristóbal's sister-in-law took place in Portugal and afterwards the couple moved to Castile, or if Violante moved to Castile to marry Molyart. This is an important question, because if Molyart got married in Portugal, what was this foreigner's role in Portuguese society? Where did he come from? When did he move to Seville with his wife Violante? And why?

Was Molyart another of King João II's traitors, like the Count of Penamacor and the Marquis of Montemor, obliged to move to Seville in 1483-84 to save himself?

Then again, if Violante went to marry Molyart in Castile, how would such marriage have been arranged and by whom? These may be important questions to clarify in the future.

It is a fact that Violante and Molyart were connected to the House of the Duke of Medina Sidonia because they lived in a property of this noble Lord of Seville. Violante also received from the Court of Castile some properties seized from a Jewish family.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Miguel no regresó nunca a España. Como tantos otros falleció en el Nuevo Mundo. Según declaró Diego de Escobar, Miguel se indispuso pronto con Don Cristóbal y por ello no tuvo inconveniente en traducir al castellano una carta que fray Juan Tisin había escrito en francés quejándose del almirante para que pudiese ser bien comprendida por los reyes [...] hoy sabemos que Muliart murió a manos de su conuñado. VARELA, Consuelo and AGUIRRE, Isabel, *La caída de Cristóbal Colón, el juicio de Bobadilla*. Marcial Pons Historia, 2006, 126.

¹⁶⁹ He verdade que a mulher Nobre casando-se com marido plebeu **perde, e derroga a sua qualidade, e segue a condição e a fortuna do marido** [...] Não succede assim ao **marido por lhe não competir o gozar da Nobreza da mulher**. Ella pelo casamento sahe do Patrio poder, e passa da familia de seus pais para a do respectivo cônjuge; fica sujeita ao poder deste, e segue em tudo a condição do mesmo: por isso **está tão longe de o nobilitar, que se elle for plebeo, a mulher fica plebea**. OLIVEIRA, Luiz da Silva Pereira, *Privilegios da nobreza, e fidalguia de Portugal*, Na nova officina de João Rodrigues Neves, 1806, 30.

¹⁷⁰ Envió al Consejo de la Inquisición cédula fechada á 30 de Mayo de 1493, ordenando que los bienes muebles y raices que fueron de Bartolomé de Sevilla, vecino de Huelva, se pusieran en se cuestración de Miguel de Muliarte, vecino de la ciudad de Sevilla, y de Violante Muñiz, su mujer, para que los tuviesen hasta que la causa fuera determinada. Por otras cédulas se autorizaba la ida y vuelta á la isla Española del mismo Muliarte, conuñado de Colón. Hay copias en la Colección Vargas Ponce, tomo 54. FERNÁNDEZ DURO, Cesáreo, *Colón y la historia póstuma*, Madrid, 1885, 216-217.

— Están secrestados en poder de Diego Alonso escrivano vecino de la dicha villa de Huelva los pongays en secrestación de Miguel Muliert(sic) vecino de la dicha çibdad de sevilla e Briolante Muñiz(sic) su muger. TUDELA Y BUESO, Juan Pérez de, *Colección Documental del Descubrimiento (1470-1506)*, Madrid, Editorial Mapfre, 1994, Vol. 1, 418.

*Don Fernando and Doña Ysabel [...] to be good and gracious to you Violante Moniz, wife of Miguel Molyart [...] nonrevocable award now and forever of all goods, mobile and immobile. [Archivo General de Simancas, Registro General del Sello, leg. 149610, f. 5].*¹⁷¹

The above extract shows that even the kings of Castile cared for Filipa Moniz's sister. But before the Court of Castile granted these lands to Violante Moniz, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Don Enrique de Guzmán had been concerned with Violante's well-being by granting her lands in San Juan del Puerto, Huelva region, as shown below:

*The land of which the Duke, my Lord and father (may holy glory have him) gave to Violante Moniz ... because it is a very necessary thing, and thus profitable for the common good of my vassals, as for the beasts.*¹⁷²

After Don Cristóbal Colón battered Miguel Molyart to death, circa 1500, Violante Moniz married Francesco de Bardi. Molyart had translated a letter from French to Castilian that some friars wanted to send to the Court of Castile, with certain truths about Don Cristóbal.

Her second wedding was, almost certainly, arranged by the First Viceroy, who called Francesco de Bardi, not from Italy but from Portugal, to come and serve him in Castile.¹⁷³ Unlike Molyart, who was murdered by the First Viceroy for betrayal, Francesco de Bardi became a faithful servant and administrator of Don Cristóbal's affairs in Castile.¹⁷⁴

It will not be unreasonable to say that there is still much to learn about the reasons why this daughter of the Captain of Porto Santo was living on the lands of Don Enrique de Guzmán, so-called Lord of Seville, before the future Admiral and Viceroy decided to leave Portugal and go

¹⁷¹ Don Fernando e Doña Ysabel [...] por fazer bien e merçed a vos Briolanja Muñiz, muger de Miguel Muliarte, difunto, vezino de la çibdad de Sevilla, acatando los muchos e buenos servicios quel dicho vuestro marido e vos nos aveys hecho [...] en remuneración dellos [...] vos fasemos merçed [...] no revocable agora e todo tiempo e syempre jamás de todos los bienes muebles e rayses e semoventes. GONZÁLEZ CRUZ, David, *Localización histórico-geográfica de las tierras explotadas por la familia de Cristóbal Colón en el puerto de San Juan* (Huelva, España), *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 74, 2 Sevilla (España), julio-diciembre, 2017, 419.

¹⁷² La tierra de que el Duque, mi señor, y mi padre (que santa gloria haia) hizo merced a Vriolanja Muñiz, para Exido de dicho Conzexo, como antes lo era, por ser cosa mui necesaria, e provechosa así al pro común de mis vasallos, como para las bestias de los requeros que vienen a ese mi lugar. *Idem*, 420.

¹⁷³ VARELA e AGUIRRE, 127.

¹⁷⁴ RODRÍGUEZ, Antonio Acosta, et al. *La Casa de la Contratación y la navegación entre España y las Indias*, Universidad de Sevilla, 2003, 233.

live there. Nevertheless, Violante Moniz continued to conduct business in Portugal through her agents. Consuelo Varela reported that some of Violante's business included "324 quintals of *pastel* [dyer's woad¹⁷⁵] she had in the said islands [...] 30 cowhides from Juan Rodriguez Cabrón, a resident of Ponta Delgada on the island of São Miguel."¹⁷⁶

Violante Moniz's brother, Bartolomeu Perestrelo II, also a brother of Filipa Moniz, became the Third Captain of Porto Santo in 1473. When Don Cristóbal married, he became the son-in-law of a deceased Captain and brother-in-law of two Captains of Porto Santo, in addition to being uncle of Bartolomeu Perestrelo III, heir to the captaincy of Porto Santo.

Regarding Isabel Moniz, Captain-consort of Porto Santo and Don Cristóbal Colón's mother-in-law, it is understood that she was one of the daughters of the honored knight Gil Aires,¹⁷⁷ secretary of the great war hero of King João I - Don Nuno Álvares Pereira -, Supreme Military Leader of Portugal.¹⁷⁸

During the reign of King Afonso V, Isabel Moniz was described as Vasco Gil Moniz's sister, in the document transferring the captaincy of Porto Santo to Pedro Correia.¹⁷⁹ Vasco Moniz had been *criado* (raised) by King Duarte and became a Knight of the regent Don Pedro, of whom he was Administrator. This uncle of Filipa Moniz was later a *cavaleiro fidalgo* (nobleman knight) of the household of King Afonso V.¹⁸⁰ Vasco was the administrator of the Chapel of Piedade, in Carmo, where, as we saw earlier, Filipa Moniz would be buried.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Dyer's woad, *Isatis tinctoria*, was an important source of blue dye and was an important source of income for the Azores in the early years.

¹⁷⁶ El 17 de abril otorga un amplio poder a Alonso y Gonzalo Fidalgo, estantes en las Azores, para que cobren en su nombre los 324 quintales de pastel que tiene en las dichas islas [...] El 11 de febrero de 1510, Pedro de Herrera, tintor de seda, hizo su procurador a Briolanja Muñiz para reclamar de Juan Rodriguez Cabrón, vecino de Punta Delgada en la isla de San Miguel, 30 cueros vacunos depositados a nombre de Beatriz Hidalgo, y que no le pertenecían en realidad a ella sino a Briolanja; el 24 de abril es Briolanja quien dió poder sustituto a Francisco Camón, para cobrar de Rodríguez Cabrón los 30 cueros, que habían sido a él depositados a su nombre, por el factor de su mando, Diego de Ocaña. VARELA, Consuelo, *Colón y los florentinos*, Alianza, Madrid, 1988, 103, 104.

¹⁷⁷ BRAAMCAMP FREIRE, Anselmo, *Brasões...* T. III, 50.

¹⁷⁸ MORENO, Humberto Baquero, *A Batalha de Alfarrobeira. Antecedentes e Significado Histórico*. T. II. Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra, 1980, 1053.

¹⁷⁹ *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. XIII, 133.

¹⁸⁰ BRAAMCAMP FREIRE, Anselmo, *Brasões...* T. III, 52.

¹⁸¹ Acedirão logo Vasco Gil Moniz, e seu cunhado Lopo Dias de Lemos, por parte de Guiomar Gil sua mulher, que era filha de Gil Ayres Moniz, representando ambos ao Prelado o direito, e posse, que na Capella haviaó adquirido, para que só os seus herdeiros fossem n'ella sepultados; e que essa fóra a intenção do veneravel D. Nuno Alvares

Vasco Gil Moniz came to marry Dona Leonor de Lusignan, granddaughter of King Jean II de Lusignan of Cyprus, and had Febo Moniz de Lusignan. This cousin of Filipa Moniz, royal blood of Cyprus, married Maria da Cunha, sister of Filipa's brother-in-law, Pedro Correia da Cunha, Captain of Graciosa, as seen in Figure 5.

Diogo Gil Moniz, another uncle of Filipa Moniz, was a Knight of the household of Prince Henrique *the Navigator* and *Reposteiro-Mór* (major footman at the royal household) of Prince Don Fernando, Duke of Viseu, Governor of the Orders of Christ and Santiago.¹⁸² He married Leonor da Silva, a descendant of royal blood, from whom Francisca da Silva was born.

This Francisca da Silva, first cousin of Filipa Moniz, married Don Sancho de Noronha, Third Count of Odemira (mentioned above as paying the dowry for Ana Moniz), making this Count of Odemira second cousin of Don Diogo Colón, Second Admiral and Viceroy.¹⁸³

Pedro Moniz da Silva, brother of the abovementioned countess of Odemira, became *Reposteiro-Mór*¹⁸⁴ of King Manuel I,¹⁸⁵ a post also held by his cousin Febo Moniz de Lusignan, son of Vasco Gil Moniz.¹⁸⁶ Don Diogo Colón was the second cousin of two of King Manuel I's Reposteiro-Móres.

Two other uncles of Filipa Moniz, Gil Aires Moniz and Rui Gil Moniz, were also noblemen Knights of the House of King Afonso V already in 1462.¹⁸⁷ Rui Gil Moniz also became treasurer

Pereira, cuja vontade devia ser observada com exacção proporcionada ao seu merecimento. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb: son origine, sa vie...* T. II, 525.

¹⁸² BRAAMCAMP FREIRE, Anselmo, *Brasões...* T. III, 52.

¹⁸³ Genealogy of Francisca da Silva and her husband, the Count of Odemira.

1. D. João I, King of Portugal	1. Fernando III <i>el Santo</i> , King of Castilla	1. Don Afonso III, King of Portugal
2. D. Afonso, 1st Duke of Bragança	2. Manuel, Prince of Castella, (Escalona e Peñafiel)	2. Don Martim Afonso Chichorro
3. D. Fernando, 2nd Duke of Bragança	3. Sancho Manuel, Lord of Infantado y Carrion	
4. D. Afonso, 1st count of Faro, 2nd count of Odemira	4. Inés Diaz Manuel == 3. Vasco Martins de Sousa Chichorro, 1st Lord of Mortágua	
	1. Isabel Vasques de Sousa	
	2. Rui Gomes da Silva, 2nd Lord of Chamusca	
	3. Leonor da Silva == Diogo Gil Moniz (Magro , Filipa Moniz's uncle)	
5. D. Sancho de Noronha, 3rd Count of Odemira ==	1.1 Francisca da Silva (Filipa's cousin)	1.2 Pedro Moniz da Silva, (Filipa's cousin) Reposteiro Mor of King Manuel I.

<https://geneall.net/pt/nome/14152/francisca-da-silva>

¹⁸⁴ *Reposteiro-mor* was the nobleman of the Royal Household who approached the pillow or chair to the king, or some close member of his family, when he knelt or sat. BLUTEAU, Rafael, *Diccionario da lingua portugueza*, Lisbon 1789, T. 2, 325.

¹⁸⁵ GAYO, Manoel Jozé da Costa Felgueiras, *Nobiliário de familias de Portugal*, Braga, 1940, 22.

¹⁸⁶ BRAAMCAMP FREIRE, Anselmo, *Brasões...* T. III, 66.

¹⁸⁷ *Idem*. 54.

of Lisbon. Rui Gil's marriage to Dona Filipa de Almada, sister of the Marquise of Aguilar de Campoo¹⁸⁸ and Lady-in-waiting of Princess D. Leonor, Afonso V's sister, was arranged by the king himself.¹⁸⁹ The integration of Filipa Moniz's uncles and cousins in the courts of King Duarte, King Afonso V, King João II, and even King Manuel I should not be minimized nor discarded. This fact implies a relationship and familiarity of all these royals and noble characters among themselves, as well as with the future Admiral Don Cristóbal.

Both Filipa Moniz and the future Viceroy of the New World had to be well-known within the Portuguese nobility circles and inside the Court of Portugal, both before and after their 1479 marriage. Filipa's close relatives belonged to high levels of the Portuguese nobility and integrated in the Portuguese court. But when reading the Portuguese chronicles of the time, there seems to be an illogical silence from the chroniclers, all of whom must have known Don Cristóbal in Portugal, especially Rui de Pina and Garcia de Resende.

These two chroniclers did not write a single word about the Portuguese life of such a famous navigator, who is proven to have been so well-connected by family relationships with so many nobles from the courts of princes and kings in Portugal, and later with the court of Castile.

These noble relatives of Filipa Moniz were no strangers to high Portuguese society. They were nobles of the court, with important posts and so well-connected that King João II asked them for life-threatening personal favors. João II knew Filipa Moniz's uncles so well that he gave them a very important secret mission, the assassination of *Torrão*, mayor of Moura, as transcribed below:

Lopo Vaz de Castelbranco, nicknamed Torrão, a high nobleman [...] governor of Moura [...] rebelled in favor of King Fernando [of Castile] in the year of 1478 [...] Prince João II ordered that he be killed entrusting the execution of this endeavor to Joam Palha, Mem Palha, Pero Palha, and Bras Palha, all brothers, and to Diogo Gil [Moniz] and Rui Gil

¹⁸⁸ D.^a Filipa de Almada had a sister named D.^a Brites de Almada who was married to Garcia Fernandez Manrique, 1st Marquis of Aguilar de Campoo. They were the parents of Luis Fernandez Manrique de Lara, 2nd Marquis of Aguilar. Filipa's uncle was brother-in-law to the 1st Marquis of Aguilar and uncle to the 2nd Marquis of Aguilar de Campoo. <https://geneall.net/en/name/46942/d-brites-de-almada/>

¹⁸⁹ Logo a seguir, em 1461, tratou-lhe el Rei o casamento com Felipa de Almada. BRAAMCAMP FREIRE, Anselmo, *Brasões...* T. III, 53.

[Moniz] also brothers, nicknamed **Magros**. All of them *cousins* and **Knights** of João II's household.¹⁹⁰

Note that Filipa's uncles are described as Knights of João II's household in 1478! Confirming the role of Filipa Moniz's uncles, the *Magro* brothers, in this secret mission Garcia de Resende wrote that "the knights who killed him were João Palha, Mem Palha, Pero Palha, and Bras Palha, all brothers; and Ruy Gil, and Diogo Gil *Magro*, brothers, and all of them cousins, whom the Prince rewarded with high generosity."¹⁹¹ Rui de Pina confirms that the killers were, "João Palha and Mem Palha, brothers, and Diogo Gil, and Ruy Gil *the Magros*, of Evora, also brothers, and all of them relatives."¹⁹²

Garcia de Resende wrote further about Diogo Gil Moniz that, in the year 1492, "Diogo Gil *Magro* Knight of King João II's household, made Álvaro Mendez do Esporão very angry", and this Álvaro Mendes wanted to kill Diogo Gil; and he did kill him in the Arraiolos fortress. Resende adds that the death of Filipa Moniz's uncle "weighed heavily on King João II because he had good will towards Diogo Gil and favored well Rui Gil, his brother."¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Lopo Vaz de Castelbranco d'alcunha o Torrão homem fidalgo [...] alcadaria mor da villa de Moura [...] alevantosse por elRei dom Fernando no anno de Mil quatro centos e setenta e oito, sendo ja elRei dom Afonso no Regno [...] ho Príncipe dom Ioão que sempre soffeo mal negócios desta calidade [...] lhe divia dar castigo para exemplo de outros, ordenou de ho mandar matar, encomendando ha execução deste negócio a Ioam Palha, Mem Palha, Pero Palha, e Bras Palha irmãos, e a Diogo Gil [Moniz] e Rui Gil [Moniz] tambem irmãos d'alcunha **Magros** naturaes d'Evora, **todos primos** e **Cavalleiros** de sua caza, aos quaes declarou em gram segredo sua tenção encomendadolhes muito que buscassem modo de porem em obra, que por isso lhes faria a todos muitas merçes, do que movidos ordenarão dahi a poucos dias sua briga feitisa, por respeito da qual como temorisados da justiça se acolherão a Moura, onde foram recebidos, e agasalhados de Lopo Vaz, ho que lhe elles pagaram na pior moeda que poderam, mattandoho hum dia entre outros que com elle saíram fora da villa a caçar e folgar. RODRIGUES, Graça Almeida, *Crónica do Príncipe Don João de Damião de Góis*, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1977, 202.

¹⁹¹ E teue maneira que estando o dito Lopo Vaz em Moura bem receoso, e guardado delle, por certos caualleiros, que manhosamente lá mandou, dizendo que hiam fogidos, o mandou matar, e o matarão no campo indo com elles á caça. E tanto que o Príncipe o soube acudio logo em pessoa, e toda a corte apos elle, e seguiu a villa, e fortaleza, e entregou há Infanta Dona Beatriz sua sogra, e mãe do Duque dom Diogo, cuja era a villa, e fortaleza. O que o Príncipe assi fez por se outros indiuidamente, e sem causa se nam leuantarem. E os **caualleiros**, que o assi matarão, erão Ioão Palha, Mem Palha, Pero Palha, e Bras Palha irmãos, e Ruy Gil [Moniz], e Diogo Gil [Moniz] *magro* irmãos, e **todos primos**, aos quaes o Príncipe fez boas merces. RESENDE, *Chronica de El-Rei Don João II por Garcia de Resende Contendo a interessantissima Miscellania Conforme a Edição de 1622*, Vol. I, 1902, 56.

¹⁹² PINA, Rui de, *Chronica de El-Rei Don Afonso V*, Lisboa, T. III, 1902, 128.

¹⁹³ RESENDE, *Chronica de El-Rei Don João II...* Vol. II, 1902, 138.

Filipa's uncles were not merely Knights of the king's household, Rui Gil Moniz was Captain of the crossbowmen of King João II's chamber.¹⁹⁴ To put this in perspective, King João II had Filipa Moniz's cousin, Count of Abrantes, as Captain of his Royal Guard; Filipa's brother-in-law, Pedro Correia, as one of the 25 royal guards; and, Filipa's uncle, Rui Gil, as Captain of the Crossbowmen of the King's Chamber; and somewhere between all of these trusted nobles walked the censored husband of Filipa Moniz, which many biographers accepted was a common weaver from Genoa.

The chroniclers declared that the Palha and Moniz were all cousins, and all of them **Knights** of the Household of King João II, also making Filipa Moniz a cousin of the Palha. Although this relationship is not well explained in our genealogies, there is no reason to deny the relationship.

Felgueiras Gayo wrote that the father of these Palha was called Vasco Palha de Almeida, in whose house King João II and Queen Leonor took shelter for fifteen days of mourning when the Prince Heir, Don Afonso, had a terrible fall from a horse that led to his death. Imagine how much King João II valued the friendship of this relative of Filipa Moniz to choose his home to take refuge in the saddest hours of his life!

The Furtado de Mendonça Clan

Connected as Captain Perestrelo's family was to the court, his marriage into the Furtado de Mendonça clan would be no different. Bartolomeu Perestrelo had Brites Furtado de Mendonça (or Catarina de Mendonça), daughter of Afonso Furtado de Mendonça, as one of his several wives. According to Manuel Abranches Soveral, all the Furtado Mendonças, brothers-in-law of Captain Perestrelo, were not only part of the King's Council, but also Knights of the Military Order of Santiago, which gives support to the authors who claim that Bartolomeu Perestrelo was a knight of the Order of Santiago, like his brothers-in-law.¹⁹⁵

Felgueiras Gayo gives Brites Furtado's father as Afonso Furtado de Mendonça, Captain of King João I's crossbowmen as well as Captain-of-the-sea.¹⁹⁶ But he had already been Captain of

¹⁹⁴ Rui Gil [Moniz] *Magro*, cavaleiro da casa de Don João II e **Capitão e Anadel mór dos seus bésteiros da camará**, o qual, ou para melhor dizer os seus herdeiros deu Don Manuel por quites por carta de 13 de outubro de 1514 [...] Mandámos hora tomar conta a Ruy Gil *Magro*, cavaleiro de nossa casa, de todo o que espandeo e recebeo. BRAAMCAMP FREIRE, Anselmo, SILVA PESSANHA, José Maria da, *Arquivo Histórico Portuguez*, Vol. V, 1907, 369, 442.

¹⁹⁵ SOVERAL, Manuel Abranches de and MENDONÇA, Manuel Lamas de, *Os Furtado de Mendonça portugueses. Ensaio sobre a sua verdadeira origem*, Porto, 2004.

¹⁹⁶ GAYO, Felgueiras, *Nobiliario de Familias de Portugal*, Oficinas Geáficas, PAX, Braga, T. XX, 1940, 44.

the crossbowmen during King Fernando's reign, a position that came to be inherited by his son Duarte Furtado de Mendonça.¹⁹⁷ This Duarte was uncle of Perestrelo's daughters, including Izeu Perestrelo. It should also be noted that another uncle of Izeu Perestrelo, Diogo de Mendonça, succeeded his brother Duarte Furtado as Captain of the crossbowmen during the reign of King João II on March 15, 1494 - see Figure 8.¹⁹⁸

Another brother-in-law of Bartolomeu Perestrelo I was Nuno Furtado de Mendonça, Royal Lodging Master (*Aposentador-mor*) of King Afonso V, who was married to Leonor da Silva (descendant of King Afonso III of Portugal). Their daughter, Ana de Mendonça, was mistress of King João II and mother of Don Jorge de Lancastre, Second Duke of Coimbra who took over as Master of the Orders of Santiago and Avis in 1500, having been given the titles already in 1495.

Therefore, three sisters of Filipa Moniz were second cousins to King João II's son and first cousins to Dona Joana de Mendonça, who became Duchess of Bragança by marriage to Don Jaime, 4th Duke of Bragança in 1519. Granted, this kinship with João II's son came into being in 1481, two years after Colón's marriage to Filipa, but the more we investigate Filipa's family connections, the more connections to the high nobility are revealed.

Perestrelo's sister-in-law, as we said, became *comendadeira* of the All-Saints commandery.¹⁹⁹ Perestrelo's niece, Ana de Mendonça, was King João II's mistress from circa 1475 to 1481, and succeeded her aunt Violante as *comendadeira* of the All-Saints commandery. This Violante Nogueira's aunt, called Maria Nogueira, had been Governess to the daughters of King Duarte I.²⁰⁰

Captain Perestrelo's in-laws were so integrated into the court of Portugal that one of them raised the Portuguese Princesses. This helps us to understand how the captain of Porto Santo was one of the nobles connected to the Portuguese Court since an early stage.

¹⁹⁷ SOVERAL, Manuel Abranches de and MENDONÇA, Manuel Lamas de, *Os Furtado de Mendonça portugueses. Ensaio sobre a sua verdadeira origem*, Porto, 2004, 11.

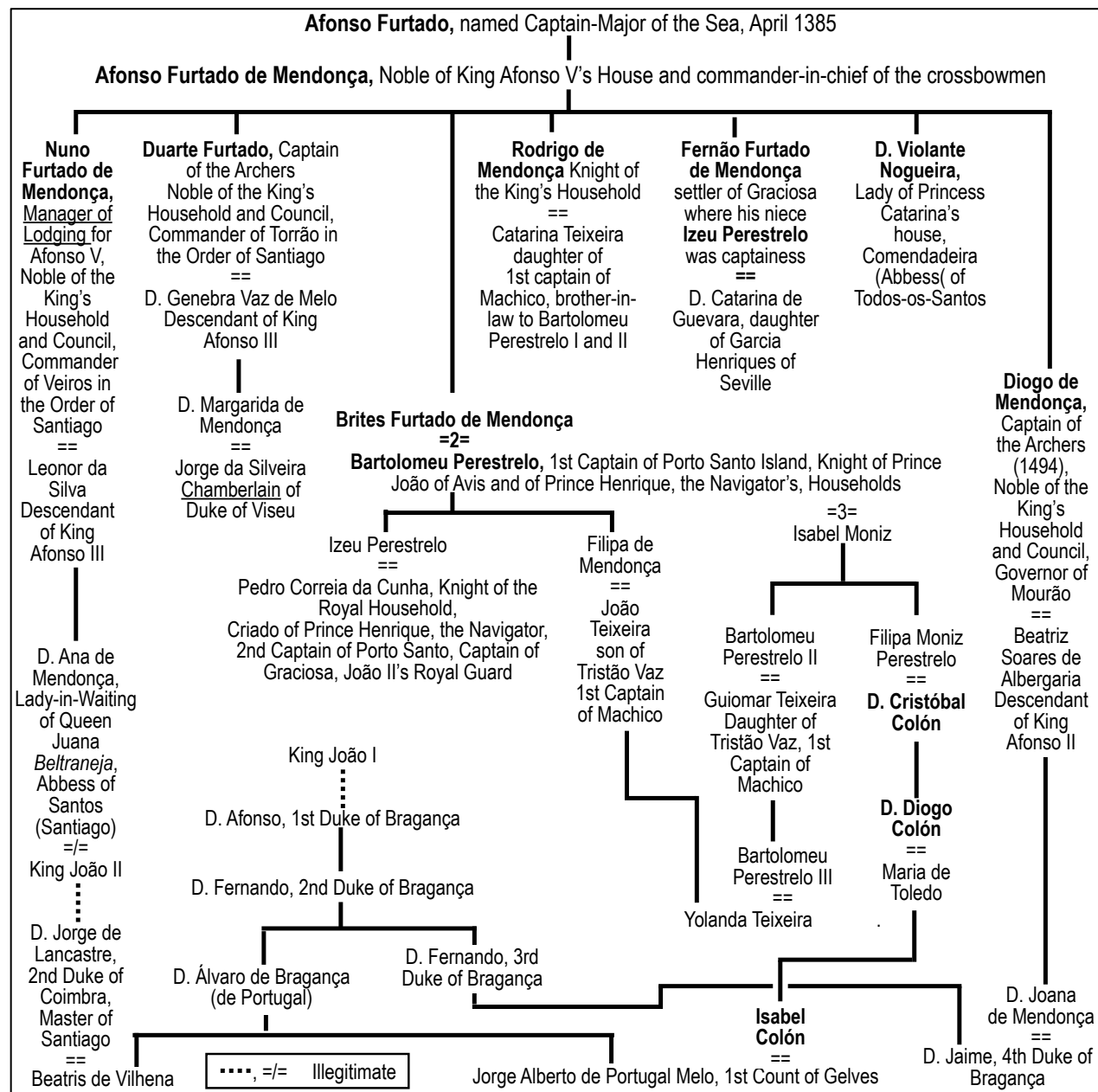
¹⁹⁸ Diogo de Mendonça, fidalgo do Conselho, n. cerca de 1447 e fal. em 1516, foi alcaide-mor de Mourão (22.8.1476) e sucedeu ao irmão Duarte Furtado como anadel-mor dos besteiros do conto (15.3.1494), cargo extinto em 1499, tendo por carta de 10.3.1500 recebido uma tença anual de 92.000 reais, sendo 80.000 pelo ofício perdido e o restante pelo serviço dos expulsos judeus de Mourão. SOVERAL and MENDONÇA, 81.

¹⁹⁹ In this case *Comendadeira* clearly refers to the lady Commander in the position of Abbess.

²⁰⁰ *Monumenta Henricina*, Coimbra: Atlântida, Vol. VII, 226-227; Vol. X, 44-45.

Figure 8

The Furtado de Mendonças rooted in the families of Perestrelo, Bragança and King João II. Nuno Furtado's grandson was son of King João II, thus Perestrelo's second nephew. Diogo de Mendonça's daughter became Duchess of Bragança. Bartolomeu Perestrelo's daughter became Captainess of Graciosa and his granddaughter became Countess of Gelves.



<https://geneall.net/en/name/12526/afonso-furtado-de-mendonca/>

<https://geneall.net/en/name/55774/bartolomeu-perestrelo/>

Recent investigations into the first inhabitants of the Portuguese Atlantic islands confirm that the original captains were nobles mainly from the House of Viseu. The prestigious positions of these noble families afforded them a life trajectory characteristically representative of an upward mobility in titles and riches.²⁰¹ Similar to Perestrelo's descendants, the descendants of other island captains married into royalty and came to wield great wealth and power in the kingdom.

The Perestrelas of Royal Blood

There are not many publications that mention the existence of a handful of Perestrelas being great-grandchildren of King Fernando I of Portugal and of King Henrique II of Castile, but they existed. This fact is not well known because the children of Branca Dias Perestrelo never called themselves Perestrelo, but instead Noronha, because their father was the archbishop of Lisbon, Don Pedro de Noronha. This Perestrelo/Noronha offspring included the Marquise of Montemor, the Countess of Penamacor, the Countess of Abrantes, and the Lord Chamberlain of King João II (who was also Commander-Major of Santiago), all of whom were first cousins of Filipa Moniz.

Many historians tend to devalue the blood ties that Filipa Moniz had with the Perestrelo-Noronha clan because they were the archbishop's illegitimate children. However, calling them legitimate or illegitimate does not change anything regarding their degree of blood kinship. In addition, Filipa's cousins had already been legitimized in Portugal a decade before Filipa Moniz was born.²⁰² Filipa's cousins held high titles and high court positions in the kingdom, showing the high degree of their bloodline.

The mother of these royals was Branca Dias Perestrelo, of whom not much is known. Some genealogists, such as Salazar e Castro, declared Branca Dias Perestrelo as being daughter of Captain Perestrelo and a fourth wife named Branca Dias.

On the other hand, Felgueiras Gayo, writing about the children of the Archbishop of Lisbon, says that he had them with Branca Dias Perestrelo, without giving Branca any affiliation. However, in a footnote Gayo gives the explanation that "Salazar says that Don Pedro de Noronha

²⁰¹ See per example: RODRIGUES, Miguel Jasmins, *Organização dos Poderes e Estrutura Social. A Madeira: 1460-1521*, Cascais, Patrimonia Historica, 1996. GREGÓRIO, Rute Dias, *Terra e Fortuna nos primórdios da Ilha Terceira (1450-1550)*, Universidade dos Açores, Ponta Delgada, 2005. RODRIGUES, Miguel Jasmins e TORRÃO, Maria Manuel, *Pequena Nobreza de Aquém e de Além-Mar*, Lisboa, IICT, CHAM, DGRQ, 2010

²⁰² Quatro cartas de legitimação dos filhos de Don Pedro, todas datadas de 13.8.1444. SOVERAL, Manuel Abranches de, *Sangue Real, Errata e aditamentos*, online <https://www.soveral.info/mas/mas5.htm>

had these children with Dona Branca Dias Perestrelo, **daughter of Bartolomeu Perestrelo**, Captain of Porto Santo Island and of Dona Branca Dias - see chapter on Perestrelo.”²⁰³

Further on, under the chapter of Perestrelo, Gayo creates more confusion making both of the archbishop’s mistresses, Isabel and Branca, daughters of Filipe Perestrelo, thus a sister of Bartolomeu Perestrelo and not a daughter.²⁰⁴

Filipe Perestrelo, nicknamed Filipão (meaning Great Filipe) in Portugal, was the trunk of the Portuguese Perestrelo family and came from Placencia in Italy. This grandfather of Filipa Moniz, where she must have obtained her name *Filipa*, settled in Portugal around 1385. After proving his high nobility, he received several privileges from King João I. This shows how, already 100 years before Filipa married Colón, her grandfather was integrated into the elites of the nobility in Portugal.

A recently published investigation, entitled *Os Furtado de Mendonça Portugueses. Ensaio sobre a sua verdadeira origem*,²⁰⁵ still confuses the kinship links between those Perestrellos that were great-grandchildren of King Fernando I and the wife of Don Cristóbal Colón. Manuel Abranches de Soveral, in an online correction to his book, *Sangue Real*, (Porto, 1998), shows Branca Dias Perestrelo as a daughter of Bartolomeu Perestrelo from a wife named Branca Dias.²⁰⁶

Without clear documentation on the exact degree of kinship, perhaps the confusion can be settled with the *First Testament* of Don Diogo Colón, son of Filipa Moniz. Don Diogo refers to

²⁰³ Salazar diz Don Pedro de Noronha tivera estes f.os de Dona Branca Dias Perestrello f.^a de B.eu Perestrello Sr. Da Ilha de Porto Santo, e Dona Branca Dias tt.^o de Perestrellos. Outros dizem os tivera de Isabel Perestrello f.^a de Felipe Perestrello e sua m.er Bertolina. GAYO, T. XXI, 136.

²⁰⁴ Dona Izabel Pestrello de Mesq.ta am.^a de Don Pedro Arcebispo de Lx.^a ou Branca Dias Perestrello. GAYO, T. XXIII, 12.

²⁰⁵ SOVERAL, Manuel Abranches de and MENDONÇA, Manuel Lamas de, *Os Furtado de Mendonça portugueses...*, Porto, 2004.

²⁰⁶ Branca Dias (Perestrello) não era irmã, mas sim filha de Bartolomeu Perestrello e de sua 1.^a mulher Branca Dias. Aquela Branca Dias (Perestrello) terá nascido entre 1418 e 1420, tendo 18 a 20 anos de idade à data do 1.^o filho, em cuja legitimação vem referida apenas como Branca Dias. E quem era ela? Toda a tradição genealógica a diz Perestrello. E com certeza Perestrello não era a Dona Isabel, que aparece na legitimação com Dona, título que as Perestrellos não usam nesta época. O grande Salazar e Castro garante mesmo que Branca Dias era filha de Bartolomeu Perestrello e de sua mulher Branca Dias. Posteriormente, vários genealogistas defenderam que Bartolomeu Perestrello seria seu irmão, dada a cronologia, e argumentam que o patronímico não obedeceria aqui à regra dado tratar-se de uma família estrangeira. Segui esta tese, mas julgo-a agora errada. Com efeito, Bartolomeu Perestrello já esteve na descoberta da Madeira em 1.7.1419. Podia, assim, perfeitamente ser pai de Branca Dias, filha de um primeiro casamento com outra Branca Dias, como diz Salazar. Sendo que Filipa Moniz, a 1.^a mulher do grande Cristóbal Colón, terá nascido muito mais tarde, do 2.^o casamento. O facto de Branca Dias ter, no séc. XV, o nome e patronímico da mãe, não é de estranhar minimamente, tendo ainda por cima em conta o facto de o pai ser estrangeiro. SOVERAL, Manuel Abranches de, *Sangue Real, Errata e aditamentos*, online <https://www.soveral.info/mas/mas5.htm>.

the Countess of Penamacor, one of the daughters of Branca Dias Perestrelo, as his aunt.²⁰⁷ Since female second-cousins were called aunts at that time in Portugal, then the Countess of Penamacor had to be Filipa's first cousin.

This second-cousin of Don Diogo had been named by different authors as the countess of *Benanico*, *Benavente*, or *Banaamar*, which had to be bad transcriptions of the original Testament. As we showed in our previous publication, the names *Benanico* and *Banaamar* would be nothing more than a corruption of Penamacor.²⁰⁸

Countess of Penamacor was the correct title of that countess living exiled in Castile, because her husband, Don Lopo de Albuquerque, the Count of Penamacor, was a traitor to King João II, who took refuge on the other side of the border in 1484. He changed his name to *Pedro Nunes* in order to conceal his continued traitorous conduct.²⁰⁹

Since the documents in Portugal cannot confirm with certainty who Branca Dias Perestrelo's father was, we must follow Don Diogo's Testament, instead of Salazar e Castro or Manuel Abranches de Soveral. If the Countess of Penamacor was an aunt [second-cousin], and not a first cousin of the Second Admiral and Viceroy, we should accept that Branca Dias Perestrelo was, in fact, one of Filipa Moniz's aunts, and not her sister.²¹⁰

This clarification makes all the children of Branca Dias Perestrelo first cousins of Filipa Moniz and nieces and nephews of Bartolomeu Perestrelo I - see Figure 9.

²⁰⁷ HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb: son origine, sa vie...* T. II, 457.

²⁰⁸ Manda décima: E mando que de la dicha limosna del dicho diezmo serán [sean] dados por el dicho padre Don Fray Gaspar, ó por quien de tal cargo tuviese, para las necesidades de la Condesa de *Benanico* [sic] **mi tia**, sobre cien ducados que tiene recibidos, todo lo que faltare para el cumplimiento de lo que e yo le mandé por una mi cédula; y este resto será pagado por partes ó juntamente, al albedrio y posibilidad del dicho padre Don Fray Gaspar. *Idem*, 457-458.

— A solução para identificar a muito misteriosa Condessa de *Benanico* que todos os livros de História negaram ser parente do 2º Vice-rei, o qual eles insistiam ser filho de um tecedor de lã, veio por meio de Carlos Calado (Presidente da Associação Cristóvão Colón em Portugal). Após ler o nosso livro, *O Mistério Colombo Revelado*, onde divulgámos pela primeira vez que o Conde de Penamacor era primo de Cristóbal Colón, Carlos Calado notou que as palavras *Benanico* e *Penamacor* soam quase iguais. Pode haver duas razões para terem chamado à Condessa de Penamacor, Condessa de Benanico: ou foi erro de grafia ou incorrecção intencional (como aconteceu com muitos outros aspectos nesta história), para nos despistar dos verdadeiros laços de sangue existentes entre Diogo Colón e as elites da linhagem de Portugal. ROSA, *Portugal e o segredo de Colombo*, Alma dos Livros, Portugal, 104.

²⁰⁹ O Conde de Penamocor [...] com seu nome mudado em **Pero Nunez**. RESENDE, *Vida e Feitos...*, 107-108.

²¹⁰ Female second-cousins were called aunts and the children of first-cousins were considered nephews.

Branca Dias Perestrelo (Lady-in-waiting of Queen Leonor of Aragon) and the Archbishop Don Pedro de Noronha, grandson of Kings Henrique II of Castile and Fernando I of Portugal, had the following documented children, cousins of Filipa Moniz, most of them legitimized by royal letter on August 13, 1444:²¹¹

Don Fernando de Noronha – Administrator of the *Excelente Senhora*. He was governor of the House of the deposed Queen Dona Juana *Excelente Senhora*, known as *la Beltraneja* in Castile and an enemy of Queen Isabel *la Catolica*.²¹² He was married to Dona Constança de Albuquerque, sister of the great Afonso de Albuquerque, King João II's royal guard.

²¹¹ Don Fernando de Noronha foi o último filho varão do arcebispo Don Pedro de Noronha. Esta paternidade está comprovada em vários documentos. Don Fernando terá nascido entre 1438 e 1442, sendo portanto menor à data do falecimento do pai em 1452. Também me parece evidente a relação estreita com sua irmã Don Catarina de Noronha, futura Condessa de Penamacor, em cuja casa casou e onde provavelmente vivia a mãe de ambos, o que fortemente indicia que tivessem sido irmãos inteiros e mais ou menos da mesma idade. Também é inegável ter sido Don João de Noronha o filho primogénito de Don Pedro. A historiografia de Óbidos chama-lhe mesmo Conde de Gijón, embora claramente sem fundamento. Mas basta ver que casou cerca de 27.4.1443, data em que obtém para o efeito 4.000 coroas de ouro de Dom Afonso V. Ora, das quatro cartas de legitimação dos filhos de Don Pedro, todas datadas de 13.8.1444, Don João aparece como filho de Dona Isabel e os restantes de Branca Dias. Do que ficou dito, pode concluir-se que Dona Isabel foi a primeira amante, talvez ocasional, e Branca Dias a segunda, esta de forma mais estável, já que lhe dá pelo menos três filhos. O primeiro destes filhos é Don Pedro de Noronha, que em 1475 já era mordomo-mor do príncipe, futuro Dom João II, e sobre o qual não conheço notícia posterior a 1489. Dom Afonso V trata-o por sobrinho, pelo que Don Pedro não devia ser mais velho do que o rei, que nasceu em 1438. Don Pedro terá assim nascido cerca de 1438, tendo cerca de 6 anos de idade quando foi legitimado. Mas esta data prende-se sobretudo com o facto de sua irmã mais velha (porque na legitimação surge em 1º lugar) Dona Isabel de Noronha, futura Marquesa de Montemor, ainda viver em 1514. A ter nascido em 1436, esta Dona Isabel teria então 78 anos de idade. Finalmente o mais novo, porque está em último lugar na legitimação, que vem estranhamente também chamado Pedro. Braamcamp Freire diz que foi erro do copista que confundiu a abreviatura de Pº com a de Rº, identificando este com Don Rodrigo de Noronha, bispo de Lamego, capelão-mor do reino e regedor da Casa da Suplicação, títulos com que já aparece em Janeiro de 1476. Mas Braamcamp não tinha razão nisso, pois Don Rodrigo foi filho bastardo do 2º conde de Vila Real e é posterior. Mas tinha razão na confusão das abreviaturas, que trocou Pº com Fº (de Fernando, o 3º filho varão de Don Pedro). O que ficou dito implicaria que Dona Catarina, futura Condessa de Penamacor, fosse também filha de Branca Dias, mas nascida depois da legitimação (1444). O que concorda com a cronologia, uma vez que casou em 1467 e faleceu entre 1518 e 1520. E nada pode levar a supor que a restante filha de Don Pedro, Dona Inez de Noronha, futura Condessa de Abrantes, não fosse também filha de Branca Dias e igualmente nascida após a legitimação dos irmãos. Com efeito, essa senhora também casou em 1467 e faleceu entre 1494 e 1496. Assim arrumados os filhos de Branca Dias, podemos dizer que esta teve de Don Pedro cinco filhos, nascidos entre 1438 e o mais tardar 1452, ano em que ele morre com 73 anos de idade. E também não há nada de estranho no facto de Don Pedro ter filhos entre os 60 e 70 anos de idade. Os casos documentados são inúmeros, principalmente sendo ela moça nova. Como diz o ditado, mulher nova e homem velho, filhos até à cova. SOVERAL, Manuel Abranches de, *Sangue Real, Errata e aditamentos*, online <https://www.soveral.info/mas/mas5.htm>.

²¹² Queen Juana, heir to the throne of Castile, ended up exiled to Portugal in 1479 and is known in Spain as “la Beltraneja” because the partisans of Isabel and Fernando insisted she was an illegitimate issue of the nobleman Beltrán de la Cueva and Castilian Queen Joana (sister of Afonso V of Portugal). If illegitimate “la Beltraneja” could not inherit the throne which would default to Isabel as next in line.

Dona Inês de Noronha – Countess of Abrantes. She married Don João de Almeida, who became Second Count of Abrantes by succeeding his father in this title in 1483. He was Captain of King João II's Royal Guard, a member of the king's Council and the Administrator of the king's household. King João II's Royal Guard also included Afonso de Albuquerque, Pedro Correia da Cunha and Duarte Pacheco Pereira.²¹³ This Second Count of Abrantes was also a first cousin of Leonor da Silva, wife of Diogo Gil Moniz, meaning that Almeida was cousin to Filipa through his wife and cousin to Filipa's uncle through Diogo Gil's wife.²¹⁴ The Third Count of Abrantes, Don Lopo de Almeida, was another Perestrelo connected by blood to the Second Admiral, Don Diogo Colón. From the relationship with the House of Abrantes alone we can infer the close elite relationships surrounding Filipa Moniz and her husband Don Cristóbal at the Portuguese Court.

Dona Isabel Henriques de Noronha – Marquise of Montemor. Also called Isabel da Silva in Castile, she is mentioned in the testament of Don Diego Colón, brother of Don Cristóbal Colón.²¹⁵ She married Don João de Bragança, brother of the Duke of Bragança, Marquis of Montemor and Supreme Military Leader of the kingdom, a great-grandson of King João I of Portugal. The Marquis of Montemor was the instigator of the treason of 1483 against King João II, with the support of Queen Isabel *la Catolica* of Castile, to whose court he fled in 1483.²¹⁶ The Marquise remained in close contact with the Colón family in Seville and signed in place of Violante Moniz, her cousin (and Colón's sister-in-law), since Violante "could not sign for having

²¹³ MARQUES, António Henrique R. de Oliveira, *Portugal do Renascimento à crise dinástica*. Editorial Presença, 1998, 703.

²¹⁴ Filipa Moniz's cousin and uncle married into the same family

Diogo Fernandes de Almeida, alcaide-mor de Abrantes	
1.1 D. Lopo de Almeida, 1st Count of Abrantes 2 D. João de Almeida, 2nd Count of Abrantes == D. Inês de Noronha (Filipa's cousin)	1.2 Branca de Almeida 2 Leonor da Silva == Diogo Gil Moniz (Filipa's uncle)

<https://geneall.net/en/name/12136/diogo-fernandes-de-almeida-alcalde-of-abrantes/>

²¹⁵ Item mando que se paguen al Padre Fray Gregorio Capellan de la Senora Marquesa de Montemayor tres mill maravedís en limosna. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb: son origine, sa vie...* T. II, 473.

²¹⁶ O marquez estando em Castello Branco, logo com odio e má vontade que a El Rei sem causa tinha, fez capitulos mui falsos e deshonestos da vida d'El-Rei, que tocava muito a sua honra e estado real, e os mandou logo por um Affonso Vaz, secretario seu, a El-Rei e á Rainha de Castella, que então estavam em Medina del Campo. Os quaes capitulos por sua deshonestidade El-Rei e a Rainha não receberam como o marquez desejava, nem deram credito ao mensageiro. RESENDE, *Chronica de El-Rei Don João II por Garcia de Resende Contendo...* Vol. I, 1902, 75.

injured the thumb of her right hand,”²¹⁷ as she stated. We can thus agree that Violante Moniz knew how to read and write, a common practice among Portuguese noble women. In Violante’s Testament she leaves a new skirt to her “cousin Isabel.”²¹⁸ In Don Diego Colón’s Testament, this brother of Don Cristóbal left money for the chaplain of the Marquise of Montemor. Furthermore, “Catalina Alvarez, servant of the Marquise of Montemor, a town in the kingdom of Portugal [...] granted a letter of payment to Admiral Don Diogo Colón, heir of Don Cristóbal Colón, for 4,238 *maravedís*, appraised amount for the things that Evaldo de Avellana had left, according to a note given to Don Cristóbal Colón, as recorded in his Testament.”²¹⁹ This cousin of Filipa Moniz ordered the construction of the church of the Monastery of Santa Paula, in Seville, where she is buried with her husband. Their tomb is adorned with a coat of arms that incorporates the arms of the Kings of Portugal. On November 27, 1523, Don Diogo Colón, Second Admiral, was “in Seville in the house of the Marquise of Montemor”, where he ratified a transfer of funds to his brother Don Hernando.²²⁰ The facts show that the relatives of Filipa Moniz continued to keep in close contact with each other, both in Portugal and in Castile. It is significant that Don Cristóbal’s brothers remained in close contact with Filipa’s relatives in Seville.

Dona Catarina de Noronha – Countess of Penamacor. She is mentioned, as we have already said, in the Testament of her second-cousin, Don Diogo Colón, who referred to her as his “aunt.” She was married to Don Lopo de Albuquerque, Count of Penamacor (traitor to King João II, who used the pseudonym *Pedro Nunes* while in exile and was incarcerated in the Tower of London in 1488, at King João II’s request.)²²¹ This Don Lopo was Chamberlain and Head Butler

²¹⁷ VARELA, Consuelo, *Colón y los florentinos*, Alianza Editorial, S. A., Madrid, 1988, 106.

²¹⁸ Pide que no se la den y que en su lugar le ofrezcan una nueva; a su prima Isabel. VARELA, Consuelo, *Colón y los florentinos*, Alianza, Madrid, 1988, 106.

²¹⁹ *Catalogo de los Fondos Americanos del Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla*, Publicaciones del Instituto Hispano-Cubano de Historia de América (Sevilla), T. I, Siglo XVI, 160.

²²⁰ HERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ, José, MURO OREJÓN, Antonio, *El testamento de Don Hernando Colón y otros documentos para su biografía*, Spain, Impr. editorial de la Gavidia, 1941, 33.

²²¹ O Conde de Penamacor, nam cansando de prosseguir com suas forças e pouco poder a deslealdade que contra elle, e seu estado e serviço ja começara, era passado a Frandes, e a Inglaterra. Só com seu nome mudado em **Pero Nunez**, comprava mercadarias e cousas pera os tratos e resgates de Guine, e andava requerendo e convidando pessoas, e armadores daquellas terras pera ysso, que ja em algũa maneira se aparelbavam. E el-rey por atalhar cousas de tanto seu serviço, ordenou de mandar a Ynglaterra em hũa caravella muito bem armada a Alvaro de Caminha, cavaleyro de sua casa que depois foy capitão da Ylha de Sam Tomee, pera que com algum engano, ou dissimulaçam prender o dito Conde. RESENDE, *Vida e Feitos...* 2007, 107-108.

of King Afonso V, Captain of the King's Guard and Ambassador to the Vatican and to the Court of France. Don Lopo had as his page Diego Méndez de Segura, future secretary of Don Cristóbal Colón.²²² Penamacor was apparently murdered on May 8, 1493, in Castile, according to the date engraved on his tomb at the Convent of Santo António da Castanheira, in Loja Nova, near Vila Franca de Xira. He had been released from the Tower of London in late 1492. This happened due to Queen Isabel's intervention on the count's behalf next to King Henry VII by request of Diego Méndez.²²³ It should be noted that it was in this same convent of Santo António that Don Cristóbal Colón visited Queen Leonor and her brother, the future King Manuel I, on March 11, 1493. This Count of Penamacor fled to Castile in 1484, as mentioned in the Portuguese chronicles. The date of Penamacor's fleeing to Castile matches the date of Don Cristóbal's flight to that same kingdom, at the end of 1484.

Don Pedro de Noronha – Lord Chamberlain and Commander Major. Already in 1475, this first cousin of Filipa Moniz held the high post of Lord Chamberlain (*Mordomo-mor*) for Prince João II, he was Commander Major of the Military Order of Santiago and Lord of Cadaval. He also became Ambassador to Pope Innocent VIII. Don Martinho de Noronha (Perestrelo), son of this Don Pedro, was “third grandson by way of the kings Don Henrique and Don Fernando, Lord of Cadaval [...] and Lord of Vila Verde,” as detailed by António Caetano de Sousa.²²⁴ It does not appear that Don Martinho inherited the post of Lord Chamberlain at the death of his father, in 1492, but Don Martinho de Noronha was the messenger chosen by King João II to escort Don Cristóbal Colón from Lisbon to Vale do Paraíso, on March 8, 1493, for the explorer's audience with the king.²²⁵

²²² Cuando Diego entró como **paje** de Penamacor tendría probablemente cuatro o cinco años de edad. VIGNAND (VIGNERAS), Louis André, *Diego Méndez, secretario de Cristóbal Colón y alguacil mayor de Santo Domingo. Bosquejo biográfico*, Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación, Año LXIX, Vol. XXXII, Núm. 119. 771.

²²³ Penamacor fue arrestado, así pasó cuatro años en la Torre de Londres. Fue entonces cuando el joven Diego [Méndez], ya un adolescente, emprendió tres viajes a España para obtener la libertad de su amo mediante la intervención de la reina Isabel la Católica. Al parecer tuvo éxito, porque en 1492 Penamacor fue libertado y al llegar a Barcelona, en diciembre de ese año, la soberana le nombró regidor de Baeza y Ubeda en Andalucía. *Idem*, 772.

²²⁴ SOUSA, António Caetano de, *Memorias historicas, e genealogicas dos grandes de Portugal: que contém a origem, e antiguidade de suas familias: os estados, e os nomes dos que actualmente vivem, suas arvores de costado, as alianças das casas, os escudos de armas, que lhes competem, até o anno de 1742*, 68.

²²⁵ Oy resçibió el Almirante una carta del Rey de Portugal con **don Martín de Noroña** por la qual le rogava que se llegase adonde él estava pues el tiempo no era para partir con la caravela. DIARIO, Friday, March 8.

Since the Lord Chamberlain was the top official of the Royal Household, responsible for its administration and for the superintendence of all other officers and employees of the same, what implications can we draw from the fact that his cousin, Filipa Moniz, was already married to Don Cristóbal Colón two years before João II was crowned king?

Nobles All Around

Although the greater nobility of the Noronha-Perestrelo clan came from their father Noronha, the Perestrelo lineage of Branca Dias also carried some importance. Filipão Perestrelo, Filipa Moniz's paternal grandfather, had a prominent status,²²⁶ in addition to the noble privilege of being exempt from paying the required contributions. King João I recognized his nobility, his coat of arms, and gave Filipão the king's own palace in Rua de Sub-Ripas in Coimbra. On the same grant, the king gave Filipão several lands in Torres Vedras, where he installed a house named Quinta do Hespagnol. This house would become the mother house of the Perestrelas of the mainland.²²⁷

Filipa's maternal grandfather, the knight Gil Aires, had been Don Nuno Álvares Pereira's secretary. From what has been exposed so far, we can see how Filipa Moniz was so connected and integrated on all sides within a family that had direct connections with kings João I, Duarte and his wife Leonor of Aragon, King Afonso V, and perhaps of greater importance, King João II. In addition, Filipa's father was a noble knight of the House of Viseu, with direct connections to Prince Henrique *the Navigator*, Duke of Viseu, who gave him the Island of Porto Santo. Perestrelo was also through his familiar circle of Perestrelo–Moniz–Furtado de Mendonça intrinsically tied at the highest levels to the House of Bragança, and to the Noronhas as well. These noble connections made Filipa's social position much more influential.

Being that Filipa Moniz was the daughter of the First Captain, sister-in-law of the Second Captain, sister of the Third Captain and aunt of the Fourth heir to the captaincy, it is possible that King Afonso V may have had some interest in deciding who Filipa married, as he did with Zarco's

²²⁶ Felippam Palestrello e missé Gabriel Palestrello e madona Bertolina herão de nobre linhagem, e geração dos Palestrellos e Bisfortes de Lombardia que **herão muito fidalgos**. PAREDES, Maria Favila Vieira da Cunha, *Os Betencourt Perestrelo de Vasconcelos: Uma Família e o seu Arquivo*, Arquivo Histórico da Madeira, Nova Série, n. 1, 2019, 18.

²²⁷ ALESSANDRINI, Nunziatella, *Os Perestrello: Uma Família de Piacenza no Império Português (Século XVI)*, Centro de História de Além-Mar (CHAM - FCSH-UNL, UAç), 84.

daughters. However, since Filipa belonged to the House of Viseu, it is more likely that Princess D.^a Beatriz, Duchess of Viseu, was the one involved with João II as Governor of the Order of Santiago in planning Filipa's marriage. D.^a Beatriz became the most powerful woman in the kingdom after her husband's death in 1470, as she took over management of the House of Viseu for her young heirs.²²⁸

Many of the Portuguese Atlantic territories were controlled by the House of Viseu. Bartolomeu Perestrelo and his son were noble knights of the House of Viseu. What logical deductions can we assume about the rules and commitments that this noble house had to its knights and their families? We must accept that the House of Viseu also had a say in the marital decisions of its members, including that of Filipa Moniz,²²⁹ as we can read in the excerpt below:

*It was an obviously arranged and predetermined marriage between the families, as it was customary at that time [...] That marriage of hers to Cristóbal Colón was clearly orchestrated within the family, the prodigious family of the House of Viseu.*²³⁰

Pedro Correia da Cunha – Second Captain of Porto Santo. This brother-in-law of Don Cristóbal was the son of Gonçalo Correia, Lord of Farelães. His mother was Margarida de Prado, daughter of João Afonso de Prado, great-grandson of Don Afonso III, King of Portugal.²³¹ Pedro Correia married Izeu Perestrelo, daughter of Bartolomeu Perestrelo.

This marriage gave Pedro Correia the right to buy the captaincy of Porto Santo in 1458 from Isabel Moniz, the widow of his father-in-law. The contract was made with the approval of

²²⁸ A morte do infante D. Fernando abriu uma nova etapa na vida pessoal e política de D. Beatriz [...] enquanto tutora dos filhos, Beatriz tinha agora a seu cargo a administração de todas as rendas e senhorios dos ducados de Viseu e de Beja. DÁVILA, Maria Barreto, *A Mulher dos Descobrimentos*, 59.

²²⁹ E tudo acontece entre a Ordem de Santiago e a Casa de Viseu. Cristóbal Colón, com este ou com outro nome, estava lá, era ali que ele pertencia [...] não foi um homem da Casa do Rei, mas isso não lhe retira a importância social porque, na verdade, tanto a Corte da Casa de Viseu como a Corte da Casa de Bragança eram Cortes alternativas, verdadeiramente alternativas à própria Corte Régia. MENDONÇA, Manuela, *Conferência de Encerramento*, Almirante Colon - um feito no Ponente, Chiado, 2019, 415.

²³⁰ Aquele seu casamento com Cristóvão Colon foi claramente orquestrado dentro da família, a grande família da Casa de Viseu, liderada por uma mulher de que aqui já se falou, aquela que é sem dúvida a mulher mais sagaz, mais forte e de inegável intervenção política no séc. XV e que se chamou D.^a Brites. D.^a Brites que é mãe da rainha D.^a Leonor, que é tia de Isabel a Católica e que é também mãe da viúva do Duque de Bragança, mandado executar por D. João II. Essa mulher, Duquesa de Viseu, ela não é Governadora da Ordem de Cristo, mas a Ordem de Cristo está entregue à sua Casa e é ela que tudo movimenta. Mas ela não movimenta apenas a Ordem de Cristo, pois interfere também na Ordem de Santiago. *Ibidem*.

²³¹ <https://geneall.net/en/name/108584/pedro-correia-capitao-da-ilha-graciosa/>

Isabel Moniz and her brother, the aforementioned Diogo Gil Moniz (*Magro*), as tutors of little Bartolomeu Perestrelo II. Pedro Correia paid 300,000 reais up front and an additional annual rent of 30,000 reais.²³² When he was forced to return the captaincy of Porto Santo to his brother-in-law in 1473, Pedro Correia did not receive any payment. The gains that he had earned during his captaincy had already compensated him. Correia was later made captain of the north part of the island of Graciosa, where he arrived around 1475. His wife and children went to live in Graciosa, and Pedro Correia became captain of the whole island circa 1485. John Boyd Thacher wrote the following regarding the Second Captain of Porto Santo:

In May 1458, Prince Henrique, by virtue of his authority as Grand Master of the Order of Christ, appointed Pedro Correa da Cunha, the son-in-law of Bartholomeu Perestrello, to be Captain of Porto Santo. When Bartholomeu II became of age and returned from Africa, where he had been employed in arms, he claimed his rights as Captain and obtained them March 15, 1473. Pedro Correa died in 1499 and was buried in the Chapel of St. João in the monastery of Carmo at Lisbon, (where his wife Izeu Perestrelo was also buried).²³³

We are faced, once again, with two important members of the Portuguese nobility connected to the famous navigator who were buried at Carmo, in Lisbon; but, like Filipa Moniz, there are no placards there to remind the visitors that Carmo has these connections to the immortal Don Cristóbal Colón.

Pedro Correia (Second Captain of Porto Santo between 1457 and 1473) knew his brother-in-law Don Cristóbal so well that they held discussions about wood and large bamboo canes²³⁴ that arrived at the Portuguese islands dragged by the waves:²³⁵

²³² FRUCTUOSO, Gaspar and AZEVEDO, Alvaro Rodrigues de, *As Saudades da terra, Historia das Ilhas do Porto-Santo, Madeira, Desertas e Selvagens* Typ. Funchalense, Funchal, 1873, 51.

²³³ THACHER, Vol. I, 399.

²³⁴ Amongst the bamboo varieties native to the Americas is *Guadua angustifolia*, a tropical species of giant timber bamboo. It is considered to be the third largest and the strongest bamboo in the world reaching heights up to 35 meters with trunks of 25 cm in diameter. *Guadua angustifolia* grows in northern Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Trinidad, Uruguay, with high concentrations in the Amazon basin and the Orinoco basin.

²³⁵ Vimos unas **cañas** de las que las tormentas marinas arrojan desde oriente a las islas de Madera y Fayal. MÜNZER, Jerónimo, *Viaje por España y Portugal*, ediciones Polifemo, Madrid, 1991, 175.

*Pedro Correia, married to a sister of the wife of the Admiral, told Colón that he had seen on the island of Porto Santo, another log, brought by the same winds, as well carved as the previous one, and that the same way there arrived [bamboo] canes so thick that from one node to another it would fit nine bottles of wine. [Colón] said that the King of Portugal affirmed this same thing and talking with [João II] about such things, the king showed them to him. And there not existing any places in these parts where such canes grow, it was obvious that the winds had brought them from some neighboring islands, or from the Indies.*²³⁶

Pedro Correia had only spoken of the canes, but King João II went further. The king himself showed the evidence to Don Cristóbal, as Don Hernando declared, and Las Casas confirmed, “Cristóbal Colón heard the King of Portugal affirm this, and speaking with the king of these matters, the king ordered them to be shown.”²³⁷

We can thus infer that the King of Portugal found it useful to debate matters of discovery with the man later named Don Cristóbal Colón, and to show him large canes and pines as concrete evidence of the existence of land to the west. This proves how personal the relationship between the King and the future Admiral was.

Diego Méndez (de Segura) – a Castilian in hiding. This hero of the Castilian discoveries was raised at the House of the Penamacors, where he was Don Lopo’s page. He became secretary to the First Admiral and, later, secretary to his son, Don Diogo Colón. Don Cristóbal called him “de Segura,” a Portuguese village on the border with Castile, 50 km from Penamacor. This designation would serve to hide Méndez’s true Castilian nationality. After moving to Castile, Méndez was accused by the Castilians of being Portuguese and had trouble advancing to higher posts in that kingdom.²³⁸ However, Méndez was really a native of Zamora and son of Garcia Méndez, an ally of King Afonso V and Queen Juana *Beltraneja* against Queen Isabel and King

²³⁶ **Canne** così grosse, che dall’um nodo all’altro contenevano nove caraffe di vino. *HISTORIE*, Cap. IX, 20.

²³⁷ LAS CASAS, T. I, 98.

²³⁸ That Méndez was not entitled to an *encomienda* because he was a foreigner, a native of Portugal, and they cited a royal *cedula* of October 4, 1513, forbidding the granting of *encomiendas* to *extranjeros*. VIGNERAS, Louis-André, *Diego Mendez, Secretary of Christopher Columbus and Alguacil Mayor of Santo Domingo: A Biographical Sketch*, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 58(4), Duke University Press, 1978, 685.

Fernando in the 1476-80 Castilian *War of the Succession*.²³⁹ Closely connected to both Portugal and to the Colón family in Castile, Méndez would certainly be aware of the many secrets that the Colón clan maintained and would assist in preserving them. In one of his letters, Diego Méndez asked the Second Admiral, Don Diogo, to give some information to both Friar Gregório and the Second Admiral's aunt, Violante Moniz, thus showing Méndez's close relationship with members of the Admiral's family:

*I beg Your Grace to give account of this news to Father Frei Gregório, to whom I don't write because I believe he has gone to Portugal, and likewise to Ms. Violante Moniz, to whom this time I cannot write*²⁴⁰

This is more evidence of how this group of Portuguese natives and their friends living in Castile, all associated with the Colón family, and remained in constant contact with one another.

On October 16, 1523, at the office of Alonso de la Barrera, public notary in Seville, Diego Méndez appointed his legal representative, Cristóvão Moniz, a Portuguese Carmelita friar, to fulfill the requests ordered by the Viceroy Don Diogo²⁴¹ (Cristóvão Moniz was the Prior of Carmo²⁴² in Lisbon, and certainly a cousin of Don Diogo Colón, from whom Cristóvão Moniz was receiving a yearly pension²⁴³). Diego Méndez not only helped to maintain the secrecy around Don Cristóbal Colón's true identity, but also saved the First Admiral's life. Méndez led the rowing of a canoe from Jamaica to Española to ask the governor of Santo Domingo for help during the Fourth Voyage. If it

²³⁹ Por lo que García Méndez hubo de seguirles, y dejó tras de sí a su esposa y a un niño. La madre de Diego murió enseguida y después de terminada la guerra García regresó a España y llevó consigo su hijo a Portugal. Allí le confió al cuidado de un amigo, Lopo de Albuquerque, Conde de Penamacor. Cuando Diego entró como paje de Penamacor tendría probablemente cuatro o cinco años de edad. VIGNAND (VIGNERAS), Louis André, *Diego Méndez, secretario de Cristóbal Colón y alguacil mayor de Santo Domingo. Bosquejo biográfico*, Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación, Año LXIX, Vol. XXXII, Núm. 119. 771.

²⁴⁰ V. merced dé su parte destas nuevas al padre fray Gregorio, que dexo de le escribir creyendo que es ido á Portugal, y asimismo á la Señora Bryolanja Moniz, que desta vez no pude escrebirle. FALCÓ Y OSORIO, María del Rosario, Duquesa de Berwick y Alba, *Autógrafos de Cristóbal Colón y Papeles de América*, Madrid 1892, 60.

²⁴¹ ALMOINA, José, *La biblioteca erasmista de Diego Méndez*, Publicaciones de la Universidad de Santo Domingo, volumen xxxv. Ediciones del Centenario de la República. Ciudad Trujillo, Editora Montalvo, 1945, 19.

²⁴² Carmo is the Lisbon convent where Filipa Moniz was buried.

²⁴³ No cartório do Carmo existia o testamento do bispo D. Frei Cristóvão Monis, que lá o viu o douto e indefesso investigador Severim de Faria, e de lá extractou, além de outros, o seguinte período que para aqui transcrevo: "e porque a visRainha das Antilhas Dona Maria de Toledo filha de Dom Fernando de Toledo irmão do Duque Dalva lhe deve (ao testador) obra de 700 libras de huma tença que tinha de seu marido (D. Diogo Colón) que hera primo com irmão d'elle Bispo, se descontem etc." BRAAMCAMP FREIRE, Anselmo, *Brasões...* T. III, 58.

wasn't for Diego Méndez, Don Cristóbal, Don Bartolomé, Don Hernando, and the entire European crew would almost certainly have perished with their ships marooned on the island of Jamaica.

On March 8, 1535, Diego Méndez stated that the Colóns were of “**of noble lineage** and as such they were and are accepted among all.”²⁴⁴ Méndez confirms that he had known Don Cristóbal for at least “forty-five years.”²⁴⁵ Deducting those 45 years from 1535, gives us 1490 as the year Méndez met Don Cristóbal.

In his Testament, written on June 6, 1536, Méndez declared to have “served the great Admiral Don Cristóbal traveling with his Lordship discovering.”²⁴⁶ Therefore, he knew the relatives of the Countess of Penamacor, his matron, very well, and in particular, he already knew the First Admiral and Viceroy years before he became famous.

The First Admiral referred to Diego Méndez as “de Segura.” This designation must have been intentional, but false, and it became a problem for Méndez, who, being considered a “Portuguese foreigner,” could not hold public office in Santo Domingo. This situation led Méndez to finally declare the truth regarding his Castilian nationality in 1530. This fact shows how Méndez lived from 1484 to 1530, for 46 years, under a false identity in Castile; for, instead of being Diego Méndez *de Segura*, page of the Count of Penamacor, Diego Méndez *de Zamora* was son of García Méndez, a *continuo*²⁴⁷ of Castilian King Henrique IV and supporter of Queen Juana *la Beltraneja* against Queen Isabel.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ Que el dicho [2º] viRey era natural dela ciudad de Lisboa que es en el Reyno de Portugal [...] que la madre del dicho viRey muger del dicho Don Christoval se llamaba doña Felipa Monyz Perestrelo e que era natural de la cibdad de Lisboa [...] Don Christoval Colon su padre y la dicha doña Felipa Monyz su muger abuelos del dicho Don Diogo de Colon que pide el abito e cada uno dellos fueron abidos tenydos e comunmente reputados por xpianos hijos dalgo segun la costumbre e feuros despaña e que no les toca raça de judios ny de negros ne de moros **ne de villanos** que son de generacion noble e por tales fueron e son abidos e tenydos entre todos los xpianos que los an conoçido e que sy alguna delas dichas raças les tocan este testgio lo supiera oydo dezir poracer tanto tiempo que los conoce. ALMOINA, José, *La biblioteca erasmista de Diego Méndez*, 24-25.

²⁴⁵ Los conoçio año dicho de quarenta e cinco años a esta parte. *Idem*, 24.

²⁴⁶ *Idem*, 30.

²⁴⁷ His father had been a **continuo** (officer or advisor) of Enrique IV, King of Castile. VIGNERAS, Louis André, *Diego Mendez, Secretary of Christopher Columbus and Alguacil Mayor of Santo Domingo: A Biographical Sketch*, Hispanic American Historical Review 58(4), Duke University Press, 1978, 677.

— **Continuo**: Hombre allegado a un señor que le favorecía y mantenía y al que debía fidelidad y obediencia. *Diccionario de la lengua española*, Real Academia Española, <https://dle.rae.es/continuo?m=form>.

²⁴⁸ Sus muchos enemigos sacaron ventaja de semejante situación y le acusaron de ser extranjero. Como tal, no se le debería haber permitido residir bajo ningún aspecto en La Española, mucho menos desempeñar un cargo público, y menos aún disfrutar una encomienda. Este fue el principal punto contencioso aducido en contra suya para justificar más tarde la confiscación de sus tierras y de sus indios. Pero en una declaración jurada, dirigida al Consejo de Indias

Thus, all around the First Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies there was no lack of intrigue and mysteries. Diego Méndez *of Segura* was from Zamora. His master, Don Lopo de Albuquerque, was *Pedro Nunes* in Flanders and England. And as for Don Cristóbal Colón, we still don't know what name he had in Portugal. But the important thing is to understand that the identity of Don Cristóbal Colón, his nobility, and his marriage to Filipa were facts known to many nobles and to the courts on both sides of the border, all of whom guarded these secrets very well from the public's curiosity.

Don Diogo Colón – Second Admiral and Viceroy. This Portuguese, son of Don Cristóbal and Filipa Moniz was born more or less in 1480, probably in Lisbon. The first piece of news we have in the documentation about Don Diogo Colón is dated May 8, 1492, written by Queen Isabel:

I, the Queen, make it known to you, my Chamberlain and Senior Accountant of the pantry and rations of my Household, that my benevolence and will is to take Diogo Colón as Page of the Prince, my very dear and very beloved Son, and that he receive with the said post for his wardrobe and maintenance nine thousand and four hundred maravedís each year. For which I command that you set it and write it this way in my payroll books that you have. And give Diogo Colón the said nine thousand and four hundred maravedís this

en 1530, él negó tales cargos y reveló su pasado, dio los nombres de sus padres, y se remontó incluso a su niñez y juventud para demostrar que era castellano por los cuatro costados y no un extranjero [...] De acuerdo con su testimonio, sus padres, García Méndez y María Díaz, eran nativos de Zamora. Su progenitor había sido continuo de Enrique IV, rey de Castilla. Durante la guerra de sucesión que siguió a la muerte de Enrique (1474), el padre de Diego abrazó la causa de Juana, hija de Enrique, mejor conocida como “la Beltraneja”, quien casó con su tío, el rey Alfonso de Portugal. Después de la derrota de sus tropas y de la pérdida de Zamora, Alfonso y su novia se retiraron a Portugal, por lo que García Méndez hubo de seguirles, y dejó tras de sí a su esposa y a un niño. La madre de Diego murió en seguida y después de terminada la guerra García regresó a España y llevó consigo su hijo a Portugal. Allí le confió al cuidado de un amigo, Lope de Alburquerque, conde de Penamacor. Cuando Diego entró como paje de Penamacor tendría probablemente cuatro o cinco años de edad [...] Lope de Alburquerque había sido uno de los consejeros más íntimos del rey Alfonso, pero tras la muerte de este último su suerte cambiaría por completo. Lope y su hermano Pedro se involucraron en una lucha entre el nuevo rey, Juan II, y la nobleza. Pedro fue sentenciado a muerte y decapitado en el año 1484, por lo que Penamacor vióse obligado a huir con su familia para refugiarse en España. Aquí dejó a su esposa e hijos y empezó a vagar por la Europa del Norte y Escandinavia durante varios años, acompañado siempre por el joven Diego Méndez. Se asentó en Inglaterra, y en su deseo de venganza organizó una expedición pirata contra La Mina y otras colonias portuguesas del África Occidental. Juan II protestó contra estas acciones rebeldes y a solicitud suya Penamacor fue arrestado, así pasó cuatro años en la Torre de Londres. Fue entonces cuando el joven Diego, ya un adolescente, emprendió tres viajes a España para obtener la libertad de su amo mediante la intervención de la reina Isabel la Católica. Al parecer tuvo éxito, porque en 1492 Penamacor fue libertado y al llegar a Barcelona, en diciembre de ese año, la soberana le nombró regidor de Baeza y Ubeda en Andalucía. Su servicio a la reina, sin embargo, iba a durar poco, ya que murió en 1496. Diego Méndez nos habría hecho creer que entró al servicio de Colón poco después de la muerte de Penamacor. VIGNAND (VIGNERAS), Louis André, *Diego Méndez, secretario de Cristóbal Colón y alguacil mayor de Santo Domingo*, Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación Año LXIX, Vol. XXXII, Núm. 119, 770-772.

*present year from the date of this my dispatch, and from now on in each year according to when you pay the other Pages of the said Prince, my Son, the similar maravedís that they receive from Me; and do not do otherwise. May 8, 1492. - I THE QUEEN.*²⁴⁹

Why did the Queen of Castile, in May 1492, make this Portuguese, son of Filipa Moniz and grandson of Bartolomeu Perestrelo, a page of the Prince heir? Don Cristóbal had not even lifted anchors yet. His famous First Voyage only started on August 2, 1492, three months later. Although Colón had finalized a contract with the court of Castile, known as *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe*, on April 17, 1492, where he requested various titles and privileges, he did not ask for his son to be made a page.

Why is it that Queen Isabel appointed as page of her son a Portuguese, whose father not only was hiding his true identity, but had not yet done anything important in Castile? Are we to assume, against logic, that Queen Isabel had no idea what Don Cristóbal's true identity was but would let the son of an unidentified person, whose lineage she did not know, be one of the pages at her son's court? A child of unknown lineage would never be granted such a favor.

On November 15, 1503, while Don Cristóbal was shipwrecked in Jamaica, Queen Isabel raised the 23-year-old Don Diogo Colón to the level of *continuo* of her Household, with a payment of 50,000 maravedís per year.²⁵⁰

In the reports and the chronicles there is more information about how Don Diogo was taken from Portugal to Castile by his father, when he was a *niñico*; that is, a little child.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Yo la Reina fago saber á vos el mi Mayordomo é Contador mayores de la despensa é Raciones de mi Casa, que mi merced é voluntad es de tomar por Page del Príncipe, mi muy caro é muy amado Fijo, á Diogo Colon, é que haya é tenga con el dicho oficio para su vestuario é mantenimiento nueve mil y cuatrocientos maravedís en cada un año; porque vos mando que lo pongades é asentades así en los mis libros é nóminas que vosotros tenedes, é libredes al dicho Diogo Colon los dichos nueve mil é cuatrocientos maravedís este presente año de la fecha de este mi albalá, é dende en adelante en cada un año segund é quando libredes á los otros Pages del dicho Príncipe, mi Hijo, los semejantes maravedís que de Mí tienen; é non fagades ende al. Fecho á ocho dias del mes de Mayo, año del Nacimiento de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo de mil é cuatrocientos é noventa é dos años. –YO LA REINA. NAVARRETE, T. II, 17.

²⁵⁰ Yo la Reina fago saber á vos los mis Contadores mayores que mi merced é voluntad es de recibir por **Contino** de mi Casa á Don Diogo Colon, é que haya é tenga de Mí de ración é quitación en cada un año cincuenta mil maravedís [...] libredes al dicho Don Diogo los dichos cincuenta mil maravedís este presente año. NAVARRETE, T. II, 295.

²⁵¹ Sabe que el dicho Almirante Don Cristóbal Colón viniendo á la arribada [*La Rábida*] con su fijo Don Diogo, que es agora Almirante, á pie, se vino á Rábida, que es monasterio de frailes en esta villa, el cual demandó a la portería que le diesen para aquel niño. THACHER, Vol. I, 432.

Don Hernando Colón stated that the navigator crossed the border into Castile with his son in late 1484.²⁵² Since Don Diogo Colón was born around 1480, one year following Colón's marriage to Filipa, Don Diogo was only four years old when he was removed from the family home and taken to the neighboring kingdom by his father. In 1492 Don Diogo was about 12 years old, at which time Queen Isabel made him page of the prince. This fact should give us reason enough to ponder the true lineage of such a well-cared for Portuguese youngster, whose father passed for a fugitive in Castile, without any possessions that we know of, without having done anything of benefit for the Castilian crown, and, furthermore, while hiding his true identity!

The conclusions that we can reach and should draw from the facts revealed in this directive from the queen is that Don Diogo Colón was not the son of a commoner, but the son of a very important nobleman. Queen Isabel knew Don Diogo's true lineage.

In the letter below, found in the Portuguese archives, it is declared that Don Cristóbal's Portuguese son, Don Diogo Colón (Moniz), was the nephew of the Countess of Lemos, who had been married to Don Dinis de Portugal (Bragança). This fact could, perhaps, link Don Cristóbal himself to the royal family of Portugal, providing the blood ties came from the Bragança side.

This letter from the Ambassador Don Duarte de Almeida (Perestrelo), a second cousin of Don Diogo Colón (Moniz), to King João III was written during the time King Carlos I of Spain was negotiating with Portugal access to the newly discovered sea route to the Moluccas, via the Pacific Ocean; a route opened by the circumnavigation voyage led by the Portuguese Fernão de Magalhães. During these negotiations with Portugal, Don Hernando Colón played an important role as chief Cosmographer of King Carlos I.²⁵³ However, his brother Don Diogo refused to give Carlos I the geographical notes that Don Cristóbal had composed in a book, which were now in his possession. Below is the essential extract from the letter:

Lordship: Because I know not if it was given to Your Highness a letter of mine that I wrote indicating that they were transcribing a book of the Admiral of the Indies [Don Diogo Colón], that his father, Don Cristóbal Colón had made, on the demarcation of the seas and lands of

²⁵² Nel fine dell'anno MCCCCLXXXIII col suo figliuolino Don Diego si partì segretamente di Portogallo. HISTORIE, Cap. XII, 32.

²⁵³ Carlos I of Spain is also known as Carlos V because he was the fifth Carlos to lead the Holy German-Roman Empire 1520 to 1558.

*Your Highness with those of Spain; I write again now, and the book I have already sent to Your Highness [...] The Countess of Lemos ordered it to be transcribed for me and intervened so that it not be handed to the Council of the Indies, who very persistently asked the Admiral, **who is her nephew**, and is very fond of her. And the book, which remains in the possession of the countess, so that nothing can be done with it, unless it is in service of Your Highness, has been arranged by me personally. And further, she is trying to learn from the Admiral [Don Diogo Colón] what those cosmographers, who meet here, will settle upon, regarding what Your Highness wrote me [...] In Valladolid, 25 November [1523-1524].*²⁵⁴

Many writers rejected outright that the Countess of Lemos could be, in some way, the aunt of Don Diogo Colón, an alleged son and grandson of insignificant Genoese weavers. They then insinuated that Don Diogo, like his supposed weaver father and half-brother, was only lying in an attempt to aggrandize himself, trying to seem important and falsely posing as the nephew of the countess; in the same way that authors claimed his father had been falsely posing as a nobleman.

There is, therefore, no logical reason for anyone to deny what is said in that letter, because the Countess of Lemos was really Don Diogo's aunt by marriage. Don Diogo Colón was married to Dona María de Toledo y Rojas, who was not only cousin of King Fernando, but a niece of the Countess of Lemos.

Dona Leonor Enríquez y Quiñones, grandmother of the 6th Countess of Lemos, was a sister of Dona Maria Enríquez de Quiñones y Toledo, grandmother of Dona María de Toledo y Rojas, wife of Don Diogo Colón. Don Diogo Colón was nephew of the Countess of Lemos by marriage.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ RUMEAU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *Un Escrito Desconocido de Cristóbal Colón: El Memorial de la Mejorada*, Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, Madrid, 1972, 32-34.

²⁵⁵ María de Toledo's connection to Beatriz de Castro Osório and King Fernando of Castille

1. Don Dinis, King of Portugal 2. Dona Constança, Princess of Portugal 3. Afonso XI, King of Castilla <i>el Justiciero</i> 4. Fadrique Alfonso de Castilla, Lord of Haro 5. Alfonso Enriquez de Castilla, Lord of Medina de Rio Seco 6. Fadrique Enriquez, Admiral of Castilla, 1st Count of Melgar y Rueda		
7.1 María Enríquez de Quiñones y Toledo 8. Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, 1st Lord of Villoria 9. María de Toledo == Don Diogo Colón, 2nd Admiral	7.2 Leonor Enriquez y Quiñones 8. Teresa Osorio 9. Beatriz de Castro Osório, 6th Countess of Lemos 10. Ana de Castro Osorio == Don Luis Colón, 3rd Admiral	7.3 Juana Enriquez, Lady of Casarrubios 8. Fernando II el Catolico, King of Castilla & Aragon

Source: <https://geneall.net/pt/nome/48977/maria-de-toledo-y-rojas>

It should also be noted that a daughter of the Countess of Lemos, Dona Isabel de Lancastre, became the Duchess of Bragança due to her marriage to Don Teodósio I, Fifth Duke of Bragança and grandson of Medina Sidonia. Another daughter of the Countess of Lemos, Dona Ana de Castro Osório, married Don Luis Colón, grandson of Don Cristóbal, who was the Third Admiral, First Duke of Veragua, Duke de la Vega, and Marquis of Jamaica.²⁵⁶

The Portuguese Don Diogo Colón was married to Dona María de Toledo y Rojas, who had royal blood from several lineages, including King Dinis of Portugal. This makes all the children of Don Diogo Colón and Dona Maria de Toledo nobles of royal blood. To close this circle of Portuguese aristocracy and royal blood, we make note that the granddaughter of Filipa Moniz and Don Cristóbal, Dona Isabel Colón, married Don Jorge Alberto de Portugal y Melo (a Bragança), who was great-grandson of King João I of Portugal. He was made First Count of Gelves by King Carlos I in 1529.²⁵⁷

Don Jorge, Count of Gelves, was nephew of the Marquise of Montemor and son of Don Álvaro de Bragança. The latter, in turn, was Chancellor of the Kingdom of Portugal until his exile at the court of Queen Isabel in 1483. Don Álvaro was one of the great-grandsons of Don Nuno Álvares Pereira and King João I, as is common knowledge from the genealogies. When the treason against King João II took place, this Don Álvaro de Bragança left for exile in Castile. There, he came to be called Don Álvaro *de Portugal* and was appointed Minister of Justice of the court by his cousin, Queen Isabel, *the Catholic*.

Don Álvaro de Portugal, as brother of the Marquis of Montemor, was also brother-in-law of Filipa Moniz's cousin, the Marquise of Montemor. At the same time, Don Álvaro was father-in-law of Filipa Moniz's granddaughter, Dona Isabel Colón, the Countess of Gelves. All of these marriages prove the existence of a vast network of royal Portuguese bloodlines all around Don Cristóbal Colón. This family web was intertwined deep within the court of Portugal and not a single connection to Genoa can be highlighted.

²⁵⁶ Don Luis, notwithstanding that Maria de Orozco and Maria de Mosquera were both still living, married, at Valladolid, Ana de Castro Ossorio, **daughter of Beatriz, Countess de Lemos**, to whom he had long been affianced. But now he had married once too often. There was judicial notice taken of his delinquency, as he was arrested early in the year 1559 and subjected to a trial and to punishment. THACHER, Vol. 3, 629.

²⁵⁷ En Barcelona, el 20 de junio de 1529, el monarca Carlos I le otorga a Don Jorge el título de conde de Gelves. <http://www.gelves.es/es/municipio/historia-del-municipio/historia/>

While Don Álvaro de Portugal resided in Castile, he defended Don Cristóbal's rights against the Crown of Castile. In one of his letters, Don Cristóbal reminds King Fernando of his debt, insisting that the king owed him a tenth of the gains and that the king would have to pay him, stating that, “as Your Highness agreed to in Burgos, due to the intervention of Don Álvaro de Portugal.”²⁵⁸

Friar Las Casas shows further evidence of Don Álvaro de Portugal's concerns for the First Admiral when he wanted to retaliate against the injustices of Don Cristóbal's arrest, affirming that “Don Álvaro had said that he would order a house to be taken from the Comendador Major, that he should not have taken one from Admiral Colón, threatening him.”²⁵⁹ Don Álvaro wanted revenge for the injustices done to the First Admiral at the hands of Commander Bobadilla²⁶⁰ and others because Don Cristóbal must have been a noteworthy Portuguese compatriot.

After Don Cristóbal Colón died, Don Diogo had to fight to take over Don Cristóbal's rights, posts and titles because King Fernando refused to honor the *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe* contract made between the Crown and his father. There it was agreed that, after Don Cristóbal died, everything would go to “his heirs and successors, one after another perpetually with all those preeminences and prerogatives belonging to such titles and posts.”²⁶¹

The King of Castile's refusal to let Don Diogo take over his deceased father's positions and titles forced a decades-long lawsuit against the Crown called the *Pleitos Colombinos*.²⁶² In the end, the Crown disfigured and modified the contract, giving Don Cristóbal's descendants much less than what it had agreed to in April 1492.

²⁵⁸ TEXTOS, 298.

²⁵⁹ Había dicho el Don Alvaro, que había de hacer tomar una residencia al Comendador Mayor, que otra tal no se hobiese tomado [a Colón], amenazándolo. GIL, Juan, *El exilio portugués en Sevilla de los Braganza a Magallanes*, Fundación Cajasol, Sevilla, 2009, 162.

²⁶⁰ El Comendador, em llegando a Santo Domingo, se aposentó em mi casa. Así como la falló, así dio todo por suyo. TEXTOS, 217.

²⁶¹ NAVARRETE, T. II, 7-8.

²⁶² MURO OREJÓN, Antonio, et. al., *Pleitos colombinos*. Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos: *Rollo del proceso sobre la apelación de la sentencia de Dueñas y probanzas del Fiscal y del Almirante (1534-1536)*. Volumen VIII (1964)
Proceso hasta la sentencia de Sevilla. Volumen I (1967)
Pleito sobre el Darién. Volumen II (1983)
Probanzas del Almirante de las Indias (1512-1515). Volumen III (1984)
Probanzas del Fiscal (1512-1515). Volumen IV (1989).

While arguing with the king, Don Diogo Colón questioned and demanded to know why “His Highness did not do him the favor of giving him what was already rightfully his and trust that he would serve him faithfully, since the King had raised him in his court and in his household.” King Fernando responded, “Look well, Admiral, in you I would surely trust, but I do not do it because of your children and successors.” Don Diogo promptly replied “Highness, is it reasonable for me to pay and to be punished for the sins of children and successors, that I may never even have?”²⁶³

What reason did the king of Castile have to fear the invisible “children and successors” of an alleged wool weaver’s son?

Dona María Álvarez de Toledo y Rojas - Vicereine of the New World. Daughter-in-law of Filipa and Don Cristóbal, she was a granddaughter of the First Duke of Alba, Don García Álvarez de Toledo, niece of the Second Duke of Alba and one of the daughters of Don Fernando Álvarez de Toledo y Enríquez, Lord of Villorrias, and Chief Falconer of King Fernando. But her father was not merely the chief falconer, he was also King Fernando’s first cousin. Dona María de Toledo was second cousin of King Fernando and was the woman of highest nobility living in the Americas in the 16th century.

We could think that the marriage between the cousin of the King of Castile and Filipa Moniz's son had taken place at the insistence of the First Admiral and Viceroy, Don Cristóbal, and of his son, Don Diogo; but that was not the case. In fact, Don Cristóbal did not want to have his son marry in an enemy house, antagonistic both to him and to his close noble friends in Castile.

Don Cristóbal wanted to marry his son to a daughter of Don Juan Alonso de Guzmán, the powerful Third Duke of Medina Sidonia. The Second Duke of Medina Sidonia, Enrique de Guzmán and his brother Juan, were both friends of Portugal, supporters of *the Beltraneja* and enemies of Queen Isabel *la Católica*. The resentment between Medina Sidonia and Queen Isabel

²⁶³ Y como el Rey le trujese siempre suspenso con sus dilaciones, como habia hecho á su padre, y un dia se le quejase diciendo que por qué Su Alteza no le hacia merced de dalle lo suyo, y confiar del que le serviria con ello fielmente, pues lo habia en su corte y casa criado, el Rey le respondió: «Mirad, Almirante, de vos bien lo confiaria yo, pero no lo hago sino por vuestros hijos y sucesores.» Luégo él dijo al Rey: «Señor, ¿es razon que pague y pene yo por los pecados de mis hijos y sucesores, que por ventura no los terné?» Esto me dijo un dia el Almirante, hablando conmigo en Madrid cerca de los agravios que rescebia, el año de 516, que con el Rey habia pasado. LAS CASAS, T. III, 237.

was such that the Monarchs of Castile once sent a squadron of two-hundred and fifty “spears in order to kill” Medina Sidonia.²⁶⁴

Don Henrique de Guzmán y Menezes, Second Duke of Medina Sidonia, together with Don Rodrigo Ponce de León, Marquis of Cádiz, and Pedro de Estúñiga, Count of Miranda, intentionally thwarted Queen Isabel and King Fernando's plans during the 1476-80 *War of Succession* against Portugal. Secretly supporting Portugal's defense of Queen Juana *la Beltraneja*'s right to the throne, they delayed Queen Isabel's orders regarding the preparations of the Castilian fleets of war against Portugal. On one occasion, the Marquis of Cádiz even sent his ships to be used as part of the Portuguese fleet against the Castilians in the African coast.²⁶⁵

Medina Sidonia was a benefactor of both Don Cristóbal Colón and King João II's famous spy, Pêro da Covilhã. Pêro da Covilhã was born in Portugal, but in his youth lived in Castile with the Duke Medina Sidonia and was fluent in several languages. When the War of Succession broke out in Castile, Covilhã returned to Portugal in the entourage of Medina Sidonia's brother Juan. It was no accident that Don Cristóbal Colón and his sister-in-law, Violante Moniz, ended up living in Seville, territory of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, together with the other Portuguese relatives of Colón and Filipa.

²⁶⁴ E como el duque [de Medina Sidonia] Don Henrique salió de Sevilla, tan enojado de la Reina e del Rey, por el mal galardón que le avían dado por los muchos serviçios que les avía hecho, tuvieron el Rey é la Reina temor que, como era tan gran señor é de tantos puertos de mar é tan rico, con el enojo que llevaba no hiziese algún movimiento en el reino; e dizen algunos quel Rey sabiendo como el Duque Don Henrique estava en San Juan, un pueblo del condado, e andava por allí a çaça, que mandó á Diego de Merlo, asistente de Sevilla, e á Don Lorenço, hermano del marqués de Cádiz, **con çinquenta lanças para que le matasen e otras doçientas en socorro**; de lo qual siendo el duque avisado por una espía que prendió, mandó a Perseval de Sotomayor, capitán de çien lanças de guarda quel Duque traía contino, que saliese á ellos, y mandó aperçibir la tierra, y el Duque como era tan animoso, cavalgó en una mula aquel día, e salióse a çaça con sólos sus çaçadores e sin armas. Quando Diego de Merlo supo quel trato era descubierto, con grandísimo temor del Duque, vuelve las riendas é vase á Sevilla. BARRANTES MALDONADO, Pedro, *Ilustraciones de la Casa de Niebla*, en *Memorial Histórico Español: Colección de documentos, opúsculos y antigüedades*, Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, 1857, T. X, 304-305.

²⁶⁵ Algunos Grandes andaluces, como el duque de Medina-Sidonia, el marqués de Cadiz y Pedro de Estúñiga, tenían interés que así fuera y estorbaron los preparativos. Viendo que no podría evitar su partida, el duque solicitó—y obtuvo—de Don Fernando el señorío de la isla de Antonio Nolli [...] Por su parte, Don Rodrigo Ponce de León, marqués de Cadiz, habría llegado a advertir de los preparativos al capitán portugués Fernão Gomes, enviándole incluso dos carabelas para que ‘[...] las emplease en el combate naval o, si por caso no se encontraba con nuestra armada, la hiciese participar de sus ganancias’. RUFO YSERN, Paulina, *La expansión peninsular por la costa africana. El enfrentamiento entre Portugal y Castilla, (1475-1480)*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época: Actas, Don João II e a Política Quatrocentista, Publicado pela Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, Porto, 1989, Vol. III, 70.

Like his father, the Third Duke, Don Juan Alonso de Guzmán, also hated *the Catholic Kings* because they had taken the city of Gibraltar from him. This city had been won by the House of Medina Sidonia and Niebla through great sacrifice, and Alonso de Guzmán contended “that Your Highness not ask for it, because he would not give the City of Gibraltar to them, because it was won at the cost of so much spilled blood from his House of Niebla.”²⁶⁶

In 1502, the First Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies was already considering a union by marriage with the House of Medina Sidonia. Admiral Colón knew that his son's marriage was a concern for the crown, as it was for himself. That year, before setting sail for his Fourth Voyage to the New World he wrote to his son, "regarding your marriage, if Their Highnesses speak to you or ask to speak of it, reply that I beg Their Highnesses to order it to be put on hold until God brings me back.”²⁶⁷

The Duke of Medina Sidonia and Violante Moniz tried to consolidate Don Diogo's marriage with the duke's daughter. “Bardi reports, with sufficient detail, the intervention of his wife [Violante Moniz] and the heartache of the Duke of Medina Sidonia as he faced the news from the court that the planned marriage of his daughter, Dona Mencía de Guzmán, to Colón's heir was in danger.”²⁶⁸

Yesterday the Lord Duque [Medina Sidonia] sent for my wife [Violante Moniz] and told her how he learned that the king, Our Lord, wanted to marry Lord Don Diogo there, and

²⁶⁶ La reina Doña Isabel dende que comenzó á gobernar estos reinos trabajó sienpre con el duque Don Henrrique, padre deste duque Don Juan, que le diese la cibdad de Gibraltar por ser cosa conviniente á los reyes de Castilla, é que le daría equivalença por ella [...] Pero el duque Don Henrrique nunca lo quiso hazer, diziendo que aquella cibdad la avia ayudado á ganar Don Alonso Perez de Guzman, el Bueno, una vez, é que despues que los moros la tomaron, avia ydo á su Costa el conde de Niebla Don Henrrique á ganarla, é murió en la demanda [...] que su Alteza no se lo mandase, porque él no le avia de dar la cibdad de Gibraltar, que con tanto derramamiento de sangre de la casa de Niebla se ganó, é por esta respuesta estava algo desabrida la Reina del duque Don Henrrique, y el Duque lo estuvo mas della en le querer quitarlo que no le avia dado é su padre avia ganado. E como la reina Doña Isabel vió muerto al duque Don Henrrique é reçibió Las letras del duque Don Juan, su hijo, respondióle que el Rey y ella le confirmarian las merçedes que tenia de los reyes sus antepasados, si les diese la cibdad de Gibraltar. El duque Don Juan, **enojado por demandarle la cibdad de Gibraltar**, respondió que bien sabian sus altezas quan pocas mercedes tenia esta casa de Niebla que le confirmasen los Reyes [...] lo que tenia era conprado ó avido en casamiento é no dado por los Reyes, que poco tenian sus Altezas que confirmarle en mercedes que los Reyes les uviesen dado, pues no tenian ningunas, que les suplicava fuesen servidos de no les pedir á Gibraltar, pues no se la dieron. [...] Don Juan de Guzman, duque de Medina [...] Les reconto **el agravio quel rey Don Fernando é la reina Doña Isabel les avian fecho em le tomar contra su voluntad la cibdad de Gibraltar**, que sus antepasados ganaron á los moros con tanto derramamiento de sangre dellos. BARRANTES MALDONADO, T. X, 393, 394, 432.

²⁶⁷ TEXTOS, 1989, 309.

²⁶⁸ VARELA, *Colón y Florentinos - Cartas de particulares a Colón y Relaciones coetáneas*, Recopilación y edición de Juan Gil y Consuelo Varela, Alianza Editorial, S. A., Madrid, 1984, 98.

he showed great anger. And my wife reminded him that he should be (there?) as long as there was time, because now it is not in Your Lordship's [Cristóbal Colón's] hands, if the king, Our Lord orders him [to marry]. And then the Lord Duke said that he would do what it took so that his [marriage] would go forward, even if he had to beg the King Our Lord and however many Grandees were at the court, and for that the Lord Duke is sending Astopynyana²⁶⁹ to the court. May Our Lord God provide whatever is best in His holy service and increase the status of Your Lordship and Lord Don Diogo. The prayers that my wife says, and orders be said are so many, that it is unbelievable, because she is for the House of Niebla with all her heart, and she much wishes it be here rather than there. I have no more news to write to Your Lordship. Our Lord increase and keep the status of Your Lordship. Seville, August 11, 1505. Your Lordship's most humble servant, Francisco de Bardi.²⁷⁰

A daughter of this Third Duke, Dona Leonor de Mendoza, had already married in 1501 the Portuguese Don Jaime, Fourth Duke of Bragança, and Medina Sidonia did his best to marry his other daughter with the Portuguese Don Diogo Colón, but failed. In the end it was King Fernando who won the marriage battle, forcing Don Diogo to marry the cousin of the monarch in 1508.

We must take into account that while King Fernando denied Don Diogo Colón his inheritance rights over the Admiralty and Viceroyalty of the New World, forcing this Portuguese to fight for them in court, he insisted at the same time that Don Diogo marry the king's cousin. Without his New World posts, titles, lands, houses and rents, which the king was denying him since the death of Don Cristóbal in 1506, what lifestyle would Don Diogo have to offer to the king's cousin?

²⁶⁹ Pedro **de Estopiñan**, [Conquistador de Melilla] cavallero de su casa é su contador, natural de Xerez de la Frontera, onbre bien entendido é diligente en toda cosa, BARRANTES MALDONADO, T. X, 406.

²⁷⁰ Ayer el señor duque envio por mi muger e le dixo como auya supido que el rey nro. señor queria casar alla al señor Don diego y mostraba mucho enojo, y mi muger le acordó que lo deuia serar quando tenia tiempo, porque agora no stara en mano de v.^a sria. si el rey nro. Señor lo mandara, y entonzes el señor duca dixo que faria tanto que lo suyo passeria adelante, aunque supiese pedirlo al rey nro. señor y a quantos grandes fuesen en la corte, y para esto el señor duque enbya a la corte astopynyana. nuestro señor dios provea lo que mas sea a su santo servicio y acrecientamiento del estado de vuestra señoria y del señor Don diego. las oraciones que mi muger faze y faze fazer son tantas, que es cosa de no creer, porque ella es toda de corazon de la casa de nyebila y desea antes aca que alla. otras nuobas no ay em que scryva a vuestra señoria nro. señor acreziente y guarde lestado de vra. señoria. de seuilla a XI de Agosto de icDon y zynco anyos. del mas vmyl seruydor de vuestra syñoria Francisco de Bardy. FALCÓ Y OSORIO, María del Rosario, Duquesa de Berwick y Alba, *Nuevos Autografos de Cristóbal Colón y Relaciones de Ultramar*, Madrid, 1902, 19.

The Third Duke of Medina Sidonia, the greatest of the greats of Castile, and who was from a lineage of the highest nobility, had married one of his daughters to the Duke of Bragança, with the greatest dowry ever seen in Castile.²⁷¹ He intended to marry his other daughter to Don Diogo Colón, another Portuguese.

Having lost the Second Admiral and Viceroy as son-in-law, in the year following Bardi's letter to Don Cristóbal expounding the great anger that the duke felt at not being able to have Don Diogo Colón as his son-in-law, the duke found a second choice, as Barrantes Maldonado explained:

*Doña Mençia de Guzman, second daughter of the Duke of Medina, married Don Pedro Giron, the first-born son and heir of the Count of Ureña, to whom the duke gave as a dowry four million maravedís, being Don Pedro Giron a man of age and in person, and his wife, Doña Mençia de Guzman, aged between sixteen and seventeen years, for which marriage, many and very great parties and rejoicing was done in Seville and throughout Andalusia.*²⁷²

From the intention of marrying his daughter to Don Diogo Colón, we can infer that the Duke of Medina Sidonia knew that Don Cristóbal's son was someone of very illustrious blood on both sides; and the high nobility of this boy must have been so great that the king and the duke battled each other to marry him in their court, having the king prevailed. While it is true that Don Diogo was the legitimate heir to the posts and titles that his father had in the New World, he was not actually admiral, nor governor, nor viceroy at the time because King Fernando prohibited Don Diogo from upholding those roles.

Knowing how the noble lineages at the time were protected against the blood of commoners, Jews, and so forth, it would be against logic and social protocols for a king and a duke to be fighting over the marriage of a groom tainted by commoner blood. Even worse, if his father had truly been hiding his true identity from the courts, Don Diogo would not have been able to present his actual pedigree as was necessary for any noble marriage contract.

²⁷¹ Dióle el duque de Medina en dote treinta quentos de maravedís en dineros, joyas é axuar, que era en aquella sazón el mayor dote que se avia dado en Hespaña, y ansi lo meresçia el duque de Bragança, ansi por ser él desçendido de la real sangre de los reyes de Portugal. BARRANTES MALDONADO, T. X, 416.

²⁷² BARRANTES MALDONADO, T. X, 434.

No noble would have married their daughter to a child whose father could not prove to the monarchs that he was of noble lineage. Occam again forces us to accept that the court always knew Don Cristóbal's true identity and nobility.

The next Duke of Medina Sidonia, Don Enrique de Guzmán, brother of the Duchess of Bragança, also had problems with King Fernando. He once fled to Portugal in fear.²⁷³ When he died in 1513 his brother and Fifth Duke, Don Alonso de Guzmán, maintained his close friendship with the Colón family. He even lived in the home of Don Hernando Colón, whose palace he liked so much that he offered to buy it for six million maravedís. Don Hernando rejected the proposal.²⁷⁴

Duque of Medinaceli – host of Colón. This Don Luis de la Cerda y de la Vega sent a letter on March 19, 1493, to Cardinal Don Pedro González de Mendoza in which he clarified his long connections with the great navigator. When Colón fled from Portugal in 1484, long before he became famous, the Duque of Medinaceli was his protector. Medinaceli declared to Cardinal Mendoza that he “hosted Cristóbal Colón, who had arrived from Portugal, at my house for a long time.”²⁷⁵ The level of Don Cristóbal's noble lineage becomes apparent once again, to the point of

²⁷³ El rey Don Fernando, nuevo governador de estos reinos de Castilla, por su hija la reina Doña Juana, queriendo ser acatado, é teniendo enojo de algunos grandes del reino, porque se avian mostrado mas por del rey Don Felipe, porque el duque de Najara no vino á las Cortes de Burgos, diciendo que era viejo, aparejó mucha artillería é gente para yr sobre él, hasta que al Rey quitaron aquel propósito, çertificandole que era su servidor, é contodo e sole tomó las fortalezas de su estado por seguridad [...] duque de Medina Don Juan de Guzman y el conde de Ureña avian trocado hijo é hija con hija é hijo sin liçençia del Rey, delo qual la corona real sentía inconveniente; é verdad era que **sin liçençia del Rey avian hecho los casamentos** [...] Don Pedro Giron del monesterio de las Cuevas, Donde estava, é pasó en un barco, é vino Donde estava el Duque en la cama é hizolo levantar, haziendole entender **quel Rey le queria cortar la cabeça** porque fue sobre Gibraltar, por tanto que le convenia salir aquella noche de la cibdad é irse con él á Portugal á casa de su hermanala duquesa de Bragança. El Duque como no avia hecho por qué é avia visto tan buena gracia en el Rey, quisiera no irse, é mas Don Pedro Giron dixo entre otras cosas al Duque é hizo que se las dixese su ayo Juan Ortiz, que como el Duque era tan moçacho, de edad no mas de treze años, hizo dél lo que quiso, é salieronse entranbos á mata cavallo de Sevilla para irse á Portugal, é llevó consigo á su ayo Juan Ortiz, é tal priesa dieron al camino que nunca los pudieron alcançar, aunque salieron de Sevilla por todos los caminos con asaz priesa é deligençia por mandado del Rey. *Idem*, 439-442.

²⁷⁴ Muy rica tapicería, la qual compró ahora dos años en 2,000 ducados, y muy buenos guadameciles y dos arcas de plata muy buena, y otras muchas cosas de muebles de casa, y mucha ropa blanca, y aquella casa en que estuvo el duque de Medina, ahora un año él y la Duquesa; y despues que se fueron le embió á rogar con un secretario suyo, que le daría por ella seis quentos; y embióle á decir que aunque le diesen diez, porque quería que quedase memoria de los Colonos. HARRISSE, Henry, *Don Fernando Colon, Historiador de Su Padre*, Ensayo Crítico por el Autor de la Biblioteca Americana Vetustissima, Sevilla, 1871, 122.

²⁷⁵ Reverendísimo Sennor: No sé si sabe vuestra sennoría cómo yo tove en mi casa mucho tiempo a **Cristóval Colomo** [*sic*], que venía de Portugal y se quería yr al Rey de Françia para que emprendiese de yr a buscar las Yndias con su favor y ayuda. E yo lo quisiera prouar y enbiar desde el Puerto, que tenía buen aparejo, con tres o quatro carauelas, que no demandaua más. Pero como vi que hera esta enpresa para la Reyna, nuestra sennora, escreuilo a su Alteza desde Rota y respondió que gelo embiase y yo gelo embié entonces y suplique a su Alteza, pues yo

having been hosted by a duke; yet, at the same time, everyone supposedly did not know who Colón was.

Although it seems to us that Colón was an unknown personality in that new kingdom, the Duke of Medinaceli would have to know who he was hosting. How? And who had convinced Medinaceli to give this apparent stranger bed and food "for a long time"?

Once more, Colón's Portuguese family connections are never far from those he mingled with. Don Afonso de Bragança, Second Count of Odemira, whose son Don Sancho de Noronha married Filipa Moniz's cousin, Francisca da Silva (Moniz), also had a daughter, Dona Mécia Manuel, who in 1501 married Don Juan de la Cerda, Second Duke of Medinaceli. Thus, the Second Duke, son of Colón's host became brother-in-law of Filipa Moniz's cousin.²⁷⁶

Besides being sister-in-law of Francisca da Silva (Moniz), Dona Mécia Manuel, Duchess of Medinaceli, was also first cousin of Don Jorge, First Count of Gelves, who married Dona Isabel Colón, granddaughter of Don Cristóbal.²⁷⁷

no quise tentar y lo adereçaua para su seruicio, que me mandase hazer merced y parte en ello y que el cargo y descargo deste negoçio fuera en el Puerto. Su Alteza lo reçibió y lo dio encargo a Alonso de Quintanilla, el qual me escribió de su parte que no tenía este negoçio por muy cierto; pero, que si se acertase, que su Alteza me haría merced y me daría parte en ello; y después de averle bien examinado acordó de enbiarle a buscar las Yndias. Puede aver ocho meses que partió y **agora él es venido de buelta a Lisboa** y ha hallado todo lo que buscaua y muy conplidamente; lo qual yo supe y, por fazer saber tan buena nueva a su Alteza, gelo escriuo con Xuares y le enbio a suplicar me haga merced que yo pueda enbiar en cada anno allá algunas carauelas mías. Suplico a vuestra Sennoría me quiera ayudar en ello y gelo suplique de mi parte, pues a mi cabsa y por yo detenerle en mi casa dos annos y averle enderaçado a su seruiçio se ha hallado tan grande cosa como ésta. Y porque de todo ynformará más largo Xuares a vuestra sennoría, suplicole le crea. Guarde vuestro Sennor vuestra reverendísma persona como vuestra Sennoría desea. De la mi villa de Cogolludo, a XIX de março. (Siguen una postdata y suscripción autógrafas:) Las manos de vuestra Sennoría besamos. Luis (Al dorso:) Al Reuerendísimo sennor el sennor Cardenal d'Espanna, Arçobispo de Toledo, etc. Carta de Luis de la Cerda, duque de Medicinaceli, a su tío el cardenal Pedro González de Mendoza. 19 de marzo de 1493. NAVARRETE, T. II, 20-21.

²⁷⁶ El Iº duque de Medinaceli hubo de comprometer en matrimonio a su hijo Juan con Mencía Manuel de Portugal, nieta del primer duque de Braganza, dama y prima segunda de la reina Isabel. Real Academia de la Historia, <http://dbe.rah.es/biografias/13862/juan-de-la-cerda>.

²⁷⁷ Connections between D. Isabel Colón, D. Jorge Alberto de Portugal, Francisca da Silva, Odemira e Medinaceli:

1. Unknown Parents 2. D. Cristóbal Colón 3. D. Diogo Colón 4. Dona Isabel Colón	João I, King of Portugal 1. Afonso, 1st Duke of Bragança 2. Fernando I, 2nd Duke of Bragança		
	3.1 D. Álvaro de Portugal , Lord of Tentúgal and Cadaval	3.2 D. Afonso, 2nd Count of Odemira	
		4.1 D. Sancho de Noronha, 3rd Count of Odemira	4.2 D. Mécia Manoel ==
	4. Dona Isabel Colón == 4. Don Jorge Alberto de Portugal y Melo, 1st Count of Gelves	== Francisca da Silva (Moniz)	D. Juan de La Cerda, 2nd Duke of Medinaceli

<https://geneall.net/en/name/47536/diego-colon-1-marques-de-jamaica/>

<https://geneall.net/en/name/1587/fernando-i-2nd-duke-of-braganca/>

Simultaneously, Dona Beatriz de Vilhena, sister of this First Count of Gelves, was married to Don Jorge Lancastre, son of King João II. This makes Don Cristóbal's granddaughter sister-in-law to the son of King João II.²⁷⁸

There is one more family link to point out that closes the circle around the Perestrelos. The 3rd Count of Odemira, as was shown above, was married to Filipa's cousin from the Moniz side. However, his mother, D. Maria de Noronha, 2nd countess of Odemira, was herself cousin to all the Perestrelo children of Branca Dias Perestrelo. D. Maria de Noronha's father, D. Sancho de Noronha, 1st Count of Odemira was a brother of D. Pedro de Noronha, Archbishop of Lisbon.²⁷⁹

The more we search, the harder it becomes to escape the elite blood ties of the high Portuguese nobility to Don Cristóbal Colón's wife.

What must be accepted, after reviewing all of these family ties with the Portuguese and Castilian nobility, is that many of these nobles knew the true lineage of the person who called himself Don Cristóbal Colón in Castile. Many of them would have already known him for decades in Portugal. The acts of reverence given by so many nobles to Don Cristóbal, his writings and his kinships, place the Admiral at the same level of nobility as all the family members that surrounded him.

Colón's noble lineage was well known in Portugal, otherwise he could not marry the lady he married. His high nobility was also well known the minute he entered Castile, otherwise Medinaceli would not have hosted him. Furthermore, Queen Isabel would not have made his son

²⁷⁸ Connections between D. Isabel Colón and King João II's son

1. Don Cristóbal Colón	1. Don Fernando I, 2nd Duke of Bragança	1. King Afonso V
2. Don Diego Colón	2. Don Álvaro de Portugal (Bragança)	2. King João II
3. Dona Isabel Colón ==	3.1 Don Jorge Alberto de Portugal y Melo, Count of Gelves	3.2 Don Beatriz de Vilhena == 3. Don Jorge de Lancastre

<https://geneall.net/en/name/2422/jorge-de-lancastre-2nd-duke-of-coimbra/>

<https://geneall.net/en/name/15237/isabel-colon-de-toledo-lady-of-gelves/>

²⁷⁹ Connections between Maria de Noronha, 2nd countess of Odemira and the Noronha/Perestrelo clan.

1. Enrique II, king of Castilla	1. Fernando I, King of Portugal
2. D. Alfonso, count of Noroña e de Gijón ==	2. D. Isabel de Portugal
3.1 D. Pedro de Noronha != Branca Dias Perestrelo	3.2 D. Sancho de Noronha, 1st count of Odemira
4.1. D. Pedro de Noronha, Lord Chamberlain	4. D. Maria de Noronha, 2nd countess of Odemira
4.2. D. Isabel de Noronha, Marquise of Montemor	5. D. Sancho de Noronha, == Francisca da Silva (Moniz)
4.3. D. Inês de Noronha, Countess of Abrantes	3rd countess of Odemira
4.4. D. Catarina de Noronha, Countess of Penamacor	
4.5. D. Fernando de Noronha, Governor of la Beltraneja	

<https://geneall.net/en/name/2008/maria-de-noronha-2-countess-of-odemira/>

a page, Medina Sidonia would not try to marry his daughter to Don Diogo, and King Fernando would never force his cousin to marry a man whose true noble lineage the king did not know.

We must accept that the noble lineage of Don Cristóbal was known by the Captains of Porto Santo, King João II, the Kings in Castile, and all the nobles in-between who knew him on both sides of the border. The same way the navigator knew all of them, they also knew the navigator personally, including Queen Leonor, Don Manuel I, and many other members of the Portuguese court, such as the Prior of Crato, Don Diogo Fernandes de Almeida:

It was at the home of this Prior of Crato, Don Diogo Fernandes de Almeida, that Admiral Colón stayed, at the request of King João II, during his visit, because, as Colón wrote in his Diary: He was the most important and most authoritative man of all those there with the king, to host the Admiral, and to do everything to welcome him and provide good company.” The Prior's brother was married to the Admiral's **cousin**,²⁸⁰ but no one cared to mention this family connection. It was no coincidence that the navigator was a guest of Don Diogo Fernandes de Almeida, one of the members of the Junta of Mathematicians involved in the planning of secret voyages of exploration and espionage missions. We can only imagine what secrets were exchanged between the two of them during the two days and two nights that Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón stayed at the Portuguese court.²⁸¹

Even stranger than Colón's 1493 visit to King João II at Vale do Paraíso is to learn that the Queen of Portugal, Dona Leonor, sent a request that the navigator come and have a personal audience with her:

As Colón was preparing to leave the Court, a messenger from Queen Leonor arrived, insisting with the Admiral to, “please not leave, without first coming here to talk to me,” at the Monastery of Santo António da Castanheira, “and he went to pay his respects and kiss her hand, since she had asked him not to leave without seeing her.” These events prove that both the King and the Queen of Portugal held Colón in very high regard. Don Hernando Colón wrote, next, that the queen, accompanied by her brother Don Manuel, “became very

²⁸⁰ The original text says *niece*, but here has been corrected to *cousin* following the clarifications obtained from Don Diogo Colón's Testament.

²⁸¹ ROSA, *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, 136-137.

happy and gave him the welcome and courtesy worthy **of such a great Lord.**” The Queen of Portugal “se alegró mucho” (became very happy) as if she were seeing a relative she had not seen for a long-time. But why?²⁸²

The Queen of Portugal held such high regard for Don Cristóbal that she requested a personal audience with him and treated him with singular deference, as her husband had already done during the previous three days. Even though his true identity was being hidden, she treated him with the courtesy worthy of such a great lord.

Through his 1479 marriage with Filipa Moniz Colón became:

- Cousin of three countesses and one marquise.
- Cousin of João II's Lord Chamberlain and Commander Major of Santiago.
- Cousin of the kingdom's Supreme Military Leader.
- Cousin of King Afonso V's Butler, Captain of the Royal Guard, and Lord Chamberlain.
- Brother-in-law of one of João II's guards and Captain of Graciosa.²⁸³
- Brother-in-law of the Captain of Porto Santo.
- Nephew of the *Reposteiro-Mór* of the Duke of Viseu
- Nephew of the former Administrator of the *Regent* Prince Don Pedro
- Nephew of two *cavaleiro fidalgos* of King Afonso V's household.
- Nephew of the Captain of the Archers of the Chamber of King João II

In 1479, before all the fame he acquired in Castile, the navigator married into this family of elites in Portugal, proving that he held a high social position in that kingdom's society. Don

²⁸² *Idem*, 137-138.

²⁸³ Já porém em esse tempo Pedro Correa da Cunha que nunca tinha vindo à Graciosa, & estava na Ilha do Porto Santo, governando-a em lugar de seu sobrinho, ainda menor) já dizem que tinha mercê Real de Capitão Donatario da outra meya Ilha Graciosa, & por isso julga o Doutor Fructuoso, que na Graciosa ao princípio houve dous Capitães Donatários, cada hum de meya ilha; mas a verdade he, que so haveria as duas **mercês feytas a Duarte Barreto, & a Pedro Correa**, pois que nunca ambos juntos tiverão posse de taes Capitánias, nem exercitaraõ o governo dellas, mas com a desgraça de Duarte Barreto, vendo Pedro Correa que a outra Capitania de meya Graciosa estava vaga, foyse a Lisboa, pedio-a tambem, allegando ser pequena a Ilha para duas Capitánias, & foy despachado por Capitão Donatario de toda a Graciosa, & então ele com sua mulher D. Izeu Perestrella de Mendonça, filha do Dnatário de Porto Santo, & com outra muyta gente se veyo para a Graciosa, & fundou a principal Villa de Santa Cruz. CORDEYRO, Antonio, *Historia Insulana das Ilhas sugeytas a Portugal no Oceano Occidental*, Gabram, 1717, 436.

Cristóbal Colón's marriage to Filipa Moniz is the most significant and the most critical fact in his life to help uncover the censored truth.

In such an indeterminate case, where the true identity of the groom is not yet known due to the absence of documentation in Portugal, is it not our duty to accept and impose in this biography the norms of the society where he lived regarding marriages amongst the nobles of his time?

Is it not our duty as investigators of the past to accept that Filipa's bridegroom was a nobleman as required to be in order to marry nobility, before accepting that he was a mere bankrupt commoner from anywhere? Without a single Portuguese document to support a plebeian hypothesis, we are obliged to accept the norms of the society where Colón lived which prohibited marriages between nobles and non-nobles.

There is nothing in Don Cristóbal's life that can be used to deny a noble birth. Every fact presented here proves that he and his brothers were born of noble parents, and that the Colombo weaver from Genoa is nothing more than a case of mistaken identity.

CHAPTER 3

THE NAME OF THE NAVIGATOR

The corruption of Colón into Colombo/Columbus

The names *Cristóbal* and *Colón* were neither the name nor the surname that the navigator had from baptism. Don Hernando Colón wrote that the invention of “such a **name** [*Cristóbal*] and **surname** [*Colón*] was not done without mystery.”²⁸⁴ In other words, the name the navigator chose to call himself was a cryptic *alias* and not his real name. There was a hidden motive behind the need to invent a new identity in Castille. Unquestionably, the navigator and his two brothers did not want people to know what that motive was. We can deduce, by the fact that his two brothers also assumed the Colón surname, that it was to protect their parents’ identities.

It stands to reason that the new name was invented in Castille. With all certainty, neither the name *Cristóbal* nor the surname *Colón* were names that the navigator, or his brothers, had used while living in Portugal. Colón is not a Portuguese word.

If the name had already been *Cristóbal Colón* in Portugal, Don Hernando would not have needed to explain that this name was new and that the mystery behind it “predicted the wonder and novelty of the voyage he was about to undertake.”²⁸⁵ Thus, Don Hernando explained that the new name was intrinsically tied to the Atlantic Voyage, a feat being marketed in Castile after 1484.

Considering that this voyage was not taking part in Portugal, the only way Don Hernando’s explanation makes sense is if the new name was assumed after the navigator entered Castile. All their relatives in Portugal and those living in Castile would have also known the Admiral by his actual name.

This argument seems logical, because if *Cristóbal Colón* was the name he already used in Portugal, prior to 1484, there would be no reason for all the confusion that ensued around his true

²⁸⁴ Si come la maggior parte delle sue cose furono operate per alcun mistério, così quel, che tocca, alla varietà di cotal nome, & cognome, non avvenne senza mistério. HISTORIE, Capitolo II, 3.

²⁸⁵ HISTORIE, Cap. I, 3.

identity and place of birth in Castile. That confusion would have already been settled in Portugal and not carried to Castile where the nobles had accepted him with open arms.

Furthermore, it would have been impossible for the navigator to hide his nationality in Castile if he used the same identity there as he did in Portugal. All the mystery that Don Hernando mentions around the place of birth would not have existed because the Castilians would have known him as Colón from Portugal. He could only hide that he came from Portugal by not using the same name in Castile that he had used in Portugal.

Modern authors have misguidedly accepted that his original name was Cristoforo and that the original surname was Colombo, a surname that they assumed would have been truncated into Colón after he moved to Castile. Not only is there no documentary evidence to confirm this concept, but it is also contrary to what Don Hernando wrote regarding how and why his father had decided to invent Colón as his new surname.

The navigator was never called Colombo in Castile, and he was only given the surname Colombo by writers outside of Castile after 1493, the year he became famous. Contemporary authors who wrote about his name and tried to explain the origins of the surname Colón added to the confusion. Those who knew the truth, both about the original name that he had before 1484 and where he came from, refused to explain it in clear terms, leaving us, instead, a puzzle still needing to be solved.

The facts lead us to accept that the navigator's pseudonym was employed in Castile, and that it was done to lessen the chances of Colón's true lineage being identified outside of Portugal. Both friar Las Casas and Don Hernando's explanations support this point of view, confirming that the chosen name was directly connected to the transatlantic voyage:

*Not so much by chance [...] by divine will, his name and surname described what he was trying to accomplish.*²⁸⁶

*The name was an indication of the effect that was going to follow, in a way that it predicted the wonder and novelty of what he accomplished.*²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ No tanto acaso, según es de creer, cuanto por voluntad divina que para obrar lo que su nombre y sobrenombre significaba lo elegia. LAS CASAS, T. I, 43.

²⁸⁷ Che non senza occulta causa furono posti per indizio dell'effetto che aveva a provenire, siccome in quello che tocca a colui di cui fu pronosticata la maraviglia e novità di quello che fece. HISTORIE, Cap. I, 3.

Therefore, the new pseudonym had to be assumed by the navigator only after he “secretly”²⁸⁸ left Portugal at the end of 1484 to go and promote his voyage in Castile.²⁸⁹ It is reasonable to assume that the new identity was adopted to disguise his Portuguese life and hide his true origins from outsiders who could have caused him and the two Iberian courts some political difficulties. Had his true lineage become public knowledge, some sort of political upheaval would have happened. Only this point of view can explain why both Iberian crowns kept Don Cristóbal’s true identity a secret.

Consequently, common sense and logic compel us to acknowledge that his real name would never be any name similar to his pseudonym. A person originally named *Cristoforo Colombo* would have chosen a pseudonym that in no way connected him to this name. It would be of no use to a person whose original name was *Cristóbal Colombo* to choose to hide behind a pseudonym of *Cristóbal Colón*. The two names are so similar that the original identity would be readily exposed.

This fact is important to keep in focus whenever there is an attempt to fit one or another Christopher/Cristoforo/Cristóvão/Cristóbal into the shoes of the navigator. His original name was neither Cristoforo nor Cristóbal, nor was it Cristóvão.

The majority of modern historians came to accept that the navigator was the weaver Colombo from Genoa and have pushed this tale as accurate for the last century, but several researchers remained unconvinced. Authors who affirmed the official version as correct have never managed to completely eliminate the doubts between Colombo and Colón - one a weaver and the other a navigator.

In 1921, Ricardo Beltrán y Rózpide, (from the Real Academia de la Historia and, at the time, President of the Comisión de Indias and Secretario General de la Real Sociedad Geográfica), published *Cristóbal Colón y Cristóforo Columbo: estudio crítico documental*, a study exposing manifest differences between Admiral Colón and the weaver Colombo. Ricardo Beltrán explained the irrationality committed by accepting any Genoese weaver documents that did not fit the true

²⁸⁸ Si parti segretamente di Portogallo per paura d’essere impedito dal Re. HISTORIE, Cap. XII, 32.

²⁸⁹ Salió Cristóbal Colon de Portugal lo más secreto que pudo, temiendo que el Rey lo mandara detener [...] Llegado en la corte á 20 de Enero, año de 1485 [sic should be 1486], comenzó á entrar en una terrible, continua, penosa y prolija batalla, que por ventura no le fuera áspera ni tan horrible la de materiales y armas, cuanto la de informar á tantos que no le entendían. LAS CASAS, T. I, 227.

historical facts already known about the noble Admiral Colón who lived in Iberia, as may be read in the excerpt below:

Most of the authors that deal with the life of Colón consider the Italian documents referring to Cristoforo Colombo and his family as the rule to which the Spanish documents must be made to fit, even those of superior authority, which are the letters written by Don Cristóbal Colón himself. If there is a discrepancy between one and the other, the question is ultimately resolved by maintaining that he [Colón] did not write the truth or hid the truth for one or another reason. The Italian documents become thus little less than articles of faith.

*We must adopt — and it is certainly more rational — the opposite technique: accepting as the critical standard and as articles of faith what Don Cristóbal Colón wrote about himself and adjust to his words what the Italian documents say, accepting those if they are in agreement with the Spanish documents, discarding them when the contradictions or anachronisms are obvious.*²⁹⁰

This small extract exposes the entire problem inherent to the official story when trying to identify the true name and identity of Colón. Due to the impossibility of matching the Spanish documents to the Italian documents, the navigator's writings had to be discarded. History was instead written using as its foundation the weaver's documents.

Although many contemporaneous authors, including Las Casas, have written that the navigator was "Genoese", it is clear in the *Historie* description that his original name was neither *Cristoforo Colombo* nor *Cristóbal Colón*. But reading the accounts from those who knew the Admiral personally does not always make it easier to understand what we should discard or accept.

²⁹⁰ La mayor parte de los modernos autores que tratan de la vida de Colón consideran los documentos italianos referentes á Cristóforo Columbo y su familia como regla de criterio á que hay que ajustar los documentos españoles, aun los de mayor autoridad, que son las cartas escritas por el mismo Don Cristóbal Colón. Si hay divergencia entre unos y otros, se resuelve em último término la cuestión afirmando que aquél [Colón] faltó á la verdad ó la oculto por estas ó las otras razones. Los documentos italianos son así poco menos que artículos de fe. Pero cabe adoptar—y es, ciertamente, más razonable—el procedimiento inverso: tomar como norma crítica y como si fuera artículo de fe lo que Don Cristóbal Colón dijo de sí mismo y ajustar á ello lo que digan los documentos italianos, aceptando éstos si se hallan de acuerdo con los documentos españoles, desechándolos si resulta evidente la contradicción ó el anacronismo. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón y Cristóforo Columbo: estudio crítico documental*, Madrid, Imprenta del Patronato de Huérfanos de Intendencia e intervención Militares, Madrid, 1921, 5.

Only after reviewing all the known texts can the whole puzzle be visualized. From there it is easier to validate what is proven, and what is not, in order to identify what pieces need to be discarded.

Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas wrote that the navigator was a **nobleman** from a noble line so **ancient** that it went back as far as a Roman Captain to whom had been given the consular insignias and other privileges by the Roman people:

*His parents were once wealthy and prominent people, whose dealings or manner of living must have been trading merchandise by sea, according to what he himself wrote in one of his letters [...] His lineage is said to be noble and of illustrious descent and very ancient, descending from that Colón whom Cornelius Tacitus writes about in the beginning of his 12th book, writing that he brought Mithridates prisoner to Rome, for which he was **given the consular insignia** and other privileges by the Roman people in gratitude for his services. And we should say that, in antiquity the first surname of his lineage was said to be Colón. As time went by, the successors of the aforementioned Roman Colón, or Captain of the Romans, came to be called Colombos (sic). Antonio Sabelico wrote about these Colombos in the 8th book of his 10th Decade, folio 168, where he mentioned **two illustrious Genoese men who were called Colombos**, as we will write below. But this illustrious man, setting aside the customary surname, **wanted to call himself Colón**, taking on the old meaning, not so much by chance, as is believed, but by divine will, so that his **name and surname** would match the actions he had been chosen to perform. Divine Providence ordains that names and surnames be given to the persons whom He designates to serve in accordance with the calling that He determines them to complete, as seen in many parts of Sacred Scripture [...] He branded himself, then, by the first name of Cristóbal, that is, **Christum ferens**, which means the bringer or bearer of Christ, and at times he signs with this name.²⁹¹*

²⁹¹ Escogió el divino y sumo Maestro entre los hijos de Adán que en estos tiempos nuestros había en la tierra, aquel ilustre y grande Colón, conviene á saber, de nombre y de obra poblador primero, para de su virtud, ingenio, industria, trabajos, saber y prudencia, confiar una de las más egregias divinas hazañas que por el siglo presente quiso en su mundo hacer [...] Y por llevar por orden de historia lo que de su persona entendemos referir, primero se requiere, hablando de personas notables, comenzar por el origen y patria dellas. Fué, pues, este varón escogido de nación genovés, de algún lugar de la provincia de Genova; cual fuese, Donde nació ó qué nombre tuvo el tal lugar, **no consta la verdad dello** [...] Una historia portuguesa que escribió un Juan de Barros, portugués que, llamó “Asia” en el lib. III, cap. 2.º de la primera década, haciendo minción deste descubrimiento **no dice sino** que, según todos afirman, este Cristóbal era genovés de nación. **Sus padres fueron personas notables**, en algún

In this text, Las Casas affirmed two things of importance: One, the Admiral descended from ancient nobility, and two, the name he came to be called in Castile was an invented phrase that described his future undertaking. Las Casas also mentioned some famous sea captains who were relatives of the First Admiral. He described them as “illustrious **Genoese** men,” saying that *Colombo the Younger*²⁹² was mentioned by Sabélico in his Chronicle.

We do not know if Las Casas got this information directly from the Second Admiral and Viceroy while both the friar and Don Diogo Colón resided in Santo Domingo, or if Las Casas merely copied from Don Hernando's *Historie*, which seems more likely to have happened. Las Casas either did not read what Sabélico wrote about that famous pirate *Colombo the Younger*, blood relative of the Admiral Colón, or intentionally tried to confuse us. Sabélico did not give any

tiempo ricos, cuyo trato ó manera de vivir debió ser por mercaderías por la mar, según él mismo da á entender en una carta suya; otro tiempo debieron ser pobres por las guerras y parcialidades [...] El **linaje de suyo dicen que fué generoso y muy antiguo**, procedido aquel Colon de quien Cornelio Tácito trata en el lib. XII al principio, diciendo que trujo á Roma preso á Mitridates, por lo cual le fueron dadas insignias consulares y otros privilegios por el pueblo romano en agradecimiento de sus servicios. Y es de saber, que antiguamente el primer sobrenombre de **su linaje, dicen, que fué Colon**, después, el tiempo andando, se llamaron Colombos los sucesores del susodicho **Colon romano ó Capitán de los romanos**; y destos Colombos hace mención Antonio Sabelico en el lib. VIII de la década 10.^a folio 168, Donde trata de **dos ilustres varones genoveses que se llamaban Colombos**, como abajo se dirá. Pero este ilustre hombre, dejado el apellido introducido por la costumbre, **quiso llamarse Colon**, restituyéndose al vocablo antiguo, no tanto acaso, según es de creer, cuanto por voluntad divina que para obrar lo que su nombre y sobrenombre significaba lo elegia. Suele la divinal Providencia ordenar, que se pongan nombres y sobrenombres á las personas que señala para se servir conformes á los oficios que les determina cometer, según asaz parece por muchas partes de la Sagrada Escritura; y el filósofo en el IV de la Metafísica, dice: “que los nombres deben convenir con las propiedades y oficios de las cosas.” Llamóse, pues, por nombre, Cristóbal, conviene á saber, Christum ferens, que quiere decir traedor ó llevador de Cristo, y así se firma él algunas veces; como en la verdad él haya sido el primero que abrió las puertas deste mar Océano, por Donde entró y él metió á estas tierras tan remotas y reinos, hasta entonces tan incógnitos, á nuestro Salvador Jesucristo, y á su bendito nombre, el cual fué digno que antes que outro diese noticia de Cristo y le hiciese adorar á estas innúmeras y tantos siglos olvidadas naciones. Tuvo por sobrenombre Colon, que quiere decir poblador de nuevo, el cual sobrenombre le convino en cuanto por su industria y trabajos fué causa que descubriendo estas gentes, infinitas ánimas dellas, mediante la predicación del Evangelio y administración de los eclesiásticos sacramentos, hayan ido y vayan cada día á poblar de nuevo aquella triunfante ciudad del cielo. LAS CASAS, T. I, 41-43.

²⁹² Según es dicho, Cristóbal Colon, tan dedicado á las cosas y ejercicio de la mar, y en aquel tiempo anduviese por ella un famoso varón, el mayor de los corsarios que en aquellos tiempos habia, de su nombre y linaje que se llamaba *Colombo Júnior* [*Colombo the Younger*], á diferencia de otro que habia sido nombrado y señalado antes [...] Desta pelea naválica y del dicho Colombo Júnior hace mención el Sabélico en su Corónica, 8.º libro de la 10.ª década, hoja 168, Donde trata que en el tiempo de la elección de Maximiliano, hijo de Federico, Emperador, por Rey de Romanos, fué enviado por Embajador de la Señoría de Venecia, Jerónimo Donato, á Portugal para que en nombre de la Señoría hiciese gracias, al Rey porque á los galeotes y remadores de las susodichas cuatro galeazas desbaratadas los habia vestido y dado ayuda de costa para que se volviesen á sus tierras. LAS CASAS, T. I, 52.

nationality, especially not **Genoese**, to the pirate Colombo, saying only, “sailing in the Iberian Sea, *Colombo the Younger* [...] encountered Venetians.”²⁹³

Although, at its core, Las Casas confirms the same ancient nobility and invention of the pseudonym as does Don Hernando in the text that we will present below, the reality is that there are several errors and disinformation in his statements. Without sufficiently clear documents or reliable chronicles on this topic, it is imperative that we separate what may be factual truth from what could be deception and intentional manipulation.

What is certain is that those two illustrious Colombo pirates which Las Casas claimed were **Genoese** were not Genoese, as Las Casas so assertively described them.²⁹⁴ They were not even born into any family with the surname Colombo.

One of the two famous Colombo pirates was the French Vice-Admiral of Normandy, who used to be nicknamed *Colombo* but was also given the additional nickname “the Elder” when a new Colombo entered the scene.²⁹⁵ The new Colombo was nicknamed as “the Younger” to tell them apart.²⁹⁶ Although *Colombo the Younger* also lived in France, he was not French.

Colombo the Elder's real name was Guillaume de Caseneuve Coullon.²⁹⁷ The nickname Colombo was derived from *La Colombe*, the name of his pirate ship.²⁹⁸ Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão wrote that during the Castilian War of Succession, Portugal's “King Afonso V sailed to Lagos,

²⁹³ Naucando per l'Iberico mare, Colombo il più giouene (Younger), nipote di quel Colombo famoso corsale fecesi incontro a Venitiani. SABELLICO, Marco Antonio, *Dell'istoria venetiana di Marco Antonio Sabellico*, Libri XXXIII, Appreso Gio: Maria Sauioni, 1668, 528.

²⁹⁴ Il fut livré dans la nuit du 21 août 1485, et le seul Colombo qui y soit mentionné était un **amiral** français. HARRISSE, Christophe *Colomb, son Origine, sa Vie...* T. I, 261.

²⁹⁵ En ambos intervinieron como actores, al servicio de Francia, los piratas-almirantes Colombo, *el Viejo y el Joven* [...] el almirante de la escuadra francesa era el griego Jorge **Bissipat** (Colombo el Joven). RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *Presencia Temprana de Cristóbal Colón en Portugal*, Congreso de Historia del Descubrimiento (1492-1556): actas (ponencias y comunicaciones), Real Academia de la Historia, Spain, 1992, 78.

²⁹⁶ CANOUTAS, Seraphim G., *Christopher Columbus: A Greek Nobleman*, Atlas Greek American Co, 1943.

— The French Guillaume de Casenove, also known as Casseneuve, Casenovo, Colombo, Coullon, and *Colombo the Elder*; and Giorgi **Bissipat**, known as *Colombo the Younger* or ‘El Mozo’. DAVIDSON, Miles H., *Columbus Then and Now: A Life Reexamined*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1997, 13.

²⁹⁷ Caseneuve de Gascogne, surnommé Coullon,* nom dont on a fait en latin Columbus, et en italien Colombo. [*Harrise erroneously claims Coullon in French would be Columbus in Latin. The French word for columbus/columba is colombe (dove).] HARRISSE, Christophe *Colomb, son Origine, sa Vie...* T. I, 261.

²⁹⁸ La Colombe (ou la Coulon), appartenant à Guillaume de Cazenove, dit Coulon ou Colomb, Vice-amiral de France sous Louis XI et Charles VIII. Groupe de Recherche en Archéologie Navale, Objectifs de Recherche Archéologique. <http://www.archeonavale.org/pdf/cordeliere/odrea.pdf>.

where he was greeted by Admiral Coullon (Colombo the Elder), who patrolled the Atlantic coast at the service of the King of France.”²⁹⁹

At the time, mid-1476, Colombo the Elder was involved in a battle alongside his Portuguese co-captain Pedro de Ataíde and the Chamberlain of King Louis XI, nicknamed Colombo the Younger. This battle took place off the Portuguese coast, near Cape S. Vicente, and involved a fleet of Genoese ships. After defeating them Colombo the Elder directed his fleet to Lisbon, where he remained until December 1476.³⁰⁰

A year later, Colombo the Younger escorted King Afonso V on his return voyage from France to Portugal. Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão explains that “the command of the fleet on the return was given to ‘Misser Gorje’ [...] having King Afonso V arrived in Cascais on the 15th of November,” in 1477,³⁰¹ a mere five days after João II had been crowned king.³⁰²

The French documents show that Misser Gorje, who commanded the fleet bringing King Afonso V to Portugal, was Georgios Palaiologos Bissipatt, also called George, *le Grec*. This Greek noble was Vice-Admiral of France and Captain of the Squadrons of King Louis XI. In November 1477 he received letters of naturalization in France.³⁰³

But George, *le Grec* was not only the famous pirate nicknamed Colombo the Younger. George, *le Grec* belonged to one of the most important imperial families in the Christian world, the Byzantine Palaiologos. Colombo the Younger was a Byzantine prince who fled to Western Europe when the Muslims conquered Constantinople in 1453.

²⁹⁹ SERRÃO, Joaquim Veríssimo, *Relações Históricas Entre Portugal e a França*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Paris, 1975, 110.

³⁰⁰ RONCIERE, Charles de la, *Histoire de la Marine Française*, Paris, 1909, Vol. 2, 374.

³⁰¹ SERRÃO, Joaquim Veríssimo, *Relações Históricas Entre Portugal e a França*, 138.

³⁰² E em comprimento de mandado d’el-rey seu pay, o principe foy alçado por rei com sua solenidade em Santarem nos alpendres de Sam Francisco, aos dez dias do mes de Novembro de mil quatrocentos e setenta e sete ãnos. RESENDE, *Vida e Feitos...*, 2007, 23

— João II was crowned king but abdicated in favor of his father and went back to being Prince Heir until Afonso V’s death in 1481.

³⁰³ SERRÃO, Joaquim Veríssimo, *Relações Históricas Entre Portugal e a França*, 138.

King Louis XI of France described George, le Grec as a prince "of the most illustrious of all, descendant of the Byzantine Emperors, our advisor and Chamberlain, Knight and Captain of the king's ship [...] *la Normande*."³⁰⁴

In April 1471 George, le Grec was part of a garrison in Calais and was described as a knight in a letter of pardon sent to him by King Edward IV of England.³⁰⁵

Having identified, therefore, who Colombo the Younger really was, it is evident that he was neither Genoese nor was his real name Colombo, as Las Casas wrote. He was Georgios Palaiologos **Byssypatt**, as he signed on the documents, and was a Greek living in France.³⁰⁶

Described as a blood relative of Don Cristóbal Colón by Don Hernando and Las Casas,³⁰⁷ George Bissipat was a Prince of Constantinople, protected and distinguished by the King of France, where he married Marguerite de Poix and became Viscount of Falaise, Lord of Hannaches and of Troissereux.

Not only did Las Casas misrepresent these two **Colombo** pirates as "Genoese" - it is proven that they were not Genoese -, but also assumed that their real surname was Colombo, which as shown was not. By the same token, Las Casas's assertions that Don Cristóbal's ancestors and Don Cristóbal himself had been named **Colombo** and that he was **Genoese** as were these other two pirates are not factual claims. By erroneously claiming the pirate Colombos as Genoese and wrongly claiming that Colón's ancestors were named **Colombo**, Las Casas just created more confusion.

We can challenge Las Casas when he says that the Roman Captain's surname "was Colón, and with time became **Colombo**" - see note 288. Las Casas's reasoning would be that the descendants of the Roman Colón, at a certain time, came to be called Colombo and that the First Admiral, having been born Colombo like the two Genoese Colombo pirates, changed the surname back to the original Colón. Las Casas's statement has no basis in fact. He was completely wrong!

Who could the Roman Colón be? The existing information on the Mithridatic Wars between the Roman Republic and the Kingdom of Ponto, from 90 BC to 74 BC, gives us reason

³⁰⁴ L'ABBÉ RENET, *Mémoires de la Société Académique d'Archéologic*, Sciences & Arts du Département de L'Oise, Beauvais, Imprimerie de Don Père, rue Saint-Jean, 1889, T. XIV, 46.

³⁰⁵ JONES, James P., *A history of the Parish of Tettenhall in the County of Stafford*, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, 1894, 206-207.

³⁰⁶ L'ABBÉ RENET, *Mémoires de la Société Académique d'Archéologic*, T. XIV, 35.

³⁰⁷ De su nombre y **linaje** que se llamaba Colombo Júnior. LAS CASAS, T. I, 52.

enough to accept that Las Casas and Don Hernando referred to the famous consul Caio Mário (157 BC - 86 BC). Caio Mário has been accepted as the trunk of the House of Colonna in Italy (*Columna* in Latin meaning *column*).³⁰⁸

Caio Mário *Columna* had married Júlia, aunt of Caio Júlio Caesar, and was elected consul seven times, an achievement that no previous consul had reached.³⁰⁹

Caio Mário was also elected tribune of the people,³¹⁰ which fits perfectly with this statement by Don Hernando that to "Colón were given the consular dignities by the Roman people, and the eagle standard, and **tribune**, or consular tent."³¹¹

Caio Mário would also be the *Romão Columnes* (Roman Columna) to whom not only Las Casas and Don Hernando referred, but also the Portuguese João Rodrigues de Sá, Mayor of Porto, in the following poem in praise of his *Galés*³¹² and Colonna lineage:

*Com que Romão Columnes / With those Roman Columns,
Se misturou de través, / Became transversally mixed
Cada hum com gram primor / Each one with great merit
Forte, leal, sem temor / Strong, loyal, fearless
Em combates, e Galés / In battles, and Galleys.*³¹³

Caio Mário, the original Roman *Columna* and the trunk of the Italian House of Colonna, could never have been *Colombo*, as Las Casas wrote. The correct surname would be *Colonna*, never *Colombo*.³¹⁴

³⁰⁸ Il gran Caio Mario sette volte Console Romano, e da lui la real Casa Colonna, fu il primo, che nel Mondo piantò le Colonne nela Mauritania. MUGNOS, Don Filadelfo, *Historia della Augustissima Famiglia Colonna*, Venetia, Nella Stamperia del Turrini, MDCLVIII, 29.

³⁰⁹ He had now lived seventy years, and was the first man that ever was chosen seven times consul, and had an establishment and riches sufficient for many kings. PLUTARCH, *Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious Men*, corrected from the Greek and revised by A. H. Clough, Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1876, 309.

³¹⁰ PLUTARCH, *Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious Men*, 291.

³¹¹ HISTORIE, Cap. I, 2.

³¹² João Rodrigues de Sá, was nicknamed *o das Galés*, (of the Galleys), because he led a fleet of ships to raise the siege of Lisbon during the 1385 Castilian invasion of Lisbon.

³¹³ BRAGA, Teófilo, *Sá de Miranda e a Eschola Italiana*, Livraria Chardron, Porto, 1896, 7.

³¹⁴ Altro più Autore trattante della famiglia Colonna, tira la discendenza di questa casa da quell'Illustre Capitano della Romana Republica **Caio Mario**, il quale per lo suo singolar valore, e sapere, cosa ad altri non permessa, fù sette volte Console, oltre d'altre segnalatissime cariche dalla Republica ricevute. E formando questo Autore la

It seems suspicious that Las Casas would call the descendants of the Roman **Columna** by the name of Colombos when Mário's descendants were **Colonnas** and not Colombos. If we were to correct Las Casas, the correct phrase would read that, "the name *Colon*, with the passage of time became **Colonna**, the descendants of the said Roman Columna." It should be noted that Don Cristóbal Colón owned Plutarch's book, which includes the life of this Roman Columna, his affirmed ancestor.³¹⁵

On the other hand, Don Hernando Colón identified the other relative and pirate George Bissipatt as "a celebrated man of his name and family called Colombo, very famous in the sea [...] was named *Colombo the Younger*, to differentiate from another who had previously been a great man of the sea."³¹⁶

Many researchers downplayed this connection and even denied the Iberian Colóns could be related to George Bissipatt, the famous pirate nicknamed *Colombo the Younger*, Vice-Admiral of France,³¹⁷ and Chamberlain to the King of France who died in 1496.³¹⁸ However, we see no reason to not accept Las Casas and Don Hernando's affirmations of this blood kinship as well as Don Cristóbal's declaration that "I am not the first Admiral in my family."³¹⁹

discendenza, si reduce à Celio, e Pirro, figliuoli di un'altro Mario, e della Reina Elimena di Macedonia. (ANÓNIMO) *Discorso genealogico della nobilissima famiglia Colonna*, Collegio Romano, 1672, 4.

³¹⁵ According to Spanish historian Consuelo Varela, an expert on Admiral Colón's documents, the name Colomo could never give the name Colombo in Italian. Instead, Colomo translated into Italian could only be **Colonna**. VARELA, Consuelo, *Cristóbal Colón y la construcción de un mundo nuevo*. Estudios, 1983-2008, Archivo General de la Nación, Editora Búho, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 2010, 54.

³¹⁶ Un uomo segnalato del suo nome e famiglia chiamato Colombo, molto nominato per mare [...] fu chiamato *Colombo il giovane*, a differenza di un altro che avanti era stato grand'uomo per mare. HISTORIE, Cap. V, 10.

³¹⁷ 1486, 26 avril. Procuration donnée par noble Jérôme George, chevalier, ambassadeur de Venise, à Jean-Pierre Stebbe, son secrétaire, pour recouvrer le chargement de quatre navires vénitiens capturés par **Georges Le Grec**, chevalier, **vice-amiral de France**, et ses hommes, et le vendre au profit de la Sérénissime République. BÉCHU, Claire, GREFFE, Florence and PÉBAY, Isabelle, *Minutier Central des Notaires de Paris, Minutes du XV^e Siècle de L'étude XIX*, Archives Nationales, Paris, 1993, 40.

³¹⁸ (NOTA 21) Nessuna delle attestazioni italiane della scoperta identifica l'Ammiraglio come discendente o parente del corsaro *Colombo il Giovane*, attivo proprio nella seconda metà del XV secolo (cfr. RACCOLTA II/3, pp. 129-248. Lo fa invece il figlio Hernando Colón, nel suo scritto (cfr. NUOVA RACCOLTA VIII/1, pp. 32-35), la cui tradizione è però davvero complessa e molto incerta. L'ipotesi che potesse esserci una parentela tra i due trovò accoglimento in parte della storiografia ottocentesca, finché non fu definitivamente scartata. RUZZIN, Valentina, *Tante cose se dicono che pareno incredebele, Lettera sulla scoperta dell'America*, Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, Ser. NS, vol. 56, 2016, 339.

³¹⁹ Non sono il primo Ammiraglio della mia famiglia. HISTORIE, Cap. II, 7.

We should not doubt that Bissipatt and his children had many opportunities to meet with their relative Don Bartolomé Colón during the time that the future *Adelantado de las Indias* resided at the Court of France, from around 1489 until the end of 1493.³²⁰

The family of George Palaiologos Bissipatt *Colombo* ended up marrying members of the Portuguese family of the Count of Monsanto, through Louis de Dommartin, Lord of Fontenoy-le-Château (where Juan Antonio was from.)³²¹ Dommartin was a descendant of the Portuguese Dona Margarida de Castro, a sister of Don Álvaro de Castro, First Count of Monsanto.

Dommartin was married to Philippa de La Mark *Colombo*, daughter of Hélène de Bissipatt *Colombo*, Viscountess of Falaise and granddaughter of George Palaiologos Bissipatt, also called Colombo the Younger – see Figure 10.

This connection is significant because Philippa de La Mark (Colombo) and her husband Louis de Dommartin (Castro) were not only Lords of Fontenoy-le-Château, but also linked to the elaboration of Waldseemüller's world map, made in Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, France. The great-provost of Saint-Dié-des-Vosges was none other than this Louis de Dommartin.³²²

Researchers who read Don Hernando's *Historie* learned that Don Cristóbal had sailed for a long time with his relative, a pirate nicknamed *Colombo the Younger*. However, some seem completely unaware of the fact that the two French pirates nicknamed Colombo were, in fact, at the service of the King of Portugal in 1476, fighting against Castile during its War of Succession.

³²⁰ Besando las manos, Bartolomé Colon, al rey de Francia por las buenas nuevas que le plugo dar, el Rey le mandó dar 100 escudos para ayuda á su camino. Oido que su hermano habia descubierto las tierras que buscaban, dióse prisa creyendo de lo alcanzar, pero no pudo, porque el Almirante ya era partido con sus 17 navios, halló empero una instrucción que le dejaba el Almirante para si en algún tiempo Bartolomé Colon pareciera. Vista esta instrucción, partióse de Sevilla para la corte, que estaba en Valladolid, por el principio del año de 1494 ... recibieronlo los católicos Reyes con mucha alegría y benignidad; llamaronle luego D. Bartolomé, y mandaron que fuese á servirles ayudando al Almirante, su hermano; para lo cual, le mandaron aparejar tres navios ... Llegó á esta isla Española en 14 días de Abril del año de 1494. LAS CASAS, T. II, 79.

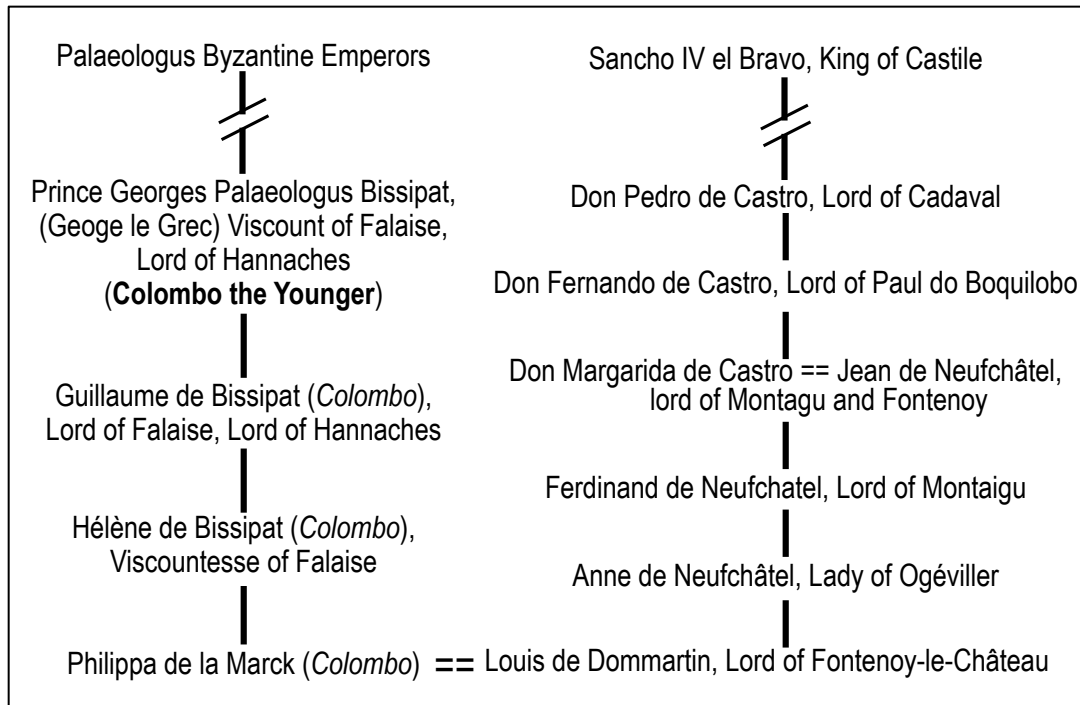
³²¹ Juan Antonio *Columbo* ... **deudo del Almirante**, hombre muy capaz y prudente, y de autoridad. LAS CASAS, T. II, 221.

— We believe that this Juan Antonio, a relative of the Colóns who captained ships for the First Admiral, was Lord Chamberlain of the Second Admiral, who died in Don Hernando's employ, and who Don Hernando says hailed from Fontenoy-le-Château, was a descendant of Prince George Bissipatt *Colombo the Younger* from whom he earned his *nome de guerre* of Colombo.

³²² DICKSON, Peter W., *The Magellan myth – reflections on Columbus, Vespucci, and the Waldseemueller map of 1507*, Printing Arts Press, Mount Vernon, Ohio, 2007, 39.

Figure 10

Family ties between George Bissipat, (known as the pirate *Colombo the Younger*) and Louis de Dommartin, Lord of Fontenoy-le-Château and Provost of Saint-Dié-des-Vosges in France.



Source: <https://geneall.net/pt/nome/232726/philippa-de-la-marck/>

What we have here are three famous men of the sea, all attributed the nickname *Colombo* - Cristóbal *Colombo*, *Colombo the Elder* and *Colombo the Younger* - but neither Don Cristóbal Colón nor the other two were ever baptized Colombo as a child. All three were just nicknames, *nomes de guerre*.

It is obvious that the real names of George Bissipatt and Guillaume Caseneuve were never Colombo, and that, likewise, Cristóbal Colón's real name had never been Colombo before it was Colón.

The conclusion is that the so-called **Genoese** pirate Colombo, which Las Casas said was “of his name and lineage called *Colombo the Younger*, in difference from another that used to be nominated” *Colombo the Elder*, was not from Genoa, but from Constantinople. *Colombo the Elder* was a Frenchman while *the Younger* was a Byzantine prince, neither was Genoese.

This obliges us to not accept Las Casas’s words about the First Admiral and Viceroy when he claims that “this chosen man was of the **Genoese** nation, from somewhere in the province of Genoa; which one it was, where he was born, or what name the place had, **the truth of it is not known.**”

A significant fact in this story is that Don Hernando and Las Casas, writing in the 1500s, were not the first ones to write that *Colombo the Younger* was a relative of Don Cristóbal Colón. This fact had already been declared as early as March 31, 1493, in a letter sent to Rome. In it the First Admiral is described as the “nephew of the great French *Colombo*.”³²³

Now that the facts have been clarified regarding the two Colombo pirates and their nationalities, let us look closely at what Don Hernando wrote about his father; Don Hernando’s First Chapter words have been manipulated and misinterpreted for many centuries.³²⁴

³²³ Copia de una littera missa a lu archiepiscono de Taragona, al presente governatore de Roma et cetera. Per questa faccio sapere ad V. Rev. S. che perseverando nostro Segnor Dio la bona fortuna de le soy Alteze, heri hanno recepute littere da uno che se dimanda Colón, grandissimo marinaro, **nepote del grande Colombo de Francia**, el qual mandarono soy Maiestatea con doy caravele verso la India ad cercare certe insule che erano incognite, in nelle quale haviva multo oro et spetie et con grandeccheze. Et separtete dele insule de Canaria et in XXXIII di arrivo [...] Et ha scripto dicto Colón a le soy Maiestate che quella e la via pio breve per andare in Yerusalim, et che luy promecte ad S. Maiestate che se ipsa vorra passar per illa de mantenere illi cinquimilia da cavallo, et L^{ta} milia peduni. Se chiama gia la Admirante del mare oceano, et vice Re de ly insule de Thiopia, incontinente facto portata la nova per ordinatione de S. Maiestate [...] Et venendo Colón farrando maiore preparatorio de caravele et de gente per mandar de lla et ad magestrarilly. RUZZIN, Valentina, *Tante cose se dicono che pareno incredebele, Lettera sulla scoperta dell'America*, Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, Ser. NS, Vol. 56, 2016, 339, 341, 342.

³²⁴ CAPITULO I. **Della patria, origine, e nome dell'ammiraglio Cristóbal Colon**^s: Siccome una delle principali cose che appartengono alla storia di ogni uomo savio è che si sappia la sua patria e origine perché sogliono esser più

First Chapter – On the homeland, origins, and name of the Admiral Cristóbal Colón

*Being that one of the principal things that is required from the history of all wise men is that one know his homeland and origins, because it is customary to esteem more those who come from big cities and of well-to-do ancestors. **Some wanted that I occupied myself in declaring and saying how:***

stimati quelli che da grandi città e da generosi progenitori procedono, alcuni volevano che io mi occupassi in dichiarare e dire come l'Ammiraglio procedette di sangue illustre, ancorché i suoi padri per malvagità della fortuna fossero venuti a grande necessità e bisogno, e che avessi mostrato come procedevano da quel **Colone** di cui Cornelio Tacito nel principio del duodecimo libro della sua opera dice che condusse prigioniero in Roma il re Mitridate, per lo che dice che **a Colone furono date dal Popolo Romano la dignità consolari, e le aquile, e tribunale, o tenda consolare**. E volevano che io facessi gran conto di quei due illustri Coloni suoi parenti, dei quali il Sabellico descrive una gran vittoria ottenuta contro i Veneziani, secondo che nel quinto capitolo sarà da noi raccontato. Ma io mi ritrassi da questa fatica, credendo ch'egli fosse stato eletto dal nostro Signore per una così gran cosa qual fu quella che fece, e perché aveva ad essere così vero apostolo suo quanto in effetto fu, volle che in questo caso imitasse gli altri i quali, per pubblicare il loro nome da mari e da riviere egli elesse, e non già da altezze e da palagi, e che imitasse lui stesso, ch'essendo i suoi maggiori del regal sangue di Gerusalemme, gli piacque che i suoi genitori fossero men conosciuti. Di modo che, quanto attà fu la sua persona e adorna di tutto quello che per così gran fatto conveniva, tanto la **sua patria e origine volle che fosse men certa, e conosciuta**. Per lo che alcuni che in una certa maniera pensano di oscurare la sua fama, dicono che fu di Nervi, altri che di Cugureo [Cogoleto], e altri che di Bugiasco [Bogliasco], che tutti sono luoghi piccoli presso alla città di Genova e nella sua stessa riviera, ed altri, che vogliono esaltarla di più, dicono che era savonese, e altri genovese: e ancora quelli che più salgono sopra il vento, lo fanno di Piacenza, nella qual città sono alcune onorate persone della sua famiglia, e sepolture con armi, e lettere di Colombo, perché in effetto questo era già l'usato cognome dei suoi maggiori ancorché egli, conforme alla patria dove andò ad abitare e a cominciar nuovo stato, limò il vocabolo acciò che avesse conformità con l'antico, e distinse quelli che da esso discendessero da tutti gli altri che erano collaterali, e così si chiamò *Colón*.

Considerato questo, mi mossi a credere che, siccome la maggior parte delle sue cose furono operate per alcun mistero, così quello che tocca alla varietà di cotal nome e cognome non avvenne senza mistero. Molti nomi potremmo addurre in esempio, che non senza occulta causa furono posti per indizio dell'effetto che aveva a provenire, siccome in quello che tocca a colui di cui fu pronosticata la maraviglia e novità di quello che fece. Perché, se abbiamo riguardo al cognome comune dei suoi maggiori, diremo che veramente fu colombo, in quanto portò la grazia dello Spirito Santo a quel nuovo mondo che egli scoprì, mostrando, secondo che nel battesimo di San Giovanni Battista lo Spirito Santo in figura di colomba mostrò, qual era il figliuolo diletto di Dio, che ivi non si conosceva, e perché sopra le acque dell'Oceano medesimamente portò, come la colomba di Noè, l'olivo e l'olio del battesimo per l'unione e pace che quelle genti con la chiesa dovevano avere, poiché erano rinchiusi nell'arca delle tenebre e confusione. E per conseguenza gli venne a proposito il cognome di Colón, che ritornò a rinnovare, poiché in greco vuol dire membro, acciò che, essendo il suo proprio nome Cristoforo, si sapesse di chi era membro, cioè di Cristo, per cui a salute di quelle genti egli aveva ad esser mandato. Ed appresso, se cotal suo nome noi vogliamo ridurre alla pronuncia latina, ch'è *Christophorus Colonius*, diremo che, siccome si dice che San Cristoforo ebbe quel nome perché passava Cristo per le profondità delle acque con tanto pericolo, onde fu detto Cristoforo, e siccome portava e conduceva le genti, le quali alcun altro non sarebbe bastato a passare, così l'Ammiraglio, che fu *Christophorus Colonius*, chiedendo a Cristo il suo aiuto, e che l'aiutasse in quel pericolo del suo passaggio, passò lui e i suoi ministri acciò che facessero quelle genti indiane coloni, e abitatori della chiesa trionfante dei cieli, poiché egli è da credere che molte anime, le quali Satanasso sperava di godere, non essendovi chi le passasse per quell'acqua del battesimo, da lui siano state fatte coloni e abitatrici della eterna gloria del Paradiso. HISTORIE, Cap. I, 2-4. § Note that we corrected the Italian translator's corruption of the Admiral's name COLOMBO back to COLÓN.

1 – the Admiral **sprung from illustrious blood**, although his parents, through bad fortune, had come to have great need and poverty,

2 – and [some wanted] that I should show how they [Cristóbal's parents] **descended from that Colone**, of whom Cornelius Tacitus, in the beginning of the twelfth book of his work, says that he took King Mithridate³²⁵ prisoner to Rome, for which, it is said, that to Colone were given the town and the **Consular dignities and the Eagles** [standard of a Roman legion] and the **tribunal** or Consular tent;³²⁶

3 – and [they] **wanted** that I make a great commotion of those two illustrious Colones,³²⁷ his relatives, of whom Sabellico writes of having a great victory against Venetians, as in the fifth Chapter will be told by us.

(A) - But **I removed myself from such undertaking** [which they had wanted Hernando to declare], believing that he was elected by Our Lord for something so grand as he did. And, because he would be thus a true Apostle of His, as in fact he was, [Our Lord] wanted that in this case he [Colón] imitate the others, the which, to publicize His name, [Our Lord]

³²⁵ According to Tacito, the captain who arrested Mithridate was named **Cilone**: Fù poi consegnato **Mitradate**, e condotto a Roma da Giunio Cilone, Procuratore di Ponto. TACITO, Cornelio, *Opere di Annali, Historie, Costumi de' Germani, e Vita Di Agricola...* Per gli Heredi di Tomaso Giunti, Veneza, 1644, 206.

— Filadelfo Mugnos in *Historia della Augustissima Famiglia Colonna* explained that Caio Mário had a son also named Mário who fathered a son named **Celio**. It is possible that **Cilone** and **Celio** were the same person. More research would be needed to verify this.

— It appears one version of Tacito's book changed Cilonem to **Colonem** [see next note] which may have led Don Hernando to believe this was his ancestor confusing him with Caio Mário. It is also possible that Don Hernando confused Caio Mário's confrontation with King Mithridate as an arrest of that king, "by exasperating **Mithridates**, especially, who was then apparently making preparations for war, he himself [Caio Mário] should be chosen general against him, and so furnish the city with new matter of triumph, and his own house with the plunder of Pontus, and the riches of its king. Therefore, though **Mithridates** entertained him with all imaginable attention and respect, yet he was not at all wrought upon or softened by it; but said, "O king, either endeavor to be stronger than the Romans, or else quietly submit to their commands." With which he left **Mithridates**, as he indeed had often heard the fame of the bold speaking of the Romans, but now for the first time experienced it. PLUTARCH, *Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious Men*, corrected from the Greek and revised by A. H. Clough, Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1876, 302-303.

— Traditus post hæc Mithridates, vectusque Romam per Junium Cilonem,¹ Procuratorem Ponti. (1) In Mss. et veteribus editionibus **Colonem**. Recte emendatum *Cilonem*... Et in antiquis inscriptionibus sæpe memorantur Cilonem, non vero Colones. TACITUS, Cornelius, *Opera omnia*, Vol 2, A.J. Valpy, London, 1821, 1192.

³²⁶ All these are positions and titles that Caio Mário had during his life. Although Mário never arrested King Mithridates, he was involved in the political conflicts involving the war against Pontus and he wanted to lead the Roman army as shown in *Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious Men*, corrected from the Greek and revised by A. H. Clough, Little, Brown, And Company, Boston, 1876, 291-309.

³²⁷ Note that in Cap. V of the *Historie* this pirate is not called Colone, but correctly Colombo, "un'huomo segnalato del suso nome, e famiglia, chiamato **Colombo**." HISTORIE, 10.

*elected them from the sea and from the coast, and not from heights and palaces. And that he [Colón] also Himself [Jesus] imitate, that being his ancestors of the royal blood of Jerusalem, he desired, that his parents be less known. In as much as his person was well adapted and endowed with everything that, for a feat of such grandeur was necessary, **the more he wanted that his homeland and origins be less certain and less known** [kept hidden].³²⁸*

*Because of that [his origins being hidden], **some**, who in a certain way think of **reducing his fame**, say*

4 – he was from Nervi

5 – others, that [he was] from Cugureo

6 – and others [that he was] from Buyasco

Which are all small places, near the city of Genoa and in its very coast. And others, who want to exalt him more [exaggerate],

7 – say he was from Savona

8 – and others [say] that he was Genoese

*9 – and still those that **reach further for the heights** [who exaggerate the most], make him from Plasencia, in which city are some honorable persons of his family, and tombs with arms and epitaphs of Colombo, because in effect [they say] this was already the surname and family name of his elders, although he, according to the country where he went to live and start new status, trimmed the word so that it conformed to the ancient, and distinguished those who proceed from him, from all the others who were collaterals, and this way [the exaggerators say] he called himself Colón.*

*(B) – **Considering this** [what was being said by others about the name and place of birth], I was convinced that in the same way that most of his things were accomplished through some mystery, also what has to do with the variety of **such a name and surname were not without mystery**.*

³²⁸ Don Hernando took shelter behind this sentence in order not to reveal anything more about his father than he knew was necessary.

(C) – Many names we could present as an example, that, **not without an occult reason**, were given as an indication of the effect that was going to follow, in a way that **it predicted the wonder and novelty of what he did**.

(D) – Because, if we consider the ordinary family name or surname of his elders, we could say that truly he was a colombo [a dove, only] **while** he brought the grace of the Holy Spirit to that New World, which he discovered. Showing, according to the baptism by Saint John the Baptist, how the Holy Spirit in the figure of a dove showed that He was the beloved son of God, that there [in the New World] was not known.

And [too] because over the waters of the Ocean he also took, like the dove of Noah, the olive and the oil of the Baptism, for the union and peace that those people with the Church would have, for they were entrapped in the ark of darkness and confusion.

(E) – And by consequence, it came to him appropriately the surname of **Colón**, which he renewed, because in **Greek it means member**.³²⁹ Because, using as his proper name Christopher, making it known what he was a **member** of, that is of **Christ**, for whom, for the health of those people he would be sent.

(F) – And then, if we want to reduce his name to the Latin pronunciation, which is **Christophorus Colonus**, we say that the same way it is said that Saint Christopher got that name because he passed Christ over the deepness of the waters with such danger, for which he was called Christopher [Christ bearer or porter], and this way, as he took and brought the people, which no other person was adequate to take them, the same way the Admiral, became **Christophorus Colonus**, supplicating to Christ His help and that He favor him in the dangers of his passage.

During the publication of Don Hernando's text in Italian, the translators used the wrong surname of Colombo for Don Hernando and not the correct Colón. This error greatly increased the confusion, especially for non-Castilian speakers. Alfredo Pinheiro Marques, like numerous others,

³²⁹ Há outros dous círculos na Esphera: os quaes se chamão Coluros: o seu officio he amostrar os Solsticios e Equinocios. Veo este nome Coluro de **Colon** que em grego quer dizer **membro**. NUNES, Pedro, *Tratado da Sphera*, Lisboa, 1537, 17.

wrote erroneously that “Hernando indicates that his father's original name was Colombo.”³³⁰ This is not a correct statement based on what Don Hernando wrote, as we transcribed above.

In Don Hernando's text there is nothing that objectively supports the claim that Don Cristóbal Colón had ever been named Colombo. Analyzing paragraph **A**, Don Hernando does not confirm or deny points 1, 2 and 3. Paragraphs **B** and **C** deny most of the points written in 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Contrary to what some construed, Don Hernando says in paragraphs **B** and **C** that his father's name originated from an “intentional mystery” and was “**invented** for hidden reasons.” The secret behind the pseudonym was known only by a selected and privileged few persons with access to the truth.

What is clear from Don Hernando's text is that he was not in a position to provide us with concrete data about his father's name and birthplace. Doing so would betray Don Cristóbal's expressed request, but we must accept that Don Hernando knew his father's true identity. It is the way to interpret what Don Hernando says. If he did not know his father's true name and lineage, he would be in no position to identify the lies others were publishing. Don Hernando had express orders to keep the secret, because his father, Don Hernando wrote, had “**wanted his homeland and his origins to be less certain and less known.**” Therefore, the secret also needed to be kept after Don Cristóbal's death.

In 2009, Consuelo Varela wrote that “the lack of indicating a precise birthplace can be interpreted as a premeditated omission by Colón and his family. What did they have to hide?”³³¹

Previously, during the 36th Congress of Americanists in 1966, Ramón Ezquerria Abadía acknowledged that “Colón never claimed that he was Genoese, or said nothing about his homeland, at least in the documentation that has come down to this day, and there is plenty of evidence that both he and his son Hernando endeavored to hide his origins.”³³²

The most fascinating thing to consider in a chapter entitled *About the **motherland, origins, and name** of Admiral Cristóbal Colón* is that Don Hernando did not write anything concrete to

³³⁰ MARQUES, Alfredo Pinheiro, *Portugal and the European Discovery of America...*, 18.

³³¹ La falta de una indicación precisa del lugar de nacimiento se puede interpretar como una emisión premeditada del mismo Colón y de la familia. ¿Qué tenían que ocultar? VARELA, Consuelo, *Cristóbal Colón y la Construcción de un mundo nuevo*, Archivo General de la Nación, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 2010, 51.

³³² Jamás ha afirmado Colón que fuera genovés, o nada ha dicho sobre su patria, por lo menos en la documentación que ha llegado hasta hoy, y sobran pruebas de que tanto él como su hijo Hernando han tratado de ocultar su origen. EZQUERRA ABADÍA, Ramón. *La nacionalidad de Colón: Estado actual del problema*. Sep. de Vol. 4 del XXXVI Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Sevilla, 1966, 415.

clarify his **motherland, origins**, nor his original **name** for future knowledge. Don Hernando left the mystery quite intact, contrary to what would be anticipated in a chapter with such a title.

Yet, the small clues Don Hernando left appear to be a clear challenge to us. Whatever the truth was, Hernando's carefully disclosed information would be obvious to all who knew Colón's identity, but to outsiders it was only a riddle to be deciphered. His ambiguity in that First Chapter left an intentional secrecy that grew to the massive confusion that remains to this day.

In addition, much of what Don Hernando wrote in this chapter, as we can clearly see, was not what he himself wanted to say, but what third parties desired him to write. According to Don Hernando, some of those people attempted to completely reveal the truth about his father, a very important secret to be kept, while others exaggerated the lies. Don Hernando merely attempted to maintain the balance by alerting us to the liars and to a possible path to the truth.

In the above-mentioned part **A**, the author clearly stated that he would not reveal the mystery because his father had expressed a desire that both his place of birth and lineage should remain hidden from the public. Thus, Hernando excused himself from such a task by saying that Don Cristóbal wanted it that way.

Examining Don Hernando's words, we must conclude that he only revealed possible birthplaces that would not betray his father's secret.³³³ All those who claimed that the navigator was born here or there did so either to devalue the Admiral's fame and prestige, or out of a desire to boast; that is, at the expense of the truth by inventing or lying. And those who invented the most insisted that the navigator was a Colombo from Placencia and that he had shortened the name Colombo to Colón.

Countering this point, Don Hernando tried, once again, to find a possible balance between preventing the lies from growing and the concern of speaking too much of the truth. He started part **B** with "considering this" and ended up stating that the name was "**not without mystery.**" Then, in the excerpt marked **D**, the author made an attempt to counter those rumors with some factual information. He explained that his father could be seen as a *colombo* (dove), as people were already misnaming Colón, only if they wanted to compare him to the dove of the Holy Spirit or

³³³ Lo lógico es suponer que Cristóbal Colón nació en cualquier parte del mundo menos en Génova [...] Hay razones para sostener que ni siquiera fué italiano, porque en este idioma no existe carta ni documento alguno de Colón. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?, Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 270, 272.

the dove of Noah's Ark. The only conclusion that we can draw from these paragraphs is that Don Hernando wanted to convey that his father's original surname had never been Colombo, as many were already erroneously claiming.

Nothing in the above text allows us to sustain what would be the real name nor the real birthplace of Don Hernando's father. Everything in the public sphere was limited to rumors created by third parties, which Don Hernando repeated with the intention of underlining the difficulty that anyone would have in discovering the truth about his father. The truth was well covered-up, not only due to the mystery his father had created with his pseudonym, but in particular, due to the large amount of misinformation that was being spread by uninformed authors that had already engulfed the identity of the famous Admiral of the Indies by the 1530s.

Given the massive amount of misinformation written, not only in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, but also nowadays, prudence is vital in the interpretation of any available clues. Distilling the text from Don Hernando's First Chapter above, discounting the rumors and exaggerations, we may conclude that:

Being his ancestors of the royal blood of Jerusalem [...] the Admiral wanted his homeland and origins to be less certain and known [...] the choice of such a name *Cristóbal* and surname *Colón* was not without mystery [...] the name was chosen for hidden reasons to serve as the announcement of the feat he was going to accomplish [...] he took the surname Colón which comes from the Greek word for *member* (member of Christ), and also renewed it as a coded reference to his ancient Roman ancestor Columna [...] and the Latin form of the pseudonym would be *Christophorus Colonus*.

In this synthesized extract there seems to be no contradiction, and it may even be the only part of the text where Don Hernando describes the truth about his father.

The word *colon* in Latin derives from the Greek *κῶλον* (*kōlon*), which does have the meaning of member in Greek.³³⁴ Therefore, all other versions of the surname can be discarded because the Greek word *Kōlon* for member does not have the same meaning as Colombo in Italian,

³³⁴ The Greek and Latin terms for *colon* are *κῶλον* and *membrum*, both of which mean “limb” or “part of the body.” NÄSSELQVIST, Dan, *Public Reading in Early Christianity: Lectors, Manuscripts, and Sound in the Oral Delivery of John 1-4*, Brill, 2016, note 17, 124.

which in turn corresponds to pigeon. Furthermore, the Latin name *Christopher Columbus* is not the same as the Latin name *Christophorus Colonus* that Don Hernando wrote:

Columbus is Latin.

Colombo is Italian.

Colombe is French.

Colom is Catalan.

Palomo is Castilian.

Pombo is Portuguese.

All of these names mean περιστέρι [peristéri], the word for pigeon in Greek. Therefore, a *pigeon* clearly does not mean the same as a *member*. The English words *colon* (:) and *semicolon* (;) both come from the Greek *kōlon*, which among other things means “member”, precisely as Don Hernando explained. The Portuguese mathematician Pedro Nunes stated in his 1537 *Tratado da Sphera* that “the name *Coluro* came from *Colon*, which in Greek means *member*.”³³⁵

Like Don Hernando, Las Casas also wrote that the navigator's *name* and *surname* were invented by him, through Divine Providence “to undertake the feat that the name and surname described.”³³⁶ For this reason, Las Casas says that the navigator “wanted to call himself *Colón*”, and that he called himself by the name of *Cristóbal*; or to be more precise, *Christum ferens*, which means bearer or bringer of Christ. Thus, Las Casas asserts how the navigator’s full name was invented. Neither the first name nor the surname were the ones the Admiral had from baptism.

³³⁵ NUNES, Pedro, *Tratado da Sphera*, Lisboa, 1537, 17.

³³⁶ Pero este ilustre hombre, dejado el apellido [Colonna?] introducido por la costumbre, quiso llamarse Colon, restituyéndose al vocablo antiguo, no tanto acaso, según es de creer, cuanto por voluntad divina que para obrar lo que su **nombre** y **sobrenombre** significaba lo elegia. Suele la divinal Providencia ordenar, que se pongan nombres y sobrenombres á las personas que señala para se servir conformes á los oficios que les determina cometer, según asaz parece por muchas partes de la Sagrada Escritura; y el filósofo en el IV de la Metafisica, dice: “que los nombres deben convenir con las propiedades y oficios de las cosas.” Llamóse, pues, por nombre, Cristóbal, conviene á saber, *Christum ferens*, que quiere decir traedor ó llevador de Cristo, y así se firma él algunas veces; como en la verdad él haya sido el primero que abrió las puertas deste mar Océano, por donde entró y él metió á estas tierras tan remotas y reinos, hasta entonces tan incógnitos, á nuestro Salvador Jesucristo, y á su bendito nombre, el cual fué digno que antes que otro diese noticia de Cristo y le hiciese adorar á estas innúmeras y tantos siglos olvidadas naciones. Tuvo por sobrenombre Colón, que quiere decir poblador de nuevo, el cual sobrenombre le convino en cuanto por su industria y trabajos fué causa que descubriendo estas gentes, infinitas ánimas dellas, mediante la predicación del Evangelio y administración de los eclesiásticos sacramentos, hayan ido y vayan cada día á poblar de nuevo aquella triunfante ciudad del cielo. También le convino porque de España trajo el primera gente (si ella fuera, cual debia ser) para hacer colonias. LAS CASAS, T. I, 43.

Perpetuating the mystery, the Admiral chose to sign his documents with a cryptogram, a signature of which there is still no agreement as to its exact meaning. He did not sign as Cristóbal Colón, but with a Greek-Latin combination of *Christo-ferens*, as shown in Figure 11.

The full solution to this encrypted signature remains elusive. Many have attempted to decipher the top three lines of code in the signature - .S., .S. A .S., X M Y -, but no solution has yet been presented that can be accepted beyond doubt.

On the lower line, Don Cristóbal usually wrote two dots (:) – which was designated in old writing as **the perfect separator** or *colon* – and on the right side the period (.) and slash (/), **the imperfect separator**, which is like our *semicolon*.³³⁷ It appears the admiral was employing this *colon* symbol as his chosen last name of Colón/Kōlon.

Between the colon and the semicolon is the designation he chose for his first name - XpōFERENS. *Xpō* is a combined Greek form for Christ and *FERENS*, which is a form of the Latin verb *fero*, meaning in the broad sense “making the crossing, bringing, transporting, ferrying.” We believe that the best deciphering of XpōFERENS is *CristóVAM* (**vam** is the plural of **vou** in Portuguese), and that the */* stands for *Kōlon* (Member). The name was a motto chosen by the navigator as *Cristo-Vou Membro* (Christ-Going Member). Both Las Casas and Don Hernando explained that the Admiral’s name was chosen as his life’s slogan.

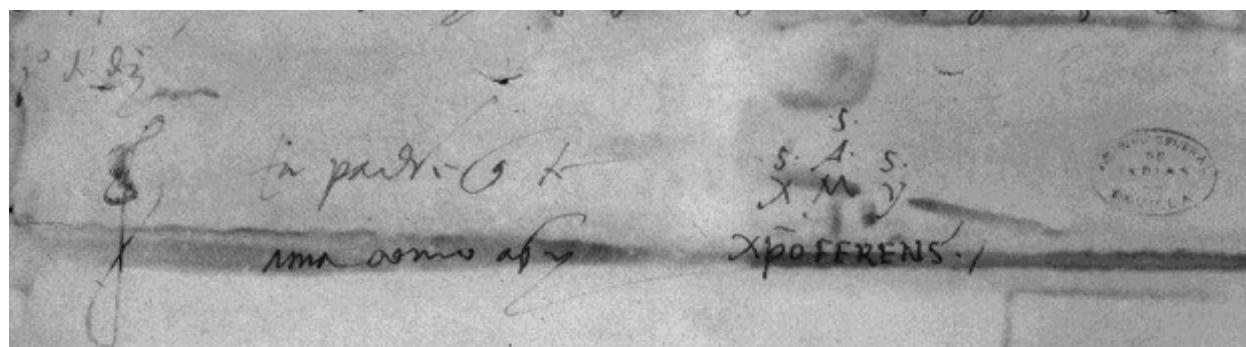
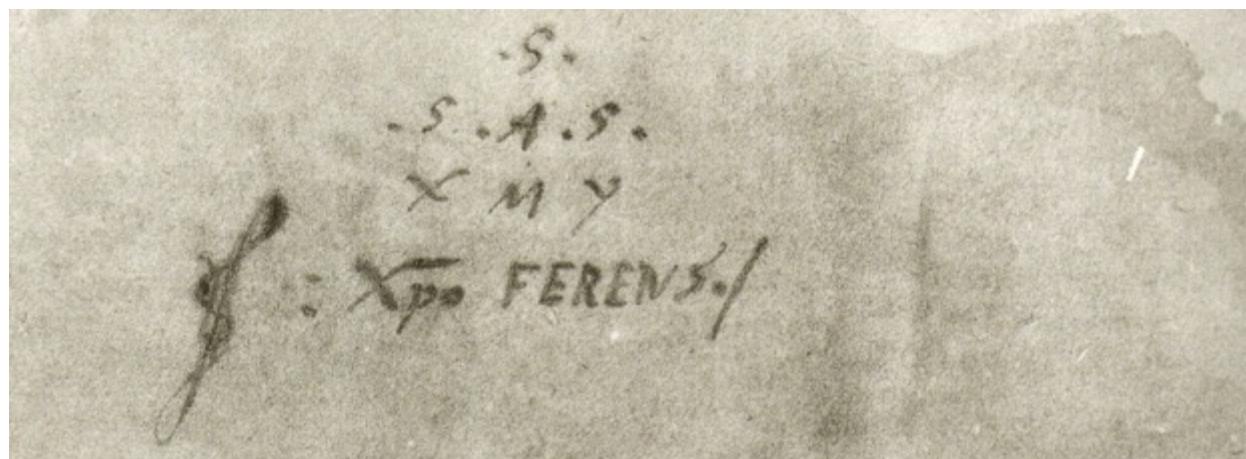
It seems reasonable to believe that the argonaut's pseudonym served as his life’s motto and his cryptic signature would have a special meaning to him, and perhaps to no one else.

³³⁷ Xpo Ferens ou Christoferens, vê-se na gravura um ponto e logo adiante um traço em diagonal, o qual traço é repetido inúmeras vezes nos textos, autógrafos, e representa sem dúvida alguma a vírgula. E mais interessante é que o ponto é substituído por dois traços paralelos, a indicar fim de oração. Aquele ponto seguido de uma vírgula deve ser, pois, parte de oração, exigindo maior pausa que a simples vírgula e menos que o ponto final nele representado pela vírgula dobrada. Ora entre os latinos a parte da oração assim dividida chamava-se **colon**, e o grande navegador chama-se em castelhano Colón também. DORNELAS, Afonso, *Elementos para o estudo etimológico do apelido Colon*, Centro Tipográfico Colonial, Lisboa, 1926, 14.

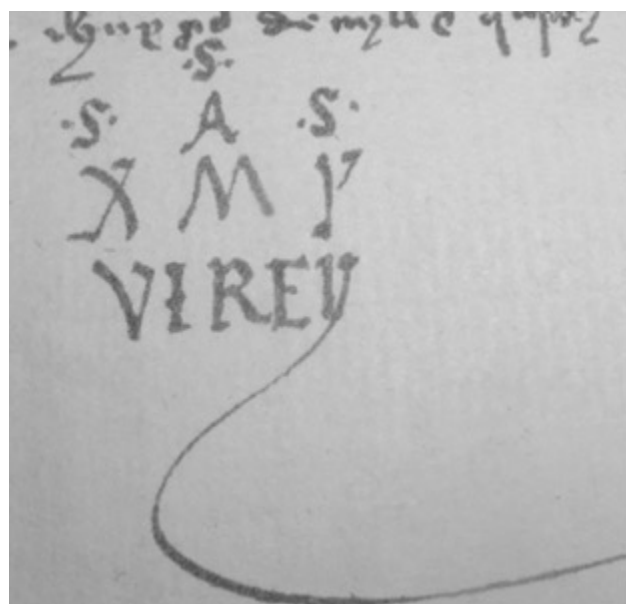
— O pequeno traço a seguir ao “Christoferens”, era o que em espanhol se chama “Colon” e que representa um membro principal dum período gramatical, tendo o nome de “colon” perfeito” o que completa em si um sentido, ou “colon imperfeito”, o membro dum período que depende doutro membro para se completar, como por exemplo nos diz o “Dicionário Espanhol-Português” por Manuel do Canto e Castro de Mascarenhas Valdez. Lisboa, 1864. *Idem*, 15.

Figure 11

Three signatures and the Viceroy seal, all showing the mysterious pyramid of letters used by Don Cristóbal Colón which still lacks a satisfactory decipherment.



Source: Archivo de Indias



Source: FALCÓ Y OSORIO, *Autógrafos de Cristóbal Colón y Papeles de América*, 38-39

Like his actual identity, the signature remains a true puzzle to be deciphered and has resulted in frustration for almost all researchers, including Consuelo Varela, who just 10 years ago declared the following:

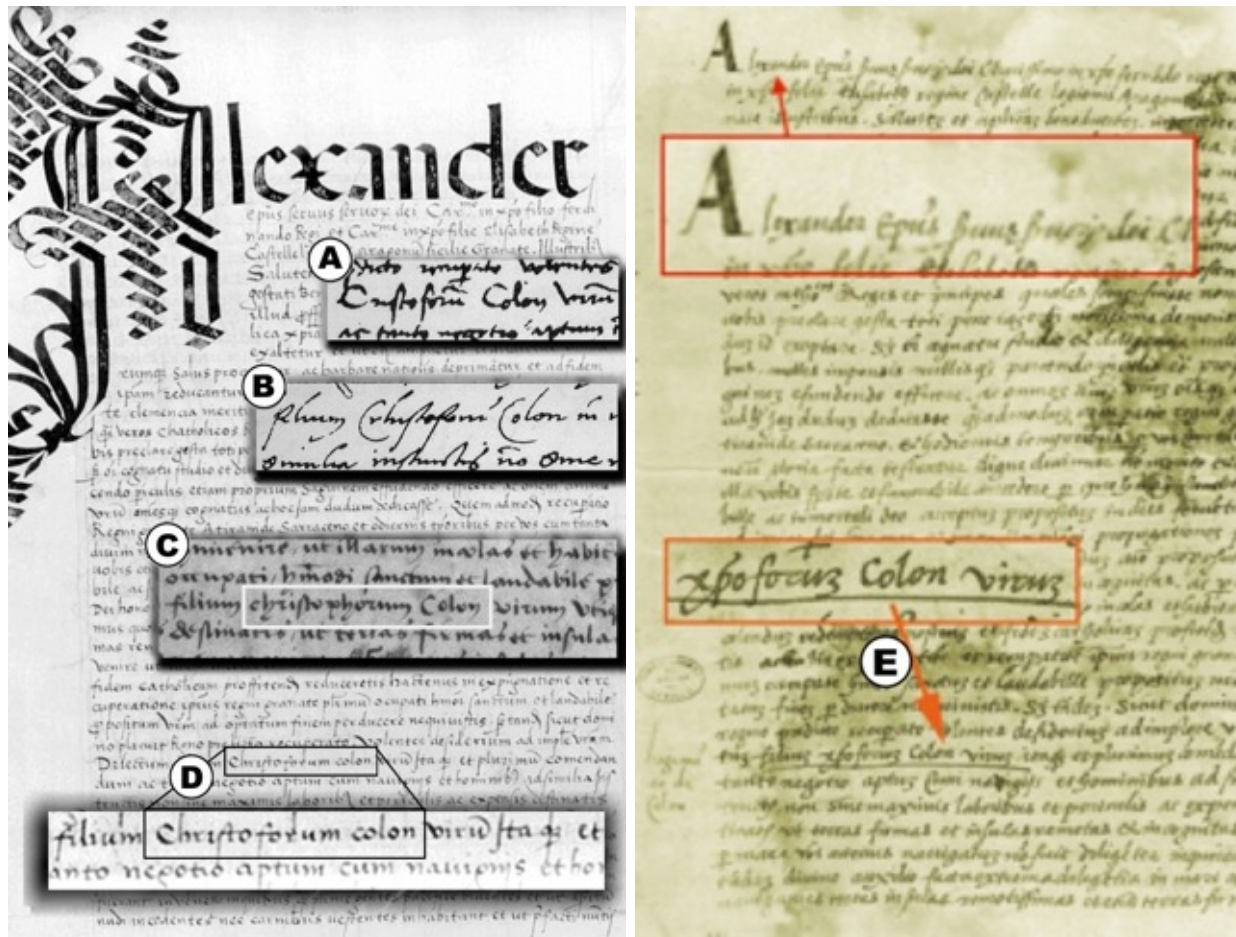
I do not know what he wanted to express in his signature - impossible for me to decipher - nor do I know where his bones rest, nor do I know if his father was a weaver of wool or silk, that even to such strange extremes the discussions reach. We still have secrets that may one day be revealed and that little by little we are clarifying. Thus, the appearance of new texts is giving us, five hundred years after his death, a different vision from the one we have maintained until now [...] Despite the fact that we have a good number of autograph letters and that we have the accounts that his contemporaries left us, we're still uninformed on many aspects of his life, of which there remain dark and even incomprehensible passages [...] Who was Colón? What was he like? These are not easy questions to answer. Despite the fact that he is one of the historical figures with one of the largest bibliographies, we are still in the dark about many aspects of his life and work. We do not know the place where he was born.³³⁸

Although the chosen family surname was and is **Colón**, and Don Hernando insisted that the correct Latin surname was **Colonus**, the non-Castilian world has continued to call the Admiral by *Colombo* or *Columbus*, with the justification that *Columbus* was the Latin version of the Castilian word Colón. Yet, in various letters from Pope Alexander VI in 1493, all of them written in Latin, the Admiral's surname is always *Colon* and never *Columbus* - see Figure 12.

³³⁸ No sé qué quiso expresar en esa firma –para mí imposible de descifrar– ni sé dónde reposan sus huesos, ni sé si su padre era tejedor de lana o de seda, que hasta esos extremos tan peregrinos llega la discusión. Nos quedan, aún, secretos que algún día se irán desvelando y que poco a poco vamos aclarando. Así, la aparición de nuevos textos nos está proporcionando, quinientos años después de su muerte, una visión diferente de la que hasta ahora hemos mantenido [...] Pese a que poseemos un buen número de autógrafos y a que contamos con las relaciones que dejaron sus contemporáneos, aún ignoramos muchos aspectos de su vida en la que existen pasajes oscuros e, incluso, incomprensibles [...] ¿Quién era Colón? ¿Cómo era? No son cuestiones fáciles de responder. Pese a que es uno de los personajes históricos que gozan de mayor bibliografía, muchos aspectos de su vida y obra quedan aún en la penumbra. Desconocemos el lugar Donde nació. VARELA, Consuelo, *Cristóbal Colón y la construcción de un mundo nuevo*. Estudios, 1983-2008, Archivo General de la Nación, Editora Búho, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 2010, 27.

Figure 12

Text from five Papal Bulls where the surname is *Colon* and not Columbus.



Note: Author compilations from various sources.

The use of the name Colón by Pope Alexander VI would not be an oversight. The Pope limited himself to using the correct Latin form of the Greek κῶλον. He must have known that he had to write *colon*, as in member, and not *columbus* as in pigeon.

Rui de Pina wrote, in 1504, “arrived at Restelo in Lisbon *Xpõvam Colõbo Italiano*.” However, in João de Barros's book, the name was corrected to *Colom*. The Colom of João de Barros should not be considered as a shortened form of Colombo, but rather a Portuguese version of the Spanish Colón. In Portuguese the final nasalization is not written with *n*.

The tradition of using the incorrect version of the surname in Portugal as Colombo, or Columbus in other parts of the world, instead of Colón, did not start with Rui de Pina in 1504. In fact, in Castile the surname first appeared as *Colomo* in the first records of payments that the Court of Castile made to the navigator.

From a letter written by the Duke of Medinaceli, we learn that upon entering Castile the navigator was hosted in his palace for about two years. The duke later wrote to Queen Isabel proposing that she be the sponsor of the discovery voyage, resulting in Colón's first audience at the Castilian Court on January 20, 1486.³³⁹

Since that date, the Court found itself obliged to favor the future admiral with subsidies for his maintenance, paid during several years. “The receipts of the year 1486 are lost [...] in large part, the receipts of aid with expenses for 1487 remain intact,” wrote Rumeu de Armas.³⁴⁰

In the entries made by the treasurer Francisco Gonzáles about these subsidies, we find several times the surname written as *Colomo* instead of Colón, as in this example of May 5, 1487:

*On this day I gave to Cristóbal Colomo, **foreigner**, three thousand maravedís, who is here [Córdoba] doing some things of service to Their Highnesses; by certificate of Alonso de Quintanilla, with order of the bishop.*³⁴¹

But it seems that as early as June 1488, Francisco Gonzáles de Sevilla started to call him Colom, time at which he wrote that he “gave Cristóbal **Colom** three thousand *mrs.* by order of

³³⁹ RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *El Portugués...*, 13.

³⁴⁰ *Idem*, 17.

³⁴¹ En dicho día di a Cristóbal **Colomo**, extranjero, tres mil maravedís, que está aqui [Córdoba] haciendo algunas cosas complideras al servicio de Sus Altezas; por cédula de Alonso de Quintanilla, con mandamiento del obispo. *Idem*, 18.

Their Highnesses.”³⁴² Note that, although initially some members of the Castilian court used the name Colomo, the documents eventually change to the correct form of Colón.

Consuelo Varela affirms that translating Colón from Spanish into Italian could only give the word “Colomo or **Colonna**, **never** Colombo.”³⁴³ Therefore, Colomo would not be the same name as Colombo in Italian because Colonna is not Colombo.

Surprisingly, in a document from 1511, during the designated *Pleitos Colombinos* (Colóns’ Lawsuit against the crown), Don Hernando Colón appears with the surname Colona - “they ordered this petition be given to Don Fernando **Colona** [...] I notified the said Don Fernando de **Colona**.”³⁴⁴ The confusion that the Admiral’s new identity was provoking in Castille becomes thus evident.

If Don Cristóbal descended from the Colonna bloodline, an ancient noble house, then his life could be easily explained within the social norms of the time:

- He would have an Italian heritage, making Rui de Pina’s description plausible.
- He would be noble enough to marry Filipa Moniz.
- And he would have formulated his surname Colon from his Colonna ancestor.

³⁴² Relación de varias cantidades entregadas á Cristóbal Colón. En las cuentas del tesorero de Sevilla Francisco González, al fol. 76, se halla esta partida: “5 de Mayo 1487, di á Cristóbal Colomo, extranjero que está aqui faciendo algunas cosas complideras á servicio de SS. AA. por cédula de Alonso de Quintanilla con mandamiento del Obispo, tres mil mrs.” Al fol. 78 v., 27 de Agosto. “Di á Cristóbal Colomo cuatro mil mrs. para ir al Real por mandado de SS. AA. por cédula del Obispo.” Y sigue de mano de los Contadores: “Son siete mil mrs. con tres mil que se le mandaron dar para ayuda de su costa por otra parte en 3 de julio.” Al fol. 80 v., 15 de Octubre 1487. “Di á Cristóbal Colomo cuatro mil mrs. que SS. AA. le mandaron dar para ayuda á su costa por cédula del Obispo.” Al fol. 89 v., 16 de Junio 1488. “Di á Cristóbal **Colom** tres mil mrs. Por cédula de Sus Altezas.” Siguen otras varias partidas á favor del mismo hasta el año de 1492. Archivo de Simancas, Contadurías generales, 1ª época, n.º 43, Colecc. de docum. Inéd. de Indias, t. xix, p. 456-457. *Bibliografía Colombina*, Enumeración de Libros y Documentos Concernientes á Cristobal Colón y Sus Viajes, Obra Que Publica la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 1892, 3-4.

³⁴³ Ambos textos siembran una duda razonable: ¿era Colón el antiguo apellido, castellano o español, de la familia? Para más confusión, en Génova no hay Colombos anteriores a Giovanni Colombo, el abuelo paterno de Cristóbal Colón. Efectivamente, como demostró Juan Gil hace años, Colón, sus hijos y sus hermanos –por expreso deseo de Don Cristóbal– eran los Colón [...] Si se trataba de una familia española emigrada a Italia, **Colón hubiera dado Colomo o Colonna, nunca Colombo**. VARELA, Consuelo, *Cristóbal Colón y la construcción de un mundo nuevo*. Estudios, 1983-2008, Archivo General de la Nación, Editora Búho, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 2010, 53-54.

³⁴⁴ Mandaron dar traslado desta peticion a Don Fernando **Colona** [...] notifique al dicho Don Fernando de **Colona**. *Colección de documentos inéditos, relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar*, Real Academia de la Historia, Est. tip. "Sucesores de Rivadeneyra," 1892, T. Núm 7, I de Los Pleitos de Colón, 30.

Remarkably, the first time we see the name written as Colón was in a letter from King João II dated March 20, 1488.³⁴⁵ By that letter, which was an answer to another sent by the famous argonaut to the King of Portugal, we must accept that, in Castile, he had always called himself Colón. João II begins his letter with “*Xpoval Colon* [...] We saw the letter you wrote to us and the goodwill and caring that you have shown **being in our service**, We thank you dearly,” - see Figure 13.³⁴⁶

As seen in other contemporary documents like the *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe*, of April 1492, and in the letter from Queen Isabel making Don Diogo page at the Court, the correct surname is Colón. It is a fact that the family has called itself Colón to the current day. People from outside the family are the ones who have given them other surnames that were not the correct surname of the navigator.

Even Don Hernando Colón’s surname was changed by the Italians to *Colombo* when they printed his manuscript, and this does not correspond to the truth of his surname. Don Hernando was born in Castile, he was baptized with the surname Colón, and explained in that same manuscript that the family surname was not Colombo for pigeon, but Colón for member.

Notwithstanding, Hernando’s clarification was ignored by the translator. In the *Historie*, Hernando’s surname, his father’s surname, his brother’s surname, and his uncles’ surnames were all changed to Colombo. Mistranslation is one of the reasons why most nations in the world mistakenly know the Spanish Colón family by one or another spelling coming from Colombo in the Italian language:

³⁴⁵ La amistad con Juan II es un primer indicio. En la famosa carta de 22 de marzo de 1488, suscrita en Avis, el monarca luso se dirige al navegante, en términos cordiales, llamándole “Cristovam Collon, noso especial amigo, em Sevilha.” Esta familiaridad hace pensar en una relación asidua y constante, antes que en un trato puramente circunstancial de negocios de Estado. RUMEAU DE ARMAS, *Él Portugués...*, 39.

— Assignatura do monarcha, perfeitamente identica á do seu testamento e ás de outros diplomas do Archivo Nacional por elle subscriptos, concludo, sem hesitações, que o documento é authenticico. VIGNAUD, Henry, *Histoire critiques de la Grande Enterprise...*, 675-676.

³⁴⁶ **Xpovam Collon**, nosso especial amigo de Sevilha: **Xpoval Colon**: Nós Dom Joham per graça de Deos Rey de Portugall e dos Algarves, daquem e dallem mar em Africa, Senhor de Guinee vos enviamos muito saudar. Vimos a carta que nos escreveste e a boa vontade e afeição que por ella mostraes teerdes a nosso serviço. Vos agradecemos muito. E quanto a vossa vinda cá, certa, assy pollo que apontaes como por outros respeitos para que a vossa industria e bom engenho nos será necessário, nós a desejamos e prazer-nos-ha muyto de vyrdes porque em o que vos toca se dará de tal forma de que vós devaas ser contente. E porque por ventura terees algum reço das nossas justiça por razam dalgumas cousas a que sejaes obrigado. Nós por esta nossa Carta vos seguramos polla vinda, estada, e tornada, que não sejaes preso, reteudo, acusado, citado, nem demandado por nenhuma cousa ora que seja civil ou crime, de qualquer qualidade. E pella mesma mandamos a todas nossas justiça que o cumpram assy. E portanto vos rogamos e encomendamos que vossa vinda seja loguo e para isso non tenhaes pejo algum e agradecer-vo-lo-hemos e teremos muito em serviço. Scripta em Avis a vinte de Março de 1488. EL-REY. PATRONATO, 295, N.1, Archivo General de Indias, Seville.

*Hernando was the first to recognize the importance of determining why the Discoverer came to use the name “Colón.” English-speaking people are unique in the Western world in using the form “Columbus,” one that the **family never used**.³⁴⁷*

But it was not the publishing of the *Historie* in 1571 in Italy that initiated the alteration of Colón into Colombo. The mistake had already happened in Rome in April 1493. Ever since that time, the mistake of changing Colón into Colombo was spread to all non-Spanish-speaking nations. The error continued until the present day and has been impossible to correct. This fact caused Afonso Dornelas to write that “Colon certainly never imagined that confusion could arise between Colombos and Colóns.”³⁴⁸

It is not clear how Pedro Posa managed to get his hands on the famous letter sent by Don Cristóbal from Lisbon on March 4, 1493, addressed to Luis de Santángel. The fact is that the navigator's missive was printed in Barcelona in the first half of April 1493. It was quickly translated into Latin and printed again in Rome April 29, 1493. This was just a couple of weeks later.

As soon as he anchored in Lisbon on March 4, 1493, Don Cristóbal Colón sent a letter to Luis de Santángel, clerk of Ración de la Corona de Aragón, who, not only had helped to convince Queen Isabel to sponsor him, but had also lent money to the Castilian Crown to finance the voyage. This letter was printed by Pedro Posa in Barcelona:

*Your Lordship: Because I know that you will be pleased with the great victory that Our Lord has given me on my voyage, I write this by which you will know [...] But I ran here into this port of Lisbon today, which was the greatest wonder in the world, where I decided to write to Their Highnesses [...] This letter was sent by **Colom** to the Escrivano de Ración about the islands discovered in the Indies, contained in another letter to Their Highnesses.*³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ DAVIDSON, 14.

³⁴⁸ DORNELAS, Afonso, *Elementos para o estudo etimológico do apelido Colon*, Centro Tipográfico Colonial, Lisboa, 1926, 10.

³⁴⁹ Señor: Porque se que aureis plazer de la grand vitoria que Nuestro Señor me ha dado en mi viaje vos escriuo esta por la qual sabreys [...] Pero cori aqui en este puerto de Lisbona oy que fue la mayor marauilla del mundo adonde acorde escriuir a Sus Altezas [...] Esta carta enbio Colom al Escriuano de Racion de las yslas halladas en las

The error made by Pedro Posa when printing the surname as *Colom* happened, most probably, innocently - see Figure 14.

Contrary to Portugal, where Colom corresponded to a Portuguese form of the Spanish Colón, in Catalan, unfortunately, the word *colom* means pigeon. The Catalan *colom* is equivalent to the Italian *colombo* and the Latin *columbus*, all of which are not the same as the *kōlon* in Greek. This small misspelling by Pedro Posa, using an *m* instead of an *n* was the first step.

However, a bigger error arose just a few weeks later when Posa's letter was translated into Latin and printed in Rome. This Roman publication further corrupted the name Colom into *Columbo*, as was shown in Figure 2. We can document the Bishop of Monte Peloso with the infamy of being the first person to have given the corrupted name Columbo to Colón.

Quickly printed throughout Europe, the Latin letter became a bestseller with some eleven editions published in 1493 alone. Between 1494 and 1497, six more editions were published spreading the news of the discovery to the four corners of Europe. The letters carried a notorious error, since the name of the Admiral was no longer Colón but instead Columbo.

This mistake is the best example of how the confusion gained wings to implement the incorrect form of the name nearly all over the world.

The unaware public never knew they were being communicated an error. Therefore, all places outside Spain started to know the Admiral by the wrong name of Colombo/Columbus.

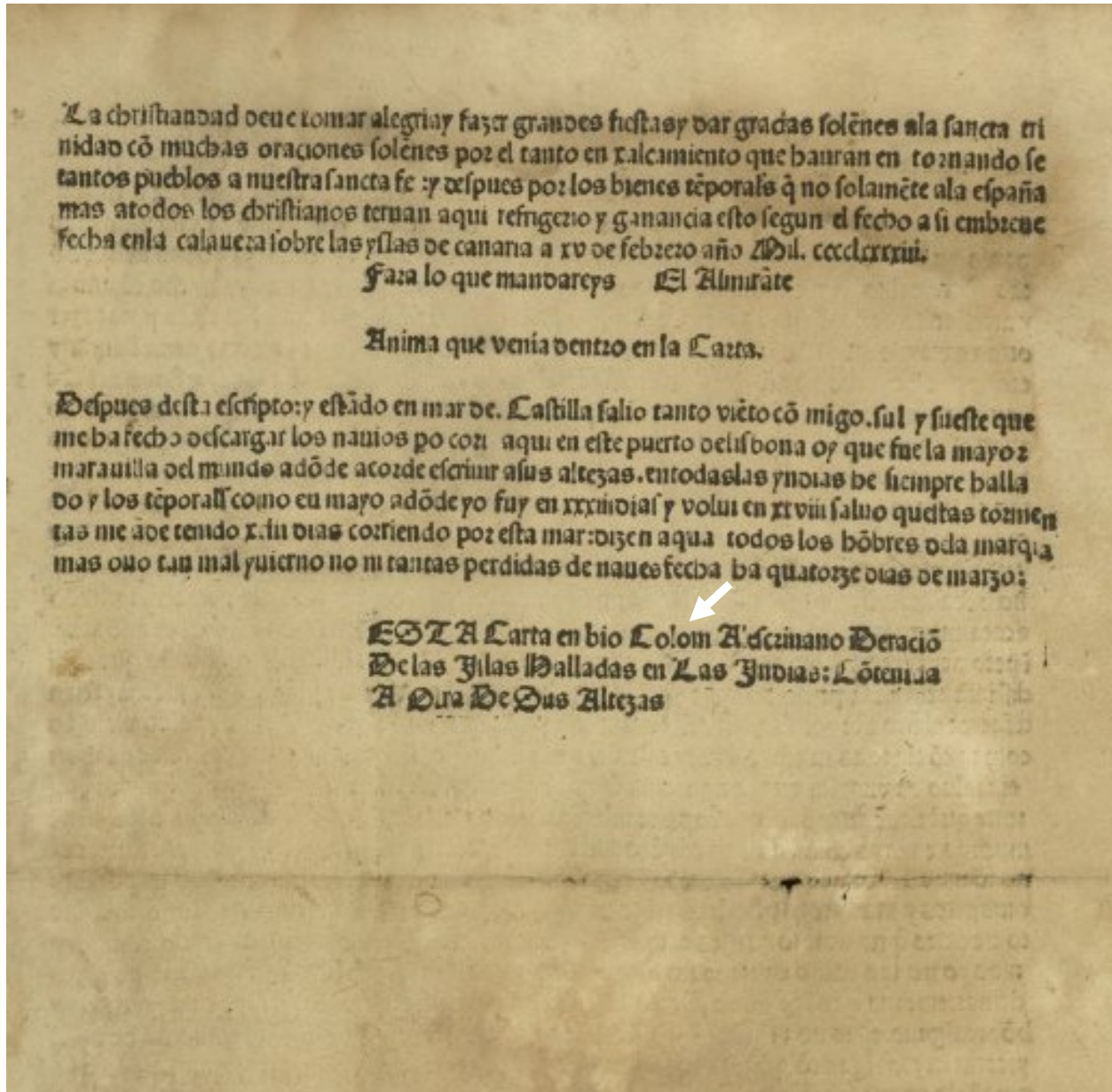
Hence, we can comprehend how as early as 1493 writers, printers and translators have been altering the facts about the Admiral's life. First they distorted the name of Colón to Colom in Catalan, and then, successively, to Columbo, Columbus, Colombo, Kolomb, and many more. The rest, as they say, is history, albeit erroneous.

No letters were published in Portugal about the discovery of the Indies. Discovering new lands in the Atlantic was not surprising news in this kingdom. Moreover, the Portuguese at that time had a practice of not publishing news on Atlantic discoveries.

Yndias, contenida a otra de Sus Altezas. POSA, Pedro, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/7fbc3989-f804-30a9-e040-e00a18067752/book#page/1/mode/2up>.

Figure 14

Second page of the Barcelona Letter printed in April 1493 by Pedro Posa, ending with, “This letter sent Colom...” (arrow). Colom means pigeon in Catalan.



Source: The New York Public Library, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/7fbc3989-f804-30a9-e040-e00a18067752/#?uuiid=7fbc3989-f807-30a9-e040-e00a18067752>

Two letters sent by King João II to the Kings of Castile mentioning the First Admiral of the Indies have recently come to light.³⁵⁰ These two letters provide some very interesting facts: in the first letter, João II does not give a last name to the First Admiral; while in the second the King of Portugal gives him the wrong surname of Colombo.

We know today that João II wrote three letters referring to the navigator. The first one, shown in Figure 13 from March 20, 1488, was sent directly to *Xpoval Colon*, in response to another sent by the future Admiral to that king.

As noted, in 1488 the surname is written correctly as Colón; but on May 3, 1493, King João II sends a letter to the court of Castile where he writes merely “due to perils of the sea, there arrived at the port of our city of Lisbon **Dom Christouam** (Lord Christopher) your Admiral, whom we greatly enjoyed seeing and ordered be treated well.”³⁵¹

In the May 3 letter, João II seems to have forgotten Colón’s surname, referring to him only as **Lord Christopher!**

On May 23, João II sends another letter to the court of Castile in which the Admiral is now given a surname. Don Cristóbal now had that surname of “Colombo” which the non-Castilian writers were giving him through the publication of the Latin letter:

³⁵⁰ Una carta remitida por Juan II, rey de Portugal, a Fernando el Católico en la que le informa del regreso a Europa - vía Lisboa- de Cristóbal Colón después de haber descubierto nuevos territorios en su viaje a las Indias. La misiva está fechada el 3 de mayo de 1493. <https://www.elcorreo.com/culturas/encuentran-toledo-documento-20190621151941-ntrc.html>

³⁵¹ Muyto alto muyto exçellente e poderoso princepe Irmaão Nos dom Ioham per graça de deus Rey de portugal e dos algarues d aaquem e d aallem mar em africa e senhor de guinee vos enuiamos muyto saudar como aquelle que muyto amamos e preçamos veeo teer com fortuna do mar ao nosso porto da nossa cidade de lixboa **dom christouam vosso almirante** que folgamos muyto de veer e mandar tratar bem por ser cousa vossa, E por vosso Respeito no caso que quisesse hir per terra por que mais çedo fosse a vos lhe mandamos dar cartas e auiaimento pera despachadamente poder hir per nossos Reynos. E ouuemos muyto prazer de sua nauegaçom e por seu trabalho nom seer sem boom efecto e asy da maneira que teue em comprir vosso mandado em sua nauegaçom acerqua do que a nos compria segundo nos certificou e Nos a vossas cousas avemos sempre de fazer por as estimarmos e querermos como as nossas proprias, sobre o quall stpreuemos mais largamente a Rui de sande caualeiro de nossa casa e alcaide moor de torres vedras alguñas cousas que vos falara, Rogamos uos muy afectuosamente, praza uos dar lhe Inteira fe, Muyto alto muyto excelente e poderoso princepe e Irmaão nosso senhor aia vossa pessoa e Real stado em sua santa guarda, stprita em torres vedras a iij dias de mayo de 1493. El Rey. PINTO, Pedro, *Carta de Don João II a Fernando, Rei De Castela E Aragão, Sobre a Chegada a Lisboa do Almirante Don Cristóvão Colombo (1493)*, Fragmenta Historica 7, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2019, 120.

*As for the announcements and prohibitions that you requested that we order so that no caravels and ships of our kingdoms and outside of them, go to what Don Christouam **Colombo** your Admiral has newly discovered.*³⁵²

This third letter from João II, just twenty days after the previous, seems even stranger than that one, which had no last name. Although it was often customary for high nobles to be described by their titles instead of last names, it seems strange that the same **Admiral Don Cristóbal** of May 3, 1493 would then, on May 23, 1493 be given the wrong surname of **Colombo**! Why the incoherence?

At this point, we must deeply consider what happened to King João II on May 23, 1493 for him to write Colombo instead of Colón. It seems that it was not an error, but an intentional maneuver.

This was the same Cristóbal Colón that we are told the King of Portugal knew so well that:

- he met with him to discuss matters of navigation in Portugal before he moved to Castile;
- he allowed him to sail to Mina and to other protected routes in the domains of the Kingdom of Portugal;
- he met him together with Mestre José Vizinho in 1485 to review the Table of the Height of the Sun at the Equator;³⁵³
- he met with him and Bartolomeu Dias in 1488 to review the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope;³⁵⁴
- he met with him at Vale do Paraíso for three long days, from March 9 to 11, in 1493,³⁵⁵ to discuss and review the discovery of the Americas, where the Admiral

³⁵² Recebemos huia vossa carta de creença, e ouuimos alguas cousas que da vossa parte per vertude della nos disse, E quanto aos pregões e defesa que nos enuiaes Requerer e que mandemos dar pera que nenhuas carauellas e nauios de nossos Reynos e fora delles, nom vão ao que ora nouamente achou **dom christouam colombo vosso almirante**... PINTO, Pedro, *Carta de Don João II a Fernando, Rei de Castela e Aragão, sobre a suspensão da saída de navios para prosseguir as descobertas (1493)*, Fragmenta Historica 7, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2019, 122.

³⁵³ THACHER, Vol. III, 479.

³⁵⁴ TEXTOS, 11.

³⁵⁵ **8 de Marzo**: Hoy recibió el Almirante una carta del Rey de Portugal con Don Martín de Noronha, por la cual le rogaba que se llegase adonde él estaba, pues el tiempo no era para partir con la carabela; y así lo hizo por quitar sospecha, puesto que no quisiera ir, y fue a dormir a Sacamben. Mandó el Rey a sus hacedores que todo lo que

most certainly presented himself as Don Cristóbal Colón, and not as Colombo, a name he never used;

- and, he had written to him in 1488, calling him **Colón**, and saying that “because your industriousness and good ingenuity are very necessary to us, we desire your presence and will be very pleased with your arrival.”

How could João II now call him **Colombo** if Colón was the surname that the navigator invented and used? Don Cristóbal would most definitely not present himself at the Portuguese court as Colombo. The Admiral of the Indies Don Cristóbal appears to be misnamed from Colón to Colombo the same way that the French Admiral Guillaume de Caseneuve Coullon was often labelled Colombo.

Why did João II give him a false name in the letter of May 23, 1493?

In our view, João II did so intentionally. He did this to further deflect and cover-up the truth of the navigator's identity utilizing the surname Colombo to make it even more difficult for the public to uncover the true identity of a nobleman that he wanted censored in Portugal. Remembering that the first Latin publication was published circa April 29, it could be enough time for the corrupted name of *Columbo* to reach Lisbon by May 23. We believe that this hypothesis may be a line of investigation to follow and ascertain.

hubiese el Almirante menester y su gente y la carabela se lo diese sin dineros y se hiciese todo como el Almirante quisiese.

9 de Marzo: Hoy partió de Sacamben para ir adonde el Rey estaba, que era el valle del Paraíso, nueve leguas de Lisboa: porque llovió no pudo llegar hasta la noche. El Rey le mandó recibir a los principales de su casa muy honradamente, y el Rey también le recibió con mucha honra y le hizo mucho favor y mandó sentar y habló muy bien, ofreciéndole que mandaría hacer todo lo que a los Reyes de Castilla y a su servicio cumpliese cumplidamente y más que por cosa suya; y mostró haber mucho placer del viaje haber habido buen término y se haber hecho, mas que entendía que en la capitulación que había entre los Reyes y él que aquella conquista le pertenecía. A lo cual respondió el Almirante que no había visto la capitulación ni sabía otra cosa sino que los Reyes le habían mandado que no fuese a la Mina ni en toda Guinea, y que así se había mandado pregonar en todos los puertos del Andalucía antes que para el viaje partiese. El Rey graciosamente respondió que tenía él por cierto que no habría en esto menester terceros. Diole por huésped al prior del Clato, que era la más principal persona que allí estaba, del cual el Almirante recibió muy muchas honras y favores.

10 de Marzo: Hoy, después de misa, le tornó a decir el Rey si había menester algo, que luego se le daría, y departió mucho con el Almirante sobre su viaje, y siempre le mandaba estar sentado y hacer mucha honra.

11 de Marzo: Hoy se despidió del Rey, y le dijo algunas cosas que dijese de su parte a los Reyes, mostrándole siempre mucho amor. Partióse después de comer, y envió con él a Don Martín de Noronha, y todos aquellos caballeros le vinieron a acompañar y hacer honra buen rato. Después vino a un monasterio de San Antonio, que es sobre un lugar que se llama Villafranca, donde estaba la Reina; y fuele a hacer reverencia y besarle las manos, porque le había enviado a decir que no se fuese hasta que la viese, con la cual estaban el Duque y el Marques, donde recibió el Almirante mucha honra. Partióse de ella el Almirante de noche, y fue a dormir a Allandra.

DIARIO.

This fact can help us better understand Admiral Colón's grievance to the Governess of the prince heir in 1500, complaining to **“let them give me, then, whatever name they want”**, even a name the Admiral had never chosen. In this matter, the Admiral no longer had any say. In the political game that the mysterious Don Cristóbal Colón was involved, he did not have the power to use his real name, nor even to correct anyone who called him by the wrong pseudonym.

Due to these same circumstances, “for hidden reasons” as Don Hernando wrote, the Admiral had adopted a name with a special meaning for himself. To better implement the secrecy, Don Cristóbal invented a special cryptogram to sign his letters, as shown in Figure 11 above. His signature is so peculiar that it may have been invented as a challenge for all who saw it. The cryptogram may even hide clues to Don Cristóbal’s secret identity.

Since in Portugal many people would have known the navigator’s homeland, his name, and his true origins, they would have to censor all that information from the Portuguese public as well.

The Admiral was not working alone to cover up his Portuguese life. Certainly, no commoner could accomplish a manipulation of such magnitude that included two courts and their chroniclers. By assisting in the cover-up, it seems reasonable to accept that the courts had the Admiral and his brothers for noblemen worthy of such consideration and from a lineage at least equivalent to that of the lady Don Cristóbal married.

However, it seems that there were a lot of people involved in manipulating the real story for one reason or another:

*To our great surprise and I would say his, Carlos V, by decree of 13th June 1523, forbids him [Don Hernando] to continue investigating through the archives and notaries.*³⁵⁶

For a man who changed his name with the intention “that his homeland and origins be less known,” and presenting himself with a false name, it seems odd that as soon as he arrived at Santa Maria Island returning from the Caribbean, he was immediately recognized by the island’s commander. Even without ever having seen Colón in person, João da Castanheira sent fresh food to the new Admiral at the *Niña*, saying that “he knew him very well and that, because it was late,

³⁵⁶ Com grande surpresa sua e direi nossa, Carlos V, por decreto de 13 de Junho de 1523, proíbe-lhe que continue nas investigações pelos arquivos e cartórios, FERREIRA, G. L. Santos e SERPA, António Ferreira de, *Salvador Gonsalves Zarco (Cristóbal Colón). Os Livros de D. Tivisco. Confirmações Históricas*, Lisboa, 1930, 87.

he wasn't coming to see him."³⁵⁷ How could Captain Castanheira "know Don Cristóbal Colón very well" if the Admiral was now using a false name? Castanheira knew Colón's true identity, the one he was known by while living in Portugal. He would have to know both identities - the real and the false one.

Afonso Dornelas already forewarned us in 1926 that the name "Colón was therefore not a family name, but instead represented the culmination of a lifetime of aspirations and study and was the reason for the existence [*la raison d'être*] of the great navigator. All the scholars who have been so painstakingly looking for a 'Colón' [or Colombo] family, to try to locate Cristóbal's parents, have been laboring in error."³⁵⁸

Colón in Spanish is in no way a translation of the Italian word Colombo, which is *palomo* in Spanish.³⁵⁹ However, the Genoese authors, especially those of the *Raccolta Colombiana*, used the names Colón and Colombo indiscriminately and interchangeably as if they were the same. This caused even more confusion. They would certainly not have done so innocently, but with the intention of removing obvious doubts that exposed the Genoese weaver as not being the Iberian navigator.

"Not a single document from the *Raccolta* proves the Italian origin of Colón or clarifies the mystery of his birth and childhood," declared Ezquerro Abadía in 1966,³⁶⁰ with whom we entirely concur.

The merging of the two names into one happened either because biographers wrongly accepted the two as the same person, or possibly because it was obvious that they were not the

³⁵⁷ **19 de Hebrero:** Después del sol puesto, vinieron a la ribera tres hombres de la isla y llamaron. Envióles la barca, en la cual vinieron y trajeron gallinas y pan fresco, y era día de Carnestolendas, y trajeron otras cosas que enviaba el capitán de la isla, que se llamaba João da Castanheira, **diciendo que lo conocía muy bien** y que por ser noche no venía a verlo; pero en amaneciendo vendría y traería más refresco, y traería consigo tres hombres que allá quedaban de la carabela, y que no los enviaba por el gran placer que con ellos tenía oyendo las cosas de su viaje. El Almirante mandó hacer mucha honra a los mensajeros, y mandóles dar camas en que durmiesen aquella noche, porque era tarde y estaba la población lejos. DIARIO.

³⁵⁸ Colon, portanto não era um apelido de família, era o resumo de toda uma vida de aspirações e de estudo, era o motivo da existência do grande navegador. Todos os estudiosos que tanto se têm ocupado em procurar uma família "Colon" para ver se encontram os pais de Cristóbal, **têm laborado num erro**. DORNELAS, Afonso, *Elementos para o estudo etimológico do apelido Colon*, Centro Tipográfico Colonial, Lisboa, 1926, 17.

³⁵⁹ Noi vogliamo ridurre alla pronuncia latina ch'è Chriftophorus Colonus. HISTORIE, Cap. I, 3.

— ANGHIERA, Pietro Martire d', *De Orbe Novo, Petri Martyris ab Angleria Mediolanensis protonotarii cesaris senatoris decades*, Logart Press, 1530.

³⁶⁰ Ningún documento de la *Raccolta* prueba el origen itálico de Colón o aclara el enigma de su nacimiento y niñez. EZQUERRA ABADÍA, Ramón. *La nacionalidad de Colón: Estado actual del problema*. Sep. de Vol. 4 del XXXVI Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Sevilla, 1966, 417.

same person and some authors were intent in falsifying the story, as will be explained further below.

This grave translation error, however, continues to be accepted today and has proven to be impossible to correct. For instance, when trying to translate the Latin word *columbus* into Spanish, dictionaries give us *Colón* and not *palomo*. In the same way, when we search for the translation of *Colón* into English, Lithuanian or any other language, we get the mistranslation as *Columbus*, *Kolumbas*, *Kolumb*, *Colomb*, *Colombo*, just to mention a few, and not the Greek *κῶλον* nor the Latin *colon*.³⁶¹

Castilian writers who knew the navigator in person generally referred to him as Colom or Colon. For example, “Don Christoual Colom was the first discoverer and Admiral of these Indies,” wrote Oviedo (1478-1557) at the beginning of his second book *Historia general de las Indias*.³⁶² Andrés Bernáldez (1450-1513), in his *Historia de los Reyes Catholics Don Fernando y Doña Isabel*, wrote “whom they called Christobal Colon, a man of very high ingenuity.”³⁶³

Pedro Martire de Anghiera, chaplain to Queen Isabel, wrote “Cristophorus **Colonus** [...] Christophori **Coloni**” in his book *De orbe nouo*...³⁶⁴

As we have already pointed out, the so-called *First Letter of Colón* was printed in Barcelona with the surname written as “Colom” by Pedro Posa, and then printed as “Columbo” by Aliander de Cosco in Rome. However, these were not the only wrong versions of the surname. Various editions of the letter published in those early years outside of Castile show no agreement on the surname of the navigator. There are letters printed where the name varies between *Christofori Colom*, *Christophorum Coloni*, *Christoforo Colúbo*, *Christophoro Colôbo*, *Christofano Colombo*, *Xpõfano Cholonbo*, among others - see Figure 15.

³⁶¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/spanish-english/cristóbal-colón>

³⁶² OVIEDO Y VALDÉS, Gonzalo Fernández de, *Historia general de las Indias*, 1525, Libro Segundo, iii.

³⁶³ BERNÁLDEZ, Andrés, *Historia de los reyes católicos Don Fernando y Doña Isabel*, Cap. CXVIII.

³⁶⁴ ANGHIERA, Pietro Martire d', *De orbe nouo Petri Martyris ab Angleria Mediolanensis protonotarij C[a]esaris senatoris decades*, Logart Press, 1530, iii, iiiii.

Figure 15

Various versions of Colón's letter where the name appears according to the printer's taste.

1	E pistola Christofori Colom: cui etas nostra Insulis Indię supra Gangem nuper inuentis.	Figura 7.5 Estas muestras de cartas de anuncio publicadas en diferentes tipografías de la época, revelan que el apellido del navegante fue, sobre todo, impreso como Colom. De arriba para abajo se puede leer: 1 – Christofori Colom 2 – Cristophori Colom 3 – Christofori Colom 4 – Christofori Colom 5 – Christofori Colom 6 – Cristoferi Colom 7 – Christophorum Coloni 8 – Christoforo Colúbo 9 – C Olumbus 10 – Christophoro Colóbo 11 – Christofano colombo Y hasta un 12 – Xpofano cholonbo La última muestra es una nota que dice «Esta carta envió Colón al escribano de raciones de las Islas encontradas en las Indias. Incluida en otra para Sus Altezas».
2	C ristophori Colom: cui etas de Insulis Indię supra Gangem nuper	
3	E pistola Christofori Co lom: cui etas nostra multū debet: de Insulis Indię supra Gangem nuper inuentis. Ad quas perquirēdas octauo antea mense au	
4	E pistola Christofori Colom: cui etas nostra multū de Insulis Indię supra Gangem nuper inuentis. Ad quas pe	
5	E pistola Christofori Colom: cui etas Insulis Indię supra Gangem nuper i	
6	E pistola Cristoferi Colom (cui etas ne multū debet: de Insulis in mari Indico	
7	& Hyspaniā: hoc anno: post captā Granatā & helysabeth regibus p christophorum coloni co	
8	C opia della lettera che scrisse on Christoforo Colūbo Vice R di Spagna & ammirante dele infule Indie: al Christianissimi & p	
9	D e insulis inuentis aragindia maris nuper inuentis: Olumbus Regle classis prefectus: quez hispani & myrāem vocant: ara reguz exploratur orienti tora: ex Calī Berbie hispanie vde nobili: que c.	
10	C RISTOPHORO Colóbo Capitulo prim procera statura rosso de grande ingegno Sequitur molto tempo li serenissimi Re & lūga parte andauano: peurādo lo aiuta	
11	a e la hystoria della inuentioe delle diefe Isole di extracte duna Epistola di Christofano colombo 7 1	
12	Finita la storia della inuentione delle nuoue infule e diane tracte duna pistola di Xpofano cholonbo e per	
13	E sta carta embió Colón a lescriuano Deracion delas Yllas halladas en las Indias. Contemida a otra De sus Altezas,	

NOTE: Author compilation

Several Italians wrote from Castile to Italy in 1493 giving the news of Admiral Colón's amazing discovery. According to a letter sent to the archbishop of Taragona,³⁶⁵ the Admiral was called "**Coloma**, a great mariner."³⁶⁶

Of the various problems that confront us in this story, identifying the correct surname of the navigator seems to be the easiest one to solve. We merely need to look at his own letters and documents and those that the Catholic Monarchs wrote to him or about him. For example, on a letter written by the Admiral to his son Don Diogo, we can read "Memorial of Admiral Don Xpobal for his son Don Diogo **Colon**" - see Figure 16.

In four compilation works that we call the *Book of Privileges*, which the Admiral himself ordered to be compiled in 1502, we read *Colon*, as already shown in Figure 1. In the letter, or grant of arms, signed by the Catholic Kings in 1493, we can read *Colon*. Again, we can affirm that the family name has remained Colón until today. For this reason, we should not consider the form of the surname to be in doubt, neither that it was Colón from the Greek κῶλον.

However, when reading works published outside of Spain, it is not easy to understand the reasons why one or another author uses surnames other than Colón. We could attribute the errors to the authors' ignorance; although sometimes it appears that using Colombo is intentional, as a way of reinforcing among the public the story of a weaver Colombo that most accepted to be correct. Or could it be that the errors were intended to lead us astray from the truth? In fact, there were acts of forgery that we will present in a later chapter.

It seems irrational to accept that King João II, Rui de Pina, and even Garcia de Resende wrote the name as Colombo out of ignorance, especially after Colón's audience in March 1493 at Vale do Paraíso, where the navigator would have never used the name Colombo.

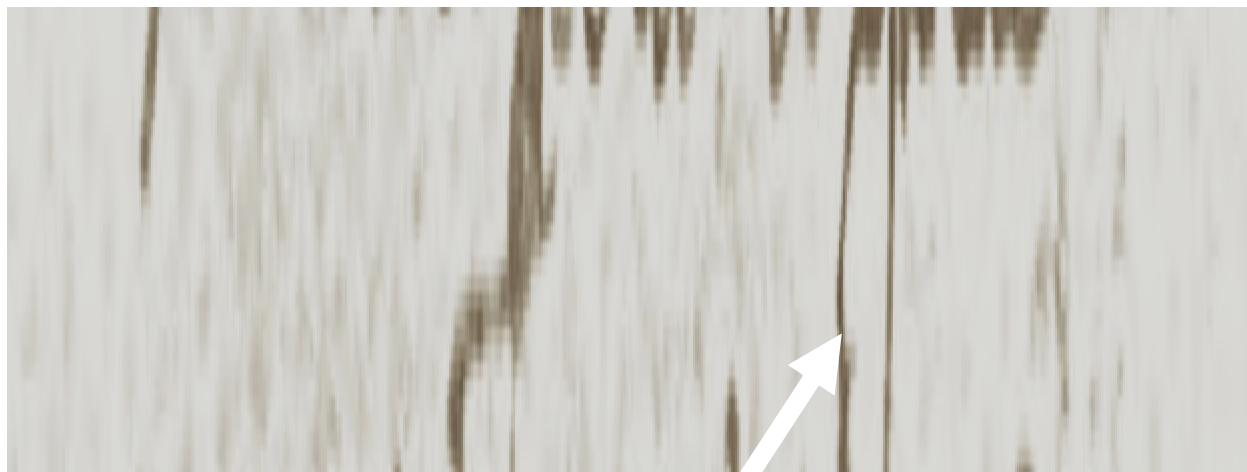
They would have known very well that the navigator, who was already titled Admiral and Viceroy when entering the port of Lisbon, called himself *Don Cristóbal Colón*, which surname King João II also knew as shown by his own letter of 1488.

³⁶⁵ Copia de una littera missa a lu archiepiscopo de Taragona, al presente governatore de Roma et cetera. Per questa faccio sapere ad V. Rev. S. che perseverando nostro Segnor Dio la bona fortuna de le soy Alteze, heri hanno recepute littere da uno che se dimanda **Coloma** [sic] [...] Et ha scripto dicto **Coloma** [sic] a le soy Maiestate che quella e la via pio breve per andare in Yerusolim, et che luy promecte ad S. Maiestate che se ipsa vorra passar per illa de mantenere illi cinquimilia da cavallo. RUZZIN, Valentina, *Tante cose se dicono che pareno incredebele, Lettera sulla scoperta dell'America*, Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, Ser. NS, Vol. 56, 2016, 339, 341.

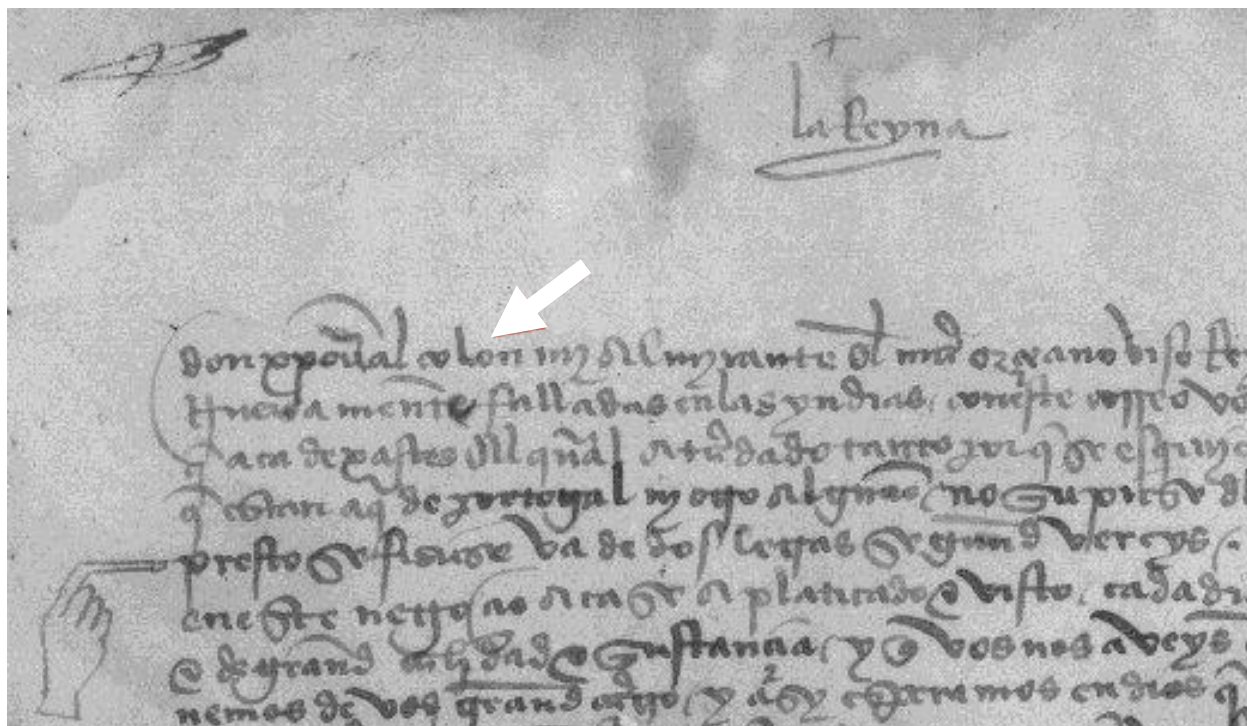
³⁶⁶ Colón, great mariner, nephew of the great Colombo from France. *Idem*, 339.

Figure 16

Memorial del Almirante Don Xpobal to his son Don Diogo Colon and letter from the Queen to Don Xpobal Colon.



Archivo General de Indias, PATRONATO,295,N.53



Source: Archivo General de Indias, PATRONATO,295,N.20

It is interesting to note that Rui de Pina (1440-1521), a man very close to King João II and an important eyewitness was the first Portuguese to write about Admiral Colón, calling him *Colombo italiano* in his chronicle of 1504. Then came Garcia de Resende (1470-1536), who was page and personal secretary of João II, but instead of Resende writing his own version of the events, he merely copied Rui de Pina's text word for word.³⁶⁷

The version of João de Barros (1496-1570) in the *Décadas da Ásia* is also a copy from Rui de Pina, as is the account by Damião de Góis (1502-1574), curator of the Royal Archives since 1548. These last two authors did not even know the navigator in person.

Manifestly, Garcia de Resende, João de Barros, and Damião de Góis were not authors of any writings about Admiral Colón, having merely copied Rui de Pina's text. While Garcia de Resende copied the text word for word, the other two authors inserted some of their own words that little changed Pina's original.

However, what is more inconceivable in the versions of these Portuguese accounts is that Pina and Resende did not write a single word to enlighten us about the fact that this world-famous navigator had abundant family ties to Portugal and to many elites at the Portuguese court, as we exposed in Chapter 2:

- not that Colón had lived in Portugal;
- not that he had married in Portugal;
- not that he was a relative of the highest Portuguese nobles;
- not that he had sailed for the king of Portugal;

³⁶⁷ Comparing the text from two Portuguese chroniclers:

Text by Rui de Pina	Text by Garcia de Resende
No anno seguinte de mil quatrocentos, e noventa e tres, estando El Rey no lugar do Val do Paraíso, que he acima do Mosteiro de Sancta Maria das Vertudes, por causa das grandes pestenenças, que nos lugares principaes daquella Comarca avia, a seis dias de Março arribou arrestello em Lixboa Christovam Colombo Italiano, que vynha do descobrimento das Ilhas de Cipango, e d'Antilia, que per mandado dos Reis de Castella tynha feyto, da qual terra trazia consigo as primeiras mostras da gente, e ouro, e algũas outras cousas que nelas avia e foi delas yntitulado almirante.	No anno seguinte de mil e quatrocentos e nouenta e tres, estando el Rey no lugar de Val de paraíso, que he acima do mosteiro das virtudes, por causa das grandes pestes que nos lugares principaes daquella comarca auia, a seis dias de Março veyo ter a Restello em Lisboa Christouão Colombo, Italiano, que vinha do descobrimento das ilhas de Cipango, e Antilhas, que per mandado del Rey e da Raynha de Castella tinha descuberto. Das quaes trazia consigo as mostras das gentes, e ouro, e outras cousas que nellas havia, e foi d'ellas feito Almirante.

- not that he was consulted by the king of Portugal on matters of navigation years before he became famous in Castile;
- not that he learned to sail with the Portuguese; and
- not even that he was requested by the King of Portugal to return from Castile in 1488 to meet with him and Bartolomeu Dias.

On top of this, they did not even write that such a famous voyage had resulted from Portuguese maritime technology, which the navigator had learned in Portugal from the Portuguese pilots and scientists.

This fact, such a colossal omission of the long Portuguese life of the navigator, should make us consider seriously whether there was an intentional censorship of the Portuguese life of Colón being enforced by the Court of Portugal.

It does not seem realistic nor logical that Portuguese writers would remain silent in the face of such an opportunity to boast about having taught the navigator everything that he knew regarding navigation, and that he had used his Portuguese education to go serve an enemy crown.

It is unrealistic that a man who had married a first cousin of the Countess of Odemira, whose wife was also first cousin to King João II's Lord Chamberlain, cousin to a great-grandson of the king of Cyprus; with three other cousins who were Countess of Abrantes, Countess of Penamacor and Marquise of Montemor, and whose uncles King João II had used as assassins against his enemies and towards whom João II himself "had good will and wished well," deserved only two words from Rui de Pina - Colombo italiano!

In a chronicle about the monarch and the writer's own kingdom, where he completely leaves out the previous Portuguese life of a hero of Christianity that achieved such a navigational feat as to discover half a world, and whose descendants were integrated into the high nobility of Spain, leaves us with much to reflect upon.

It seems totally against human nature for a Portuguese reporter to silence members of a prominent Portuguese family who are so closely related and so well connected to a navigator that accomplished such a great feat.

Garcia de Resende lived 24 hours a day with King João II. Resende had to be aware of Admiral Colón's family relationships and their high society positions in and out of the Portuguese Court. If any of the four chroniclers were in a position to record Admiral Colón's true identity and role, it would be Garcia de Resende. So why did he not write his own account, rigorous and

truthful, based on what he himself had witnessed instead of plagiarizing Pina? The only logical answer is that the reports Resende and Pina left us did not correspond to the free perception of the facts they witnessed, but instead they wrote what was dictated to them by King Manuel I's Portuguese Court.

The result of all these inaccurate maneuvers between chroniclers, printers, translators, and inventors of facts is the international confusion that came down to our time; a paradox where non-Spanish-speaking nations erroneously call him Colombo/Columbus while all the Spanish-speaking nations correctly call him Colón.

In Spain the surname has been Colón since 1488, time at which this surname was not even known outside of Portugal and Castile.

Who, then, should we believe in? In faraway authors who never knew the navigator and who wouldn't even know how to pronounce his pseudonym?

Or, instead, in the navigator himself, the one who invented the alias and knew what he wanted to be called?³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Así como no se conoce con fijeza el lugar y la fecha del nacimiento del Descubridor, tampoco se conoce su verdadero nombre. Ya veremos que **no se llamaba, Colón, Colombo, Colonus ni nada que se le parecería a esos nombres...** No existe en la historia uno solo indicio de que el Almirante hubiese firmado nunca con ninguno de esos nombres, ni aún empleándolo como seudónimo! En realidad el Almirante jamás se firmó de otro modo sino por medio del citado logogrifo [...] cuyo significado jamás se ha podido decifrar, ni tampoco hay esperanza de que llegue algún día quien lo pueda decifrar... Vimos que nunca, ni una sola vez siquiera, firmose Colón, Colonus, Colombo, ni nada que se pareciese a ninguno de esos nombres... Por otra parte, siendo dudoso que se llamara Colón, ni Colombo, (ya vimos que según Don Hernando éstos nombres citados eran solamente seudónimos). BRANDT, Carlos. *El misterioso almirante y su enigmático descubrimiento: biografía*, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, Dirección de Cultura, Venezuela, 1949, 28, 34, 45, 112.

CHAPTER 4

UNRELIABLE SOURCES

The Genoese Colombo documents do not fit the life of the Iberian Colón

Now that Admiral Colón's connections to the noble family of Filipa Moniz and his chosen pseudonym have been explained, it is pertinent to analyze the most important documents that the official history has employed to support the theory that the weaver Colombo was the navigator Colón.

Since all the evidence shown so far proves that the navigator belonged to the nobility in Portugal, it should thus not be necessary to spend time with the documents related to the weaver from Genoa. In fact, an anonymous letter written to Cardinal Gonzalo Fernández de Heredia in Rome, in 1493, declared that the Admiral was a “nephew of the great Colombo [*the Younger*] from France,” thus, not the weaver:

*Our Lord God maintaining the good fortune of Their Highnesses, they have received letters from one who calls himself **Colón, a great seafarer, nephew of the great Colombo from France**, and who was sent by Their Majesties with two caravels to India to look for certain unknown islands.*³⁶⁹

However, it is necessary to review the essential Genoese documents so that, in the end, they be rejected once and for all as not being linked to the life of the Iberian navigator and Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón.

Some contemporaries described the navigator as being Genoese and even called him Colombo. This cannot be denied. However, the Genoese weaver documents do not align with Admiral Colón's life. Therefore, if Admiral Colón had to be accepted as being the same person as

³⁶⁹ Uno che se dimanda Coloma, grandissimo marinaio, nepote del grande Coloma de Francia. RUZZIN, Valentina, *Tante cose se dicono che pareno incredebele, Lettera sulla scoperta dell'America*, Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, Ser. NS, Vol. 56, 2016, 339.

the weaver Colombo, then all the facts and documents in Portugal and Spain relating to the life of the First Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies and the pirate *Colombo the Younger* had to be rejected, misrepresented, and distorted until they fit the life of the Genoese weaver.³⁷⁰

Since the Genoese documents are connected to a different person, historians contended that Admiral Colón was not believable and that his own testimonials about himself should be discarded as lies. What others wrote, and who others believed that Admiral Colón was, became more important than what Don Hernando wrote, and even what Don Cristóbal wrote about himself.³⁷¹

Thus, a conundrum arose between two factions of historians, those who believed Colón and those who disbelieved him, and in this way “Colón presents a double personality: the one which comes from the Genoese documents, and the other which comes from his own declarations, from Hernando and from Las Casas.”³⁷² The disbelievers won.

Their solution pursued in the face of this duality was to deny everything related to the noble navigator that did not fit a plebeian’s life. Whatever facts elevated Admiral Colón out of a commoner’s state were described as boasting, deflection, and deception by the Colóns and duly discarded. Even in the 1500s Las Casas understood that what was being written by many of his cotemporary authors was a misrepresentation of the facts and tall tales conveyed from afar:

*None of those who have written in Spanish or Latin, until the year 1527, when I began to write this, saw anything of what they wrote [...] nor should they be given more credit than if they heard them while they were absent in Valladolid or Seville.*³⁷³

³⁷⁰ Columbus scholar Paolo Emilio Taviani views these arrogations as a tribute to “the stature of the Navigator.” In fact he was “a nobody—a foreigner and a sailor to boot—when he first met the Catholic kings in 1486.” BRONNER, Fred, *Portugal and Columbus: Old Drives in New Discoveries*, Mediterranean Studies, Vol. 6, Penn State University Press, 1996, 54

³⁷¹ Colón [...] had to exaggerate his accounts of his deeds in order to match his exaggerated claims [...] at times he might make egregious claims to a noble and seafaring lineage [...] he arrogated to himself a quite spurious coat of arms [...] he boasted that he was ‘not the first Admiral of my line’: that must have been, to say the least, an overstatement [...] this weaver’s son, who dreamed of self-transformation into Admiral of the Ocean Sea and founder of an aristocratic dynasty, might have tried any of the routes of self-aggrandizement. FERNÁNDEZ-ARRESTO, Felipe, *Columbus: And the Conquest of the Impossible*, Phoenix Press, London, 2000, 14, 10, xii.

³⁷² Colón se presenta una doble personalidad: la procedente de los documentos genoveses y la que proviene de sus declaraciones, de Hernando y Las Casas. EZQUERRA ABADÍA, Ramón. *La nacionalidad de Colón: Estado actual del problema*. Sep. de Vol. 4 del XXXVI Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Sevilla, 1966, 417.

³⁷³ Y así en referir las cosas acaecidas en estas Indias, mayormente aquellas que tocan á los primeros descubrimientos dellas, y lo que acaeció en esta Española y en las otras sus comarcas islas, ninguno de los que han escrito en lengua castellana y latina, hasta el año de 1527, que yo comencé á escribirlas, vido cosa de las que escribió, ni

It is a fact that people only find things where they search. You will not find anything where you do not look for it. For this reason, if documents were found in Genoa of a Cristoforo Colombo, and even though these documents are not related nor relevant to the great Admiral Colón who lived in Iberia, the researchers' presumption made them relevant. The Genoese documents were eagerly accepted because they fit the already accepted corrupted name of Colombo and provided a quick solution.

The easiest place to locate Colombos would be in Italy. "From this [Colombo] family they have found more documents than from many persons significantly more illustrious and from a more prominent social category,"³⁷⁴ wrote Ramón Ezquerro Abadía. In fact, it seems quite bizarre to have unearthed so many documents in Genoa relating to a family of insignificant weavers when typically, such families barely received a single word in the ancient texts. However, as early as 1855, Henry Harrisse wanted to accept that the Colón puzzle would be solved with the Colombo documents, as he stated:

*It is therefore necessary to search and find the exact dates and the details of the circumstances in which he [Colombo] appeared as a craftsman, as an industrialist, as an innkeeper and as a taxpayer; because it is from these authentic clues that the historian can hope to deduce the confirmatory reasons which, in the current state of the matter, allow the City of Genoa to be accepted or rejected as the birthplace of Cristóbal Colón.*³⁷⁵

Harrisse became convinced that Colón was the Colombo weaver from "a family of obscure workers and having woven cloth himself," and did not endeavor to seek the navigator anywhere else.³⁷⁶ It seems a proven fact that in 1493, when Admiral Colón became world famous, nobody

cuasi hubo entonces hombres de los que en ellas se hallaron que pudiesen decirlas, sino que todo lo que dijeron fué cogido y sabido como lo que el refrán dice "de luengas vias", puesto que de haber vivido muchos días en estas tierras hacen algunos dellos mucho estruendo, y así no supieron más dellas, ni más crédito debe dárseles que si las oyeran estando ausentes en Valladolid ó en Sevilla. LAS CASAS, T. I, 32.

³⁷⁴ De esta familia [Colombo] han quedado más documentos que de muchas personajes más ilustres o de mayor categoría social. EZQUERRA ABADÍA, Ramón. *La nacionalidad de Colón: Estado actual del problema*, 416.

³⁷⁵ Il faut donc chercher à retrouver les dates exactes et le détail des circonstances où il a figuré comme artisan, comme industriel, comme tenancier et comme contribuable; car c'est de ces indications authentiques que l'historien peut espérer déduire les raisons positives qui, dans l'état actuel de la question permettent d'accepter ou de rejeter la ville de Gênes comme lieu de naissance de Christophe Colomb. HARRISSE, Christophe *Colomb, son Origine, sa Vie...* T. I, 8-9.

³⁷⁶ Colomb avait à compter avec les préjugés de son temps et les préventions des personnages dont il implorait l'appui. **Appartenir à une famille d'obscurs artisans** et avoir soi-même tissé du drap pour vivre, étaient des faits dont

in Genoa believed that the Admiral was Genoese. The Genoese news manuscripts are silent about him. There were no documents, publications or advertisements in that city giving thanks and glory to a supposed Genoese navigator and his epic discovery.³⁷⁷

We have already shown, through Las Casas's text, that calling any person "Genoese" does not make him Genoese nor born in Genoa, and that naming someone Colombo does not make them belong to a family with such a surname. One must note that at times foreigners even found it beneficial to claim false nationalities in Castile.³⁷⁸ From the *Pleitos Colombinos* (Columbian Lawsuits), we learn a very interesting fact. Some of the witnesses testified that:

*In Spain many **foreigners** were simply called Genoese [...] The Castilians who do not have much contact with the nations of Italy call all foreigners **Genoese** because there are many from that nation and for this reason this witness believes for certain that the said Admiral Don Cristóbal would be called Genoese even if he were from another nation.*³⁷⁹

le prudent Génois ne devait guère se targuer à Lisbonne [...] Ce sont ces écrivains qui, les premiers, firent connaître que Christophe et Barthélémy Colomb étaient de très humble origine, peu instruits, **fil d'un pauvre tisserand**, et ayant eux-mêmes passé leur jeunesse à carder de la laine ou à tisser du drap. *Idem*, 71,74.

— No doubt this **weaver's son** had little chance at formal schooling [...] throughout his teens he carded wool for his father. FERNÁNDEZ-ARMESTO, Felipe, *Columbus: And the Conquest of the Impossible*, Phoenix Press, London, 2000, 12-13.

— On sait que c'était **une famille d'artisans**, originaire de Quinto, qui passa ensuite à Gênes; on connaît les noms et même l'âge de la plupart de ses membres, ainsi que la situation qu'ils occupaient. Ce sont les archives des notaires italiens de l'époque colombienne qui nous ont livré ces renseignements. VIGNAUD, Henry, *Études critiques sur la vie de Colomb avant ses découvertes*, H. Welter, 1905, 101.

³⁷⁷ Les archives de l'État, conservées autrefois au Palais Ducal, et depuis 1817 au Palazzetto, ne peuvent contenir rien de particulier concernant Christophe Colomb, qui, à notre connaissance, n'a figuré dans aucun acte officiel génois. On ne pourrait guère espérer rencontrer qu'un rapport inédit fait par Francesco Marchesio et Gian Antonio Grimaldi, ambassadeurs de la République qui, au moment où ils prenaient congé de Ferdinand et d'Isabelle, en 1493, pour revenir à Gênes, apprirent de ces monarques même la découverte du Nouveau Monde; — si toutefois nous n'avons déjà ce rapport dans les commentaires de Bartholomeo Senarega, comme le prétend l'historien Luigi Bossi. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, son Origine, sa Vie...* T. I, 11-12.

³⁷⁸ Ulloa tuvo la suerte de descubrir una carta del rey Don Fernando el Católico a la Señoría de Génova, del 14 de junio de 1494, en que el monarca español se lamenta de que ciertos catalanes residentes en Génova se fingiesen napolitanos para no someterse a la autoridad del cónsul de España en esa ciudad. GANDIA, Enrique de, *Historia de Cristobal Colon Análisis crítico de las fuentes documentales y de los problemas Colombino*, Buenos Aires, 1942, 93.

³⁷⁹ Los testigos —de distintas partes de Italia— declararon conforme a la pregunta y dos de ellos dejaron constancia que en España se llamaba genoveses a todos los extranjeros. Antonio Frasca, siciliano, dijo "que en todo este tiempo y muchas pláticas y conversaciones de personas deste Reyno de Castilla ha visto que indiferentemente a **los extranjeros de estos reinos los suelen llamar Ginoveses**, aunque sean de otras Nasciones [...] y así a este testigo le parecía y parece que los castellanos que no tienen mucha plática con las naciones de Italia **llaman a todos los extranjeros Ginobeses** por haver muchos de aquella nación y por esta razón cree y tiene por cierto

Dorico Vescoyo stated that “he himself was Milanese but they considered him to be a Genoese.”³⁸⁰ Juan Romano pointed out that “for this reason this witness has it for certain [...] that if the said Don Cristóbal Colón Admiral had been described as Genoese [...] he was not Genoese as they thought him to be.”³⁸¹

According to these witnesses, during the Colón Lawsuit, just because others described Don Cristóbal as a Genoese it was not proof that he was born in Genoa.

Today we have a very similar situation in the United States where illegal aliens crossing the southern border are generally called Mexicans. However, many are not from Mexico. They come from Central American nations like Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, just to name a few. The fact that some foreigners were labelled Genoese would change the whole perspective on nationalities if instead of claiming a Genoese nationality, Castilians merely meant a foreigner when they described Colón as being a Genoese. The following extract from Henrique de Gandia would have a completely different meaning:

Since 1496 the Catalans and Aragonese were forbidden to go to conquer the Indies. In a chronicle by the monk Aspa, written around 1519 and published recently, it is read that Bobadilla imprisoned Colón because he schemed on the island of Hispañola in favor of the

este testigo que al dicho Almyrante **Don Christoval le llamarian Ginobes aunque fuese de otra nacion.**” Otro testigo, un tal Romano, confirma que “el comun hablar en España es dezir ginoveses a cualesquier extranjeros especialmente siendo de hacia la parte de Ytalia, aunque no sean naturales de Genova, ni de su provincia, y esto save por haver oydo comunmente llamar a los extranjeros ginoveses por los tratos que tienen en España. *Ibidem.*

³⁸⁰ En petición hecha en Madrid, 29 de noviembre de 1594: “es común cosa y manera de hablar en esta Corte, y en toda España, quando se trata y habla de **qualesquier italianos, decirles y llamarles genoveses**, aunque las tales personas de quien se habla y trata sean sicilianos, milaneses y lombardos o de otras provincias de Italia, y no naturales de Génova ni de su distrito y república.” Sobre el tema se pronunciaron algunos españoles, un siciliano y un milanés: Antonio Frasca, de Sicilia, notario en Madrid que dio fe de numerosas declaraciones realizadas durante el proceso, dijo que **a todos los extranjeros les llamaban en España genoveses** aunque procedieran de otras naciones; Dorico Vescoyo, apuntó que él era milanés pero que era tenido por genovés; Juan Romano señaló: “por esta razón este testigo tiene por cierto (tachado: save) que si el dicho don Cristóbal Colón almirante, tuvo nombre de ginovés, fue por ser de hacia la parte de Italia, aunque no fuese ginovés como lo tienen los demás extranjeros que bienen de aquellas provincias.” Existiendo tal costumbre en tierras españolas nada extraña que casi siempre se aludiera al Almirante llamándole genovés, o solo en ocasiones ligur o de La Liguria, es decir, la ribera de la República, señalando su patria que no su ciudad de nacimiento. CHOCANO, 134.

³⁸¹ Juan Romano señaló: “por esta razón este testigo tiene por cierto (tachado: save) que si el dicho don Cristóbal Colón almirante, tuvo nombre de ginovés, fue por ser de hacia la parte de Italia, **aunque no fuese ginovés** como lo tienen los demás extranjeros que bienen de aquellas provincias.” *Ibidem.*

*Genoese and on his first voyage [error for second] he had taken about forty "Genoese men of his nation." Ulloa believes that instead of Genoese it should be read "Catalans."*³⁸²

Even Don Hernando who was born in Castille and was a noble Castilian declared in his *Last Will* that he made himself pass for anything but Spanish whenever he journeyed outside of Castile:

*When I travelled outside the kingdoms of Spain, I always spoke Italian wherever I went, so that I was not recognized as Spanish. And this way, thank God, I escaped many dangers in which I found myself, and where my life would have ended, if they knew I was Spanish.*³⁸³

Consequently, if Genoese sometimes meant a foreigner of unknown origins in Castile, then the foreigners that Don Cristóbal had taken to the New World could be from any nation. When one reads "Genoese of his nation", one should consider it as foreigners of his nation, even Portuguese.

In a letter carried by Juan Aguado to Don Cristóbal, which was written by the Spanish monarchs on April 9, 1495, they were adamant that Portuguese should not be in the New World. There is no mention that Genoese are in the New World, as can be seen below:

³⁸² Desde 1496 se prohibio a los catalanes y aragoneses pasar a la conquista de las Indias. En una cronica del monje Aspa, escrita hacia 1519 y publicada recientemente, se lee que Bobadilla aprisiono a Colon porque este intrigaba en la isla Española en favor de los genoveses y en su primer viaje (error por segundo) habria llevado unos cuarenta hombres "genoveses de su nacion." Ulloa cree que en vez de genoveses debe leerse "catalanes." GANDIA, Enrique de, *Historia de Cristobal Colon Análisis crítico de las fuentes documentales y de los problemas Colombino*, Buenos Aires, 1942, 92.

— En el que diu aquest monjo, que es nomenava Aspa, cal endevinar o discernir la veritat. Segons aquest monjo, Colom se n'hauria endut, en el seu primer viatge, fins a quaranta homes "genovesos de la seva nació." ULLOA, Lluís, *Noves Proves de la Catalanitat de Colom Les Grans Falsetats de la Tesi Genovesa*, Ex-Director de la Biblioteca Nacional de Lima, Llibreria Oriental-Americana, Paris, 1927, 57.

³⁸³ Pero quiero avisar al depositario que quando acaesciere de poder enviar sumista ó otra persona por los libros, que procure que sea italiano, é si italiano no fuere, que sea francés ó aleman, que aya tenido mucha plática fuera de Alemania en Italia, ó Francia ó España; porque siendo de cualquiera destas tres naciones va mas seguro fuera de España, é le miran con mexores ojos que no al español. Y esto tengo muy experimentado **quando yo andaba fuera destes reinos de España siempre hablaba italiano do quiera que fuese, por no ser conocido por español.** Y con esto, bendito nuestro Señor, me escapé de muchos peligros en que me ví y en que fenesciera si supieran que era español. HARRISSE, Henry, *Don Fernando Colon, Historiador de Su Padre...*, 151.

*Even so, send back a Portuguese who is there, who Colón received on behalf of Don Álvaro de Ataíde, because they don't want there to be foreigners over there [...] and even less if it's a Portuguese than others, and so, in any case return the Portuguese.*³⁸⁴

The Portuguese and Castilian monarchs had set their territorial boundaries with the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas. The presence of Portuguese subjects in the New World would not be welcomed news to the Castilians.³⁸⁵

Admiral Colón slipped some Portuguese mariners onboard for the First Voyage. We know this from the Admiral's own accounts:

*And he [João II] ordered removed **two Portuguese sailors** who were returning with the Admiral.*³⁸⁶

*Martín Alonso Pinzón came to him with two pieces of cinnamon and said that a **Portuguese** he had on his ship had seen an Indian who was carrying two great bundles of it.*³⁸⁷

Rui de Pina, as is well known, described him as "Italian" without specifying any town on that great peninsula, while at the same time Pina completely silenced all of Colón's ties to Portugal, both his marriage and his maritime service to Kings Afonso V and João II.

It seems that it was so important to obfuscate the truth about the Admiral³⁸⁸ that even King Carlos, grandson of Queen Isabel, showed an interest in keeping Don Cristóbal Colón's family genealogy less clear:

³⁸⁴ Ansy mesmo dexe venir un portugues que allá está, que rescebio a causa de don alvaro de atay, [Ataíde] porque non han gana que haya alla estrangeros [...] , y menos portugues que de otros, y que en todo caso envie el portugues. FALCÓ Y OSORIO, María del Rosario, Duquesa de Berwick y Alba, *Autógrafos de Cristóbal Colón y Papeles de América*, Madrid 1892, 5.

³⁸⁵ Dona Filipa, filha de Dom Pedro, Duque de Coimbra, ao dar a sua opinião e voto para a guerra de 1476-1480, "em quanto viverem as nossas gentes cada hora pelejarão, depois que morrerem todos Portugueses e sua memoria então se chamarão verdadeiramente vencidos [...] Ca em quánto forem vivos, sempre nas cavernas da terra viverão guerreando Castelhanos." SANCEAU, Elaine, *Dom João II*, Livraria Civilização, Porto, 1952, 173, 174.

³⁸⁶ TEXTOS, 170.

³⁸⁷ DIARIO, November 4.

³⁸⁸ Para contentar certas elites que não viam com bons olhos os favores que o navegador recebia na Corte, foram redigidos à pressa alguns documentos onde ele era tratado por Genovês NUNCIBAY, Francisco Medina, *Genealogía de la Casa de Portugal*, copia inédita en la Colección Vargas Ponce de la Real Academia de la Historia de Madrid.

*The kings of Portugal and Spain pretended not to know about this mystery. A proof of this would be found in the fact that Don Carlos V's order prohibited Don D. Hernando Colón continuing the study of his father's origins.*³⁸⁹

When reviewing this whole piece of history, one can understand how past investigators accepted Colón as being the weaver, even though many were suspicious of the documents supporting this theory; as Ezquerria Abadía said, “admittedly they offer reasons to doubt them, but these letters seem authentic and have been accepted by the most famous Colombianists.”³⁹⁰

Ezquerria Abadía understood that “all of the documents, except for **one significant exception**, are **alien** to Colón: they originate from other people.”³⁹¹

Rumeu de Armas mistrusted the official story when he wrote, “another surprising linguistic anomaly of Cristóbal Colón was his ignorance of the Italian language.”³⁹²

The navigator's place of birth has never been resolutely declared nor ascertained. In several of Pietro Martire's writings, Admiral Colón is described as *ligur*, a person from Liguria, Italy. Martire has the honor of being the first historian of the New World since his account was the first to be printed in 1511.

On September 13, 1493, Pietro Martire wrote to the Count of Tendilla saying, “**Colonum ligurem**, insistisse in castris apud Reges.”³⁹³ We must believe that this information came directly from the navigator. Pietro Martire wrote that he knew Colón personally and that he had “intima familiaritate” with him.³⁹⁴ Was it really the navigator that said he was a “Ligurian”? Or, instead, should we believe that Pietro Martire invented this detail in the absence of true information?

³⁸⁹ GANDÍA, Enrique de, *Historia de Cristóbal Colón. Análisis crítico de las fuentes documentales y de los problemas colombinos*, Buenos Aires, 1942, 106.

³⁹⁰ Admitiendo que ofrecen asideros a dudas, parecen auténticas estas cartas y así han sido aceptadas por los más afamados colombinistas. EZQUERRA ABADÍA, Ramón. *La nacionalidad de Colón: Estado actual del problema*. Sep. de Vol. 4 del XXXVI Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Sevilla, 1966, 424.

³⁹¹ Todos los testimonios, salvo **una capital excepción**, son externos a Colón: proceden de otras personas. EZQUERRA ABADÍA, Ramón. *La nacionalidad de Colón: Estado actual del problema*, 415.

— The “**principal exception**” that Ezquerria Abadía is referring to is the *1498 Mayoralazgo* which is a fabrication, as discussed below, and not written by the hand of Don Cristóbal.

³⁹² Otra sorprendente anomalía lingüística de Cristóbal Colón era su ignorancia del italiano. RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *El Portugués...*, 42.

³⁹³ THACHER, Vol I, 55.

³⁹⁴ *Idem*, 39.

It is strange to read Ligurian and not the more common Genoese. Still, considering that the navigator wanted to keep his birthplace and identity secret, Admiral Colón could have given the false declaration of being from Liguria, the province where Genoa is located instead of his real place of birth. Either way, whether Don Cristóbal said he was Ligurian or Martire assumed he was Ligurian, it does not mean we should accept it as being true. Like Don Hernando told us, Don Cristóbal would not allow the public to know where he was born. Therefore, if he told Martire that he was from Liguria, we must assume this to be a deflection from the Admiral's true place of birth.

It is possible that the navigator had Ligurian blood through some ancestors and that, in this way, he would not be lying by declaring that he was Ligurian.³⁹⁵ In the United States it is very common for people of foreign descent to attribute themselves the nationality of their ancestors, such as Italian, Polish or any other, even though they are fourth and fifth generation US-born descendants who have never set foot in their ancestors' homelands.

Nevertheless, what should be of most concern to seekers of the truth is what appears to be a falsification by many authors who wrote that the navigator's name was **Colombo**, and that he was **Genoese** and, furthermore, that he was a **weaver**, although none of this information is written in any of the original documents belonging to Admiral Colón in Castile or in any Castilian court document.

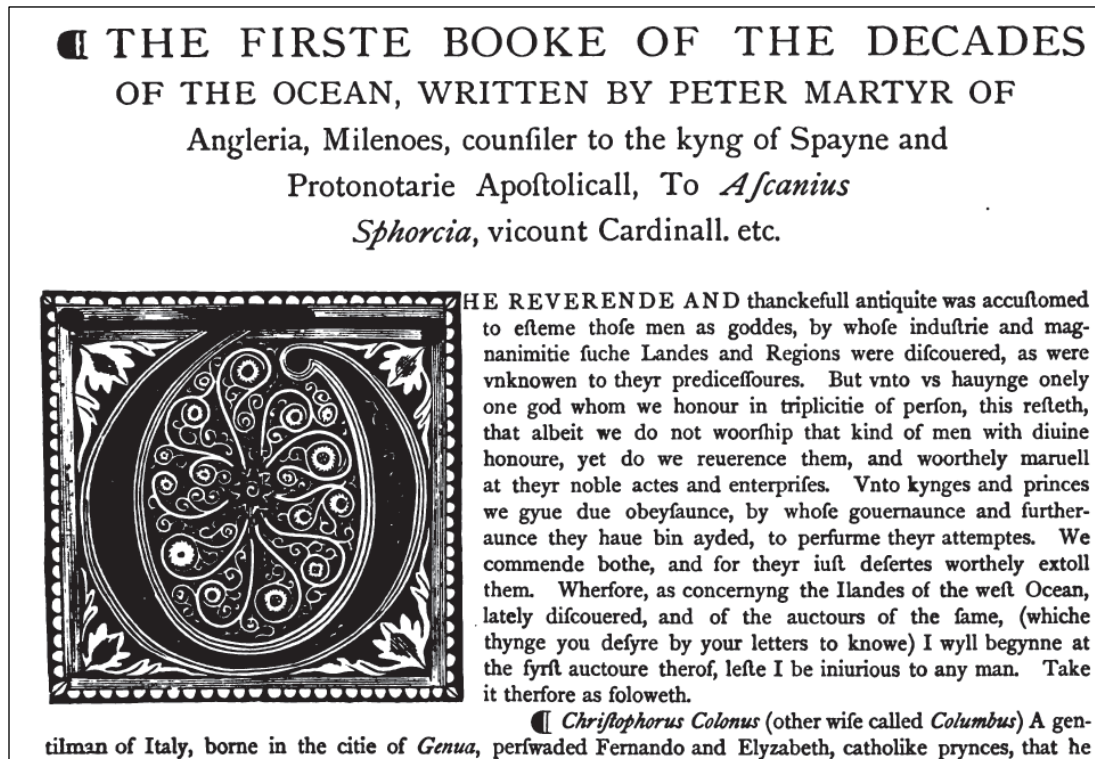
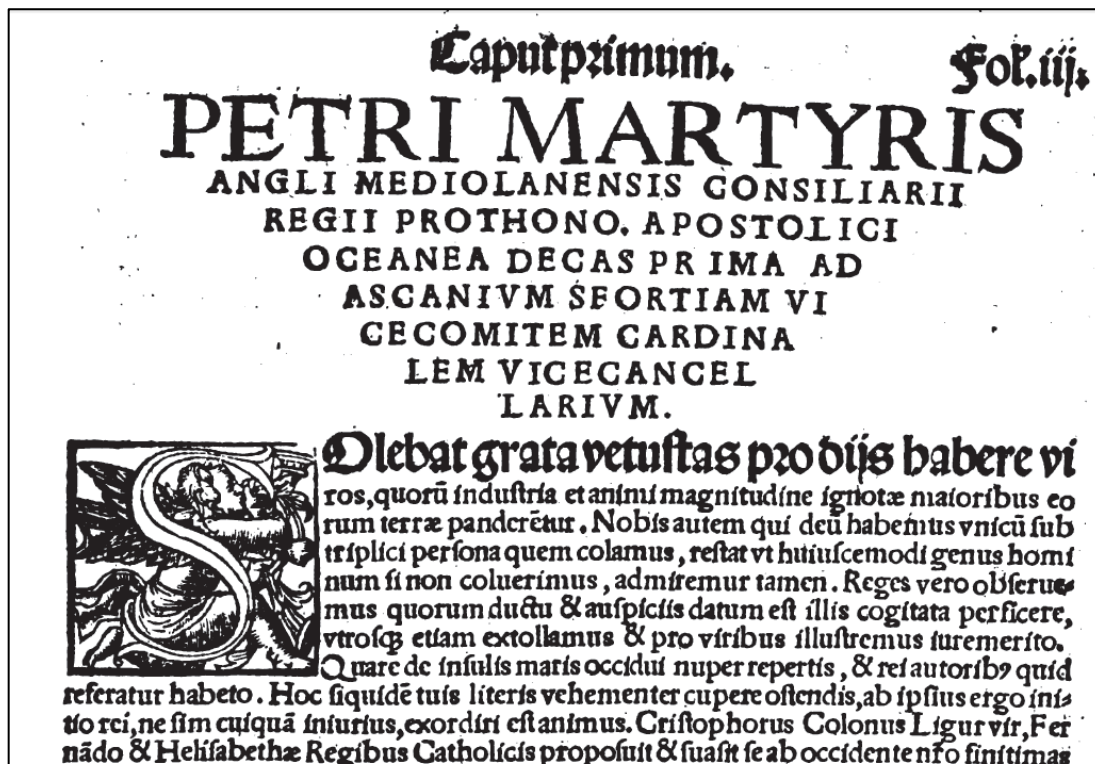
An example of evident dishonesty is Richard Eden's 1555 translation of Pietro Martire's *Décadas* into English, where Eden added the phrase "*(otherwise called Columbus) a gentelman of Italy, borne in the citie of Genua*" to Martire's text - see Figure 17.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁵ One styled a Ligurian was not necessarily a Genoese, nor did the latter term as here used indicate the birthplace of anyone. Not only Gallo, but Giustiniani, Fulgoso, Geraldino, Andreas Bernaldez, Pedro Martir, and other historians, speak of Colón as a Ligurian, several of the others probably deriving their information from Gallo; but such a statement as in dictating the place of his birth, would have little more value than it would to speak of a person at present as Irish, or a Gothamite. Ligurian meant of Spanish origin. "The Ligurians," says Henry Harrisse in his "Christopher Columbus and the Bank of St. George," "were not of Italic origin. They most probably belonged to the Iberian race, which is the substratum of the Spanish nation." KIRK, Hyland C., *The Secret of Columbus With Additions*, Press of the Hayworth Publishing House, 1912, 9-10.

³⁹⁶ EDEN, Richard, *The decades of the newe worlde or west India conteynyng the nauigations and conquestes of the Spanyardes, with the particular description of the moste ryche and large landes and ilandes lately founde in the west ocean perteynyng to the inheritaunce of the kinges of Spayne*. ... Wrytten in the Latine tounge by Peter Martyr of Angleria, and translated into Englysshe by Rycharde Eden. Londini: In ædibus Guilhelmi Powell [for Edward Sutton], Anno. 1555.

Figure 17

The last two lines of Pietro Martire's original text (top image) were manipulated in Richard Eden's translation by inserting text that is not in the original (see last two lines in Eden's image at bottom).



Eden added this text without alerting the reader that these words are not in Martire's original. This alteration constitutes a form of fraud, leading many historians to believe that these words had been written by Martire and not inserted by Eden. Pietro Martire wrote:

Christophorus Colonus quidam Ligur vir, Fernando & Helisabethae regibós catholicis.

But as Figure 17 shows, Eden's text reads:

Christophorus Colonus, (other wise called Columbus) A gentilman of Italy, borne in the citie of Genua, perswaded Fernando and Elyzabeth, catholike prynces.

The underlined text is not in the original. It appears that the farther in space and time an author lives from Don Cristóbal Colón, the more inaccurate their published works tend to be.

What is certain is that the navigator quickly went from Pietro Martire's "Colonus *ligur*" to Rui de Pina's "Italian Colombo", and then to the "Genoese Colombo" of other authors, many of whom had never met the navigator in person and would have no proof of where he had been born.

The story has been improperly conveyed from the very beginning. If we cannot rely on the contemporary chroniclers in Portugal, Castile, or Aragon, as we have exposed here, much less should we give credit to those who were writing outside these three kingdoms. Knowing how rumors multiply so easily and that there was no way for writers to verify and to ascertain the truth, everything must be carefully scrutinized, because manipulations have been a constant.

John Thacher gives us another example of how the problem increased through the act of each writer who decided to invent a fact. In the Italian translations of Martire and Oviedo's works there were third party insertions, "it cannot be charged to Oviedo, for he had nothing to do with this Italian translation."³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷ Essendo d'eta d'anni XL. huomo di alta statura, di color rosso, di buona complessione & gagliardo, propose prima alla Signoria di Genoua... Libro Primo, as the title tells us, is made up of extracts from Peter Martyr's writings, but the particular paragraph here quoted, and which bears upon this quotation, **was gratuitously inserted by some other hand.** It cannot be charged to Oviedo, for he had nothing to do with this Italian translation, and the same statements are not found in his own work. When, however, Giovanni Battista Ramusio, or Rhamusio, as he called himself, published the third volume of his *Navigazioni et Viaggi* at Venice in 1556, he incorporated the Summario bodily. Navarrete refers to the passage quoted above from Ramusio, and gives it support, although not accepting its conclusions. But if Ramusio is not responsible for the statement originally, he certainly is for repeating it in his work. Assuredly Peter Martyr is not responsible for it, since **no such statement is found in his acknowledged works.** Nor is Trivigiano responsible for it, since it is not in the Libretto. The age assigned Columbus by the author of the Summario when he went into Portugal was forty years, but the author of the Summario does not tell us when he went into Portugal. Navarrete, reading this passage not in the original,

There was even a claim that the Admiral was “40 years old when he proposed his enterprise to the **City of Genoa**,” as reported by Thacher.³⁹⁸ In addition to the age of 40 being completely contrary to the statements made by Don Cristóbal, there is no documental proof that the future Admiral ever proposed his expedition to the **City of Genoa**, and anyone propagating this as a fact just increases the fictional part of the tale.

The ambassadors of Genoa, Francesco Marchesi and Giovanni Antonio Grimaldi, were in Barcelona in 1493 to congratulate King Fernando and Queen Isabel on the great discovery of Don Cristóbal, but there was no news sent to Genoa by these ambassadors claiming that such a famous and honorable discoverer was a Genoese national!³⁹⁹

Oviedo, a contemporary of the navigator wrote that “Cristóbal Colón, as I have heard from men of his nation, was a native of the province of Liguria [...] some say from Saona others from a small place or village said Nervi [...] but it is more certain that he was a native of the place called Cogureo [...] The origin of his ancestors is from the city of Plazencia in Lombardy.”⁴⁰⁰

When reading the account from Andrés Bernáldez, known as Cura de los Palacios, we may not have cause to vacillate about Genoa. “[Andrés Bernáldez] writes this as an eyewitness to the events and directly acquainted with many prominent people,”⁴⁰¹ as reads the introduction to his book:

apparently, but in Ramusio, and assuming that the latter date was 1470, rightly declares that if we must deduct forty years from that figure, we arrive at the year 1430 for the birth of Columbus. Accepting 1470 as the time when Columbus went into Portugal, and accepting the story found in Ramusio as to his having been forty years of age when he offered his projects to Genoa, the distinguished author tries to show that it was later than 1470 when this offer was made and rejected, and thus secures a later date from which to deduct his forty years. THACHER, Vol. I, 266-268.

³⁹⁸ *Idem*, 266.

³⁹⁹ Los embajadores de la señoría de Génova, Francesco Marchesi y Giovanni Antonio Grimaldi que acudieron a Barcelona a felicitar a Fernando y Isabel por el hallazgo de Colón, no hicieron saber a Génova que el descubridor era un genovés. GANDÍA, Enrique de, *Historia de Cristóbal Colón. Análisis crítico de las fuentes documentales y de los problemas colombinos*, Buenos Aires, 1942, 92.

⁴⁰⁰ Xpõual colom, segun yo he sabido de hombres de su nación, fue natural dela provincia de liguria [...] unos dizen que de Saona otros que de um pequeno lugar o villaje dicho Nervi [...] por mas cierto se tiene que fue natural de um lugar dicho Cogureo [...] El origen de sus predecesores es de la cibdad de Plazencia en Lombardia. OVIEDO Y VALDÉS, Gonzalo Fernández de, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias, Islas y Tierra-Firme del Mar Océano*, Publicala la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 1851, Cap. IV, 12.

— Oviedo, writing not many years after his death, considers it so very doubtful where the great navigator was born that he mentions some six Italian towns claiming the honor of his birth; and this number has since been increased to nearly a score, including French, Portuguese and Spanish claims, while it may be worthy of note that Charles Molloy wrote a book in 1682 to prove that Columbus was born in England! KIRK, Hyland C., *The Secret of Columbus With Additions*, Press of the Hayworth Publishing House, 1912, 6.

⁴⁰¹ BERNÁLDEZ, Andrés, *Historia de Los Reyes Católicos Don Fernando Y Doña Isabel*, Sevilla, 1870, T. I, XXIII.

*In the name of Almighty God, there was a man from the **land of Genoa**, a merchant of printed books, who dealt in this land of Andalusia, whom they called Cristóbal Colón, a man of very high ingenuity.*⁴⁰²

However, when giving the account of Colón's death, the same Bernáldez says that “the said Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón, inventor of the Indies, of wonderful and honored memory, a native of the **province of Milan**, being in Valladolid in the year 1506, died in the month of May.”⁴⁰³ We don't know why the locations don't match, being first from Genoa and then from Milan, but it is something that seems to happen with frequency in the navigator's story.

For his part, Francisco López de Gómara, born around 1511 (five years after Colón's death), in his *Historia General de las Indias* wrote that “Cristóbal Colón was a native of Cugureo, or as some would like, of Nervi, a village in Genoa, a well-known city in Italy. He descended, from what some say, from the Perestrelos of Placencia in Lombardy.”⁴⁰⁴

Surprisingly, while it was mentioned everywhere and almost accepted as a *fait accompli* that Colón was Genoese, and after Martin Waldseemüller himself had previously called the discoverer of America “Genoese,” Colón is described as a “captain of Portugal” in his new map from 1516.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰² En el nombre de Dios Todo-poderoso, ovo un hombre de tierra de Génova, mercader de libro de estampa, que trataba en esta tierra de Andalucía, que llamaban Christoval Colon, hombre de muy alto injenio. *Idem*, 357.

⁴⁰³ Alejandro Geraldino, el segundo Obispo de Santo Domingo, y que reposa en la Capilla del Cristo, dice en su obra: “*Itinerarium ad regiones sub aequinociale*”, terminada en Santo Domingo en el 1552. “C. Colón era italiano, según decían, y de la ciudad ligur de Génova. Andrés Bernáldez, cura de la villa de los Palacios y depositario de los papeles de Colón, en su *Historia de los Reyes Católicos*, le llamó al dar cuenta de su fallecimiento, dice que era de la **provincia de Milán**, contradicción notable que revela **el absoluto desconocimiento de la cuna de Colón**. HORTA Y PARDO, Constantino de, *Verdadera Cuna de Cristobal Colon*, New York, 1912, 49.

— SANFUENTES Y CORREA, Enrique, *Cristóbal Colón y Su Detractor El Marqués de Dos Fuentes*, Imprenta Universitaria, Santiago, 1918, 23.

⁴⁰⁴ Era Cristóbal Colón natural de Cugureo, o como algunos quieren, de Nervi, aldea de Génova, ciudad de Italia muy nombrada. Descendía, a lo que algunos dicen, de los Pelestreles de Placencia de Lombardía. LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA, Francisco, *Historia general de las Indias*, Espasa-Calpe, S.A., Madria, 1922, 38.

⁴⁰⁵ No Mapa-Carta Marina, de Martin Waldseemüller, desenhado em 1516, lê-se que Colón era um capitão de Portugal. Waldseemüller escreveu que este novo mapa corrigia as duas versões anteriores, de 1507 e 1513. Neste, o genovês aparece, aparentemente, corrigido para um capitão de Portugal. Waldseemüller trabalhou para os descendentes do conde português de Monsanto, como já explicámos – Monsanto casou-se dentro da família de Colombo, o Moço –, e deve ter tido acesso a muitos segredos portugueses. Waldseemüller mostrou a localização dos padrões colocados pelos marinheiros portugueses, assim como menciona os nomes de lugares da costa de África que ainda não eram do conhecimento público. Numa época em que o mundo inteiro afirmava que Colón era genovês e se chamava Colombo, Waldseemüller identificou-o como capitão português. Porquê? ROSA, *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, 550.

Las Casas called him Genoese, however added that it was without knowing the “truth of it.” Giovan Battista Strozzi, Florentine in Cádiz, called Colón “Savonese”⁴⁰⁶ as did Galindez de Carbajal,⁴⁰⁷ and in a 1493 letter to the Duke of Ferrara, the navigator is called **Spagnolo** (Spanish.)⁴⁰⁸

Don Hernando, as we pointed out in his *Historie*, does not give his father any birthplace. What he wrote merely shows how different people were already inventing different locations as the birthplace of his father, being that the truth had been well hidden.

In the *Psalterium, Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum* [...] published in 1516 in Milan, the bishop of Nebbio, Agostino Giustiniani, wrote several pieces of information about the navigator that correspond to everything the modern biographers have come to accept. For example, that the Admiral “was born in Genoa to plebeian parents.”⁴⁰⁹

This statement, and others published in the 1516 *Psalterium* were contradicted by Don Hernando in his *Historie*. Don Hernando declared that Giustiniani's book was banned by the Genoese government because it contained many falsehoods about his father. And it appears that Giustiniani's information about Don Cristóbal, written in the 1516 edition of the *Psalter*, was removed because according to Henry Cotton it was no longer in a new edition of the *Psalter* published in 1518.⁴¹⁰

But again, in his *Historie*, Don Hernando did not give us factual information about his father's place of birth that we could use to counter Giustiniani's misinformation. Those facts that Don Hernando knew to be correct and contrary to those in the *Psalterium* were left out because it

⁴⁰⁶ *Memorie Della Società Geografica Italiana*, Roma, 1895, 114.

⁴⁰⁷ Savone, désignée à une époque aussi reculée que celle où écrivait Galindez de Carbajal. *Ibidem*. HARRISSE, Henry, *Christophe Colomb: son origine, sa vie...*, TI, 156.

⁴⁰⁸ May 10, 1493: De quelle insole extranee trovate per quel **Spagnolo**, navicando, et li mandai la copia de una littera. BERCHET, Guglielmo, *Fonti italiane per la storia della scoperta del Nuovo mondo*, Part 3, Vol. 1, 1892, 143.

⁴⁰⁹ Christophorus cognomento Columbus patria genuensis, uilibus ortus parentibus [...] Hic puerilibus annis uix prima elementa edoctus, pubescēs iam rei maritime operam dedit. THACHER, Vol I, 207.

⁴¹⁰ Of this edition it is said that 2000 copies were printed on paper, and fifty on vellum. M. Van Praet does not appear to have known of the Bodleian copy. As reference is frequently made to a note occurring in this edition of the *Psalter* relative to Colón, the following particulars are given; as though often quoted, perhaps it is not much known. On verse 4 of the 18th (our 19th) Psalm, is this comment: “*Et in fines mundi verba eorum. Saltem temporibus nostris, quibus mirabili ausu Christophori Columbi Genuensis, alter pene orbis repertus est...*” I am not aware that this note is repeated in any subsequent edition of the *Psalter*; certainly, **it is not** in that of 1518. COTTON, Henry, *A Typographical Gazetteer*, Oxford University Press, 1831, 343.

was how his father had wanted it to be. However, if Don Hernando did not know the truth, he would have never known that what the Bishop of Nebbio published in his *Psalterium* were lies.

Instead of giving us the real information, Don Hernando came to prove thirteen falsehoods with Giustiniani's own words, exposing him as a false historian who didn't even know the facts that were visible and within reach, therefore, how could he ever know the details that were intentionally hidden and the family wanted kept secret from the public. In his *Historie*, Don Hernando proclaims it this way:

*But it is not surprising that Giustiniani, in the case of what is **hidden**, ran the risk of not writing the truth, since in the very clear things of Colón's discovery and navigation in half a sheet of paper, which Giustiniani wrote in said Psalter, he wrote more than twelve lies [...] we will only say that, due to the many errors and falsehoods found in Giustiniani's story printed in the Psalter, the Government of Genoa, considering the falsity of his writings [...] by public decree, it was canceled and extinguished.*⁴¹¹

On March 8, 1535, the former secretary of Don Cristóbal Colón and former page of the Count of Penamacor, Diego Méndez, appeared in Madrid. His sworn statement reads that “the father of the said viceroy [Don Diogo] was called Don Cristóbal Colón, **Genoese**, and was born in **Saona** which is a village near Genoa.”⁴¹² It should be noted, as we have already explained, that this Diego Méndez lied to the Castilian Court for 46 years about his own identity and nationality. We should accept that it would not be difficult for Méndez to lie and cover up Admiral Colón's secret nationality as well by redirecting it to Saona.⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ Ma non è da maravigliarsi che il Giustiniano in questo caso, che è occulto, ardisca a non dire il vero, poiché nelle cose molto chiare del suo scoprimento e navigazione in mezzo foglio di carta, che in detto Salterio scrisse, mise più di dodici bugie [...] diremo solamente che per i molti errori e falsità che in detta storia e nel Salterio del Giustiniano si trovano, la Signoria di Genova, considerata la falsità della sua scrittura [...] con gran diligenza ha mandato a cercarla in ogni luogo dove è stata mandata, acciò che per pubblico decreto sia cancellata ed estinta. HISTORIE, Cap. II, 4-7.

⁴¹² VIGNERAS, Louis André, *Diego Méndez, Secretary of Christopher Columbus and Alguacil Mayor of Santo Domingo: A Biographical Sketch*, The Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 58, n°. 4 (November 1978), 676-696.

⁴¹³ Già è noto che il Salinero, il Verzellino, e il Belloro (padre) diligenti investigatori delle patrie memorie non avendo l'a more, nè l'odio della plebe, scopertamente si protestarono, che riiun diritto avea la patria loro (Savona) sopra il Colombo. Vedi Storia letteraria tom. 2.°, pag. 273 scritta dal Reverendo Spotorno. ISNARDI, Felice, *Nuovi documenti originali illustrati dal Signor F. Isnardi, mercè dei quali è accertata la patria di C. Colombo il Comune di Cogoleto e ridotti a silenzio G. Spotorno, G. Pizzorno e G. Belloro*, Frugoni, 1840, 10.

In his *Epichemera*, published in Turin in 1696, Felippo Alberto Pollero erroneously wrote that Colón was buried in the Cathedral of Seville with an epitaph that said *Christophorus Columbus Savonensis*.⁴¹⁴ Colón's bones were only brought to the Sevillian cathedral two hundred years later, in 1899.

Two centuries ago, in 1809, Francesco Cancellieri claimed that a certain Francesco Agostino, Bishop of Saluzzo, writing about the prelates of Piedmont said that the titular bishop of Bettelemme in 1465 was a Giacomo Colombo, brother of "Domenico father of the great Cristóbal. Affirming that the Admiral was not from Liguria, but from the Piedmont. *Ex quo patet, celebrem Columbum, non Ligurem, sed Pedemontanum fuisse*."⁴¹⁵

Gian Batista Spotorno mentions several works that tried to prove the navigator's birthplace as being Modena, Cosseria, Pradello, or Cuccaro, but disputes all of these places by taking advantage of the *Mayorazgo of 1498*. Spotorno insists that "Cristóbal Colón was born in Genoa. On this, he himself makes a solemn declaration in his **Testament of 1498**."⁴¹⁶ Here, we see how the 1498 *Mayorazgo* was the one and only Castilian document in support of a Genoese birth.

In the face of discord, Spotorno had already proposed to prove in his 1819 work that "Cristóbal Colón is Genoese by origin, by country, and by birth, i.e. born in Genoa, of a father who is a citizen of Genoa."⁴¹⁷

Henry Harrisse described the confusion that existed in 1887, saying that "most of the towns and villages that claim to have seen the birth of Cristóbal Colón: Plaisance, Cuccaro, Cogoleto,

⁴¹⁴ He lays particular stress on the testimony of the Magnifico Francisco Spinola, as related by the learned prelate Felippo Alberto Pollero, stating that he had seen the sepulchre of Cristóbal Colón in the cathedral at Seville, and that the epitaph states him expressly to be a native of Savona: "*Hic jacet Christophorus Columbus Savonensis*." The proofs advanced by Signor Belloro show his zeal for the honour of his native city, but do not authenticate the fact he undertakes to establish. He shows clearly that many respectable writers believed Colón to be a native of Savona. IRVING, Washington, *The Works of Washington Irving*, London, 1866, Vol. II, 815.

⁴¹⁵ L'anno 1465, lo chiama Fratello di Domenico, Padre del gran Cristoforo. Dal che ricava, esser evidente, ch'egli non fu della Riviera di Genova, ma *Piemontese*. *Ex quo patet, celebrem Columbum, non Ligurem, sed Pedemontanum fuisse*. CANCELLIERI, Francesco, *Notizie storiche e bibliografiche di Cristoforo Colombo di Cuccaro nel Monferrato scopritore dell'America raccolte da Francesco Cancellieri*, Francesco Bourlié, Roma, 1809, 15.

⁴¹⁶ SPOTORNO, Giovanni Battista, *Memorials of Columbus; Or, A Collection of Authentic Documents of that Celebrated Navigator: Now First Published from the Original Manuscripts*, by Order of the Decurions of Genoa, Treuttel and Wurtz, Treuttel, jun. and Richter, 1823, ix.

⁴¹⁷ SPOTORNO, Giovanni Battista, *Della origine e della patria di Cristoforo Colombo libri tre di Don Giambattista Spotorno*, Presso A. Frugoni, 1819, 14.

Pradello, Nervi, Albissola, Bogliasco, Cosseria, Finale, Oneglia, Quinto, Novare, Chiavari, Milan, Modena, Calvi, do not produce any [documentary] support for this claim.”⁴¹⁸

These ongoing uncertainties brought us a “Don Cristóbal Colón [...] who, as Paulo Jovio writes, [...] was a native of Albizolo near Saona,” as Prospero Peragallo showed in 1888.⁴¹⁹ Reviewing this Prospero Peragallo’s book, published in Lisbon,⁴²⁰ Fernández Duro wrote that “he does not at all convince the reader that reason is on his side,” especially when considering the hypothetical points of Colón’s foggy life, “homeland, age, youth, nautical initiation, arrival in Portugal, marriage....”⁴²¹

Several places in Italy claim to have proof that they were the birthplace of the famous navigator. Writing about this in 1912, Hyland Kirk said that “in Cogoleto, on the way to Savona, we can see another house, or rather a shop bearing the date 1650, where Colón was born. Tourists can also find documentary evidence in the village of Albissiola, a little further west, that Colón was born there; and when we reach Savona we may be presented with equally convincing documents to prove that Colón was born in that city.”⁴²²

⁴¹⁸ HARRISSE, Henry, *Christophe Colomb Et Savone: Verzellino et ses Mémoire; Études d’histoire critique et documentaire*, A. Donath, 1887, 24-25.

⁴¹⁹ Don Christoval Colon [...] que, como escribe Paulo Jovio [...] fue natural de Albizolo cerca de Saona. PERAGALLO, Prospero, *Cristoforo Colombo e la Sua Famiglia*, Lisboa, 1888, 73.

⁴²⁰ PERAGALLO, Prospero, *Cristoforo Colombo e la Sua Famiglia*, Lisboa, 1888.

⁴²¹ No en toda convence al lector de que esté la razón de su lado, especialmente cuando en la consideración de puntos hipotéticos de la nebulosa de Colón, patria, edad, juventud, iniciación náutica, llegada a Portugal, casamiento, venida a España, hospitalidad del Duque de Medinaceli, etc., etc., sienta opiniones propias, fundadas solamente en el raciocinio. Parecele, por ejemplo, evidente y claro como la luz del día que Génova dio cuna al navegante, y sin embargo, fresca está aún la tinta de imprenta de otros libros en que se aboga por distintas localidades. FERNÁNDEZ DURO, Cesáreo, *Nebulosa de Colón según observaciones hechas en ambos mundos; indicación de algunos errores*, Est. tip. Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1890, 15.

⁴²² If one will stop at Cogoleto, on his way to Savona, he can see another house, or rather shop bearing the date 1650, where Colón was born. The tourist will also find documentary evidence at the town of Albissiola, a little farther west, that Colón was born there; and when he reaches Savona may be shown documents equally convincing to prove that Colón was born in that city. And so if he goes in other directions from Genoa. At Quinto, proof will be presented that Colóns was born there, and also at Nervi, and at Bogliasco; while equally convincing proofs will be furnished at Chiavari, at the castle of Cuccaro, at Cosseria, Finale, Novare, Milan and Modena that he was born in each of these towns. If he takes boat to Calvi, Corsica, the investigator will be shown the street where Colón was born and lived, also his statue erected under the auspices of the French government sanctioning the claims of the historian Peretti, and the Abbe Martin Cassanova de Pioggiola, that Colón was a native of that port. KIRK, Hyland C., *The Secret of Columbus With Additions*, Press of the Hayworth Publishing House, 1912, 7.

The historian Justin Winsor, after a careful examination of all the evidence presented by different locations, including Genoa, came to the conclusion that “there is left in favor of any of them, after their claims are critically examined, nothing but local pride and ambition!”⁴²³

In fact, no solid evidence has ever been found for any town in Italy or outside Italy. Constantino de Horta y Pardo, in a 1912 publication supporting Pontevedra, in Galicia, as the true birthplace of Colón, stated that:

*The History of the Discovery accepted, admitted and propagated the Genoese nationality of Colón because it lacked evidential proofs, based on respectable and authorized documents implanted with all the solemnities cotemporary to the time of the Discovery.*⁴²⁴

The Senate of Genoa, during the inheritance lawsuit for the Dukedom of Veragua (1578-1609), supported a Bernardo Colombo from Cogoleto to compete for the inheritance of the Colón family in Spain. Since it was an extraordinarily valuable inheritance, plaintiffs were sought in Italy to go to Spain to try their luck.

At the time, due to a mandate in a manifesto that the Duke of Mantua published with the authority of King Felipe II of Spain, the testimonies of several prominent Genoese citizens were taken. It seems no one from Genoa knew that the famous navigator was a native of that city; and furthermore:

*The city of Genoa has annals where the names and notable events of the natives of the said city are put and recorded, both noble and commoner, and those who have done more prominent deeds they register and erect statues to them. Because Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón was not a native of the said city, there is no account nor record of him in the annals, nor any statue was erected, as they did for men of lesser fame and glory.*⁴²⁵

⁴²³ KIRK, Hyland C., *The Secret of Columbus With Additions*, Press of the Hayworth Publishing House, 1912, 8.

⁴²⁴ La Historia del Descubrimiento aceptó, admitió y propagó la nacionalidad genovesa de Colón por carecer de pruebas evidentes, basadas en respetables y autorizados documentos revestidos de todas las solemnidades del tiempo del Descubrimiento. HORTA Y PARDO, Constantino de, *Verdadera Cuna de Cristóbal Colon*, New York, 1912, 49.

⁴²⁵ Gabriel de Sandoval, procurador del aspirante Baltasar Colombo, presentó en el Consejo de Indias un pliego de alegaciones donde se señalaba que jamás hubo en la ciudad de Génova “naturales que se llamasen Colombo; porque en la ciudad de Génova no a avido ni ay personas naturales della que se ayan llamado ni llamen del apellido Colombo o Colón, ni han sido tenidos por vecinos ni naturales de la dicha ciudad hombres algunos de

There was no reaction from the Genoese chroniclers⁴²⁶ nor its citizens to glorify that city, nor to have celebrations to such a great hypothetical native hero.⁴²⁷ Moreover, during the inheritance lawsuit, there was not a single Colombo living in the city of Genoa, or its republic, who knew of having blood kinship with the descendants of Admiral Colón.

Proof of this is the fact that the Colombo pretenders who went to battle for the inheritance lawsuit in Spain (Bernardo Colombo and Baltazar Colombo) were not born in Genoa.

Yet, in Genoa there are two letters supposed to have been sent by the Genoese Bank of Saint George to the Admiral and his son Don Diogo in Castile, dated December 8, 1502. The letters claim that Genoa was “sua primigenia pátria” (his original homeland) and that he was “affectionato de questa sua originaria pátria” (very fond of this his original homeland).⁴²⁸

We have been led to believe that these two controversial letters were the bank's response to an alleged letter from Admiral Colón, written on April 2, 1502. Apparently, a month before lifting anchors on May 9, 1502, for his Fourth Voyage, the navigator would have written this to the Bank of Saint George offering them 10% of all the family's vast earnings for all eternity:

*Very noble Sirs, although the body be here, the heart is there permanently. Our Lord has given me the greatest grace that, aside from David, he has done to anyone. The things of my undertaking already shine and would make a tremendous glow if the government's darkness did not cover it. I return to the Indies in the name of the Holy Trinity to come back soon and because I am mortal, I wish that Don Diogo, my son, that, from all the earnings that he receives, that he assist you with **the tenth of everything each year forever,***

tal apellido; lo otro, porque en la dicha ciudad de Génova ay annales donde se ponen y asientan los nombres y hechos notables de los naturales de la dicha ciudad, assí nobles como de populares, y a los que los han hecho más señalados les firman y ponen estatuas, por no ser el almirante Don Christóval Colom natural de la dicha ciudad ni se asentó ni se hizo memoria dél ni de sus hechos en los dichos annales, ni se le formó ni puso estatua como la han hecho y hazen a otros hombres de menos fama y nombre que él.” Declararon lo mismo once testigos, en su mayoría personas procedentes del Monferrato que vivían en la Corte española, algunos en las casas de los representantes diplomáticos de repúblicas italianas, como el doctor Annibal, en la del embajador de Mantua, o Juan Bela en la del embajador de Saboya, o Bartolomé Peggio en la del embajador de Venecia; y otros que eran naturales y vecinos de la ciudad de Génova, siendo el más destacado de ellos el príncipe de Palermo Nicolao Grimaldi, de 83 años. CHOCANO, 137.

⁴²⁶ Huberto Foglieta [...] que les Ginoveses no ayan puesto en ellos [los libros de historia] a don Christoval. SANCHEZ, Luis, *Alegacion en derecho por Doña Francisca Colon de Toledo, sobre la sucession en posesion del Estado y Ducado de Veragua*, (Exclusion de don Baltasar Colombo) Madrid, 1608.

⁴²⁷ KIRK, Hyland C., *The Secret of Columbus With Additions*, Press of the Hayworth Publishing House, 1912, 8.

⁴²⁸ HARRISSE, *Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George*, New York, 1888, 5, 7.

*for the reduction of the expenses of wheat and wine and other food provisions. If this tenth amounts to something take it, and if not, accept my good intentions. I ask mercifully that this son of mine you keep well entrusted [...] April 2, 1502.*⁴²⁹

As written, the incredible offer of 10% “of everything each year forever” to the Genoese bank immediately stands out as suspicious. For, if Don Cristóbal Colón was not from Genoa, as it appears he was not, why would he be offering this huge amount of money to that bank?

Exposing this letter as a Genoese con and a sham is Don Cristóbal’s letter to Don Diogo Colón, his heir, written at the same time, where no mention is made of the 10% to be sent to Genoa, as may be read below:

*Very dear son: I leave you in my place and I want you to spend everything that belongs to me with great care as it pertains to your honor, and for this I leave you a power of attorney done at a notary public. All my privileges and grants remain with Fray Don Gaspar; and a document [Last Will dated April 1, 1502⁴³⁰] for the transfer of my property, if it becomes necessary at any time. I command you and order you **to take great devotion in giving the tenth of all the money** from your earnings, from rents or any other kind, the tithe of it, that without delay of time give it in service of our Lord to the needy poor and **to relatives before any others**, and if they are not where you are, set it aside to be sent to them.*⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ Muy nobles señors bie q el coerpo ande aca el coraçõ esta ali de continuo nrº Sor me ha fecho la mayor merced q despues de dabit el aya fecho anadi las cosas de my inpresa ya luzê y faria grã lumbrẽ si la escuridad del gobierno nõ le incobriera yo buelu[o] alas yndias ê nõbre de la santa trinidad pa tornar luego y por q yo soy mortal yo deso a dõ diego my fijo q de la Renta toda q se oviere q os acuda ali cõ el diezmo de toda ella cada un año pa siêpre pa ê descuêto de la Renta del trigo y bino y otras bitualias comederas si este diezº fuere algo Reçebildo y si no Reçebid la voluntad q yo tengo a este fijo myo vos pido por merçed q tengays ecomêdado. HARRISSE, *Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George*, New York, 1888, 5.

⁴³⁰ BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?*, *Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 256.

⁴³¹ Muy caro hijo; yo os deço en mi lugar, y quiero que vos, todo lo que me pertenece, que lo gastes con mucha orden lo que pertenezca á tu honra, y para ello te deço poder ante escribano. Todos mis privilegios y escrituras quedan á Fray Don Gaspar; y una escritura de Donación de mis bienes, para si menester fuere en algún tiempo. Yo te mando y encargo que tú lo debas tomar mucho á devoción, de dar el décimo de todos los dineros que hubieres, que sean de rentas, que sean de cualquiera otra guisa, el diezmo de ella, luego sin dilación de ora dadlo por servicio de nuestro Señor á pobres necesitados y parientes antes que á otros, y si no estubieren á do estubieres, apártalos para se los enviar. TEXTOS, 308.

One immediately notices that the son is ordered to give the tenth not to the Bank of Saint George, but to his relatives; with priority given to their poor and needy relatives first. Don Cristóbal would not be offering the tenth of everything indefinitely to the bank in Genoa and at the same time ordering his son to give that same tenth to his poorer relatives.

The Admiral's letter to his son does not mention that he had already given the tenth in an offer letter to the bank. Furthermore, the way in which the letters found in Genoa are signed represent another irregularity.

Admiral Colón never signed as *The Major Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy and Governor General of the Islands and Continent of Asia and Indies for the King and Queen my Lords and their Captain General of the sea and of their council*.⁴³² These letters located in Genoa are the only known letters with this very unusual signature. His authentic letters are signed as *XpoFerens* or *Virrey* or *el Almirante*!

In 1502, Don Cristóbal was neither Viceroy nor Governor because the court removed those titles after his arrest in 1500. In 1502 he was only Admiral:

*D. Cristóbal Colón, our **Admiral** of the Islands and the continent that are in the Ocean sea, in the part of the Indies ... March 14, 1502.*⁴³³

*Captain of the Most Serene King of Portugal, our son: we let you know that we sent **Admiral** D. Cristóbal Colón, bearer of this letter, with certain ships ... March 14, 1502.*⁴³⁴

One more anomaly is that while Colón's supposed letter to that Italian bank is written in Castilian, not in Italian, the two letters from the bank are written in Italian. And even more inexplicable is how the bank's reply to those two Colóns living in Castile are both found in Genoa and no trace of the bank's letters are found in the Colón archives in Seville!

There are so many contradictions to this story; and these letters to and from the bank are just another paradox that just does not fit. With so many frauds that seem to have been manufactured to

⁴³² HARRISSE, *Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George*, Chiswick Press; C. Wittingham and Company, London, 1888, 6.

⁴³³ D. Cristóbal Colón, nuestro **Almirante** de las Islas y Tierra firme que son en la mar Océano á la parte de las Yndias. NAVARRETE, T1, 279.

⁴³⁴ Capitan del Serenísimó Rey de Portugal, nuestro hijo: facemos vos saber que Nos enviamos al **Almirante** D. Cristóbal Colón, levador desta, con ciertos navios. *Idem*, 282.

support the legend that Colón was born in Genoa, it is highly likely that these letters are just another instance of fraud. In this story, denunciations of fraudulent documents have been a common occurrence over the centuries, and Marcello Staglieno called some of this to attention in 1887 when he wrote that, “documents from Salinero reproduced by HARRISSE are apocryphal.”⁴³⁵

A forged letter offering 10% to the Genoese bank could be used during the inheritance battle as part of the scam to try to swindle some money during that lawsuit. Seeing the possibility of stealing such an enormous inheritance from the legitimate heirs of the First Admiral of the Indies, the government of Genoa itself became involved in this theft conspiracy. The Senate of Genoa published several advertisements in order to support any Ligurian Colombo who wanted to go and try his luck in Spain.⁴³⁶ By scheming with the aforementioned Bernardo Colombo, the city of Genoa had the potential to bring high monetary benefits to itself.

In the 1580s, not one Colombo was found in Genoa who believed himself to be related to the Colón family from Spain. Bernardo Colombo, one pretender who fought for the opportunity to be named the heir to the House of Colón was from Cogoletto, and not Genoa. Bernardo pretended to be

⁴³⁵ Prospero Peragallo incalorito nella difesa di quanto dicono le *Historié* di Hernando Colón, trovando che i documenti savonesi non concordavano con alcune asserzioni delle *Historié* medesime ne mise in dubbio l'autenticità; e dopo di lui in un opuscolo pubblicato da Celsus a Lisbona, in contraddizione di altro stampato a Parigi da Sejus si vollero dimostrare senz'altro, **apocrifi tutti i documenti del Salinero** riprodotti dall'HARRISSE [...] Peragallo e Celsus corsero troppo volendo sostenere l'assoluta falsità dei documenti savonesi, tanto più che gli argomenti addotti da loro non posano sopra solide basi, essendo tutti, come si dice, argomenti ad hominem perchè cavati dalle inesattezze e contraddizioni in cui caddero HARRISSE e Sejus, nella cita-zione dei documenti di cui è caso e che questi furono rico-nosciuti ed accettati come autentici dal Ferreri, dal Salinero, dal Monti, dal Pollero, dai Belloro e da altri, che ne videro gli originali o le autentiche copie. STAGLIENO, Marcello, *Alcuni Nuovi Documenti Intorno a Cristoforo Colombo ed Alla Sua Famiglia*, Giornale Ligustico, 1887, 244-245.

⁴³⁶ Tanto la prima supplica diretta al Pretore Urbano di Genova dal Bernardo quanto le deposizioni dei testimoni proposti da esso furono pubblicate in Genova e in Cogoletto locis solitis et sono tubae (2) – (2) Vedi la supplica di Bernardo Colombo di Cogoletto sopra riferita diretta al Pretore di Genova firmata David Vacca. - Vedi il decreto del detto Pretore in data del 2° aprile 1583 col quale si manda pubblicare in Genova e in Cogoletto la detta supplica di Bernardo Colombo – Vedi il certificato della seguita ne pubblicazione nei luoghi soliti della città di Genova in data del 20 aprile detto anno firmato da Francesco Cosso Cintraco della Repubblica. – Vedi il certificato della pubblicazione fatta ne in Cogoletto da Giovanni Della-Valle nunzio pubblico di Cogoletto firmato dal Signor Antonio Defranchi Notajo di Arenzano e Cogoletto li 22 aprile 1583 – Vedi il proclama sur riferito col quale il detto Pretore di Genova manda pubblicarsi in Genova e in Cogoletto il contesto delle surriferite deposizioni e invita il pubblico a farvi opposizione entro il termine perentorio di tre giorni in data del 2 maggio 1583.– Vedi il certificato di pubblicazione seguita in Genova dei detti esami in data del 4 maggio 1583 firmato dal Cintraco della Repubblica Franciscus Cotius. - Vedi il certificato della pnbbli cazione seguitane in Cogoletto in data del 6 maggio fattane dal nunzio pubblico, detto Giovanni Della-Valle, firmato dal detto Notajo Antonio Defranchi – Vedi il decreto del detto Pretore in data del 1o maggio 1583, onde concede, che si rilasci copia a utentica di detti esami al detto Bernardo di Cogoletto. ISNARDI, 96-97.

a great-grandson of Don Bartolomé Colón.⁴³⁷ The various witnesses questioned swore that they had knowledge to prove that Bernardo Colombo, a hypothetical son of Don Bartolomé Colón, brother of the great navigator, had a son Massino, who was Don Bartolomé Colón's *nipote* (grandson):

*His sworn testimonial oath said: I have known, as I have said, how the said Bernardo was son of the said Bartolomeo [Colón] and I know that Massino was born from him, and from his wife whose name I do not recollect, and as a legitimate and natural son of that Bernardo, that Massino was had, not only by their relatives, but also by all those who knew him and likewise as grandson of the said Bartolomeo, brother of the Great Cristóbal inventor of the Indies, and it is also public voice and fame.*⁴³⁸

In 1583 the Senate of Genoa promoted the tale that Lieutenant Don Bartolomé Colón was from Cogoleto, where he had left three legitimate and recognized children: Tommaso, Bernardo, and Antonio (certainly prior to 1479, time at which Bartolomé would already be in Portugal). This gives us reason enough to question how such a famous navigator, as Don Cristóbal Colón clearly was, supposedly born in Cogoleto and having three alleged legitimate nephews living there, all first cousins of Don Hernando Colón, and yet the latter was not able to find a single relative when he visited Cogoleto, as may be read in this excerpt of his *Historie*:

*To be more certain, when I passed through Cogoleto, I tried to obtain information from two Colombo brothers who were the richest in that place, and who it was claimed were related to us. But as the youngest was over a hundred years old, they were unable to give me any information.*⁴³⁹

⁴³⁷ Il detto Bartolommeo Colombo figlio di Domenico e fratello di Cristoforo (chechè abbia fin qui scritto gratuitamente il prefato Campione di Genova in torno alla di lui nessuna figliuolanza legittima e riconosciuta) ebbe a figli legittimi e riconosciuti Tommaso, Bernardo ed Antonio tutti e tre menzionati insieme col loro avo (Domenico) padre (Bartolomeo) e zio paterno (Cristoforo). ISNARDI, 13.

⁴³⁸ Suo Juramento testificando dixit: Io ho cognosciuto come ho detto il Bernardo figlio del detto Bartolomeo et sò che da lui è nato Massino, e da sua moglie de quale non mi raccordo il nome, e per figlio legittimo e naturale di esso Bernardo esso Massino era tenuto non solamente da loro parenti, ma anche da tutti quelli che lo conoscevano, et parimente per nepote di detto Bartolomeo [Colón] fratello del Gran Christofforo Inventor dell'Indie, e n'è anco publica voce e fama. *Idem*, 47.

⁴³⁹ Di che per meglio certificarmi, passando io per Cugureo [Cogoleto], procurai di avere informazioni di due fratelli Colombi, che erano i più ricchi di quel castello, e si diceva ch'erano alquanto suoi parenti: ma, perché il men vecchio passava i cento anni, non seppero darmi notizia di ciò. HISTORIE, Cap. II, 4.

Don Hernando died in 1539. Passing through an Italian town before that year, where he supposedly had three cousins, instead of finding those three sons of Don Bartolomé he found only two hypothetical relatives born circa 1439, who knew nothing about any relatives of the Colóns in that place. And why was Don Hernando searching in Cogoletto if his father was supposed to be from Genoa?

Only 77 years had passed since the death of the First Admiral of the Indies, but no person in Genoa, and not even the Genoese government seemed to know that the famous Don Cristóbal Colón was supposed to be the Cristoforo Colombo weaver from that city.⁴⁴⁰ Genoa's Senate chose instead to support a false Colombo pretender from Cogoletto to go to Spain and try to steal the inheritance from the navigator's legitimate descendants.⁴⁴¹

If it were true that Don Cristóbal was from Genoa, at least some relatives would have been found there in the 1580s. However, forty years after the death of Don Hernando, there were no Colombos in Genoa related to the famous Colóns in Spain. Bernardo Colombo, an alleged great-grandson of Don Bartolomé Colón was rejected by the tribunal in Spain, and the Government of Genoa was admonished for its participation in that fraud.

This episode shows how in 1583 no one in Genoa believed that Don Cristóbal Colón was Genoese, despite the publications and searches for relatives of the navigator carried out by the Senate of Genoa. The best they could find in Liguria were two postulants, Bernardo of Cogoletto and Baltazar of Cuccaro, both without any blood ties to the famous Colón.

Although Bernardo was quickly rejected, Baltazar Colombo prepared a more convincing fraud claiming that Admiral Colón was a nephew of a Francesco Colombo born in the palace of Cuccaro. Francesco Cancellieri was convinced enough of this in 1809, when he wrote:

Certainly, there is no lack of strong reasons to believe, that Cristóbal Colón, commonly believed to be Genoese [...] was [instead] from Monferrato, from a Castle called Cuccaro, where there still exists a noble family, descendant of a Francesco Colombo, paternal uncle

⁴⁴⁰ Nell'atto il Colombo é bene qualificato "Dominicus de Columbo civis Ianue, quondam Iohannis, de Quinto, textor pannorum et tabernarius." Mallevadore dell'atto é Domenico di Pasquale di Fontanabuona, anch'esso tessitore di panni. RACCOLTA, Parte II - Vol. I, 21.

⁴⁴¹ ISNARDI, 6-7.

— Vedi Storia letteraria citata tom. 2, pag 234, eleggiqueste parole: ad abbattere la pretensione di Bernardo da Cogoletto bastò l'osservare che Bartolomeo fratello dell'Eroe, dal quale pretende. *Idem*, 13.

*of that famous Navigator. Having read this passage, I wrote to Mr. Denina in the year 1780, to find out more from him about that place and the year of Colón's birth.*⁴⁴²

In a biography about a character who was so famous throughout Europe in his day, well known on both sides of the border of the two Iberian kingdoms and inside the two Iberian courts, in which it should be easy to access the facts, we face the opposite of facts time after time. As researchers we are constantly faced with propaganda and misinformation, and even disinformation, most times for reasons that cannot be fully understood. It is very difficult to know who to trust - whether we should trust the son, who knew his father for eighteen years and knew all the reasons to preserve the family secrets, thus giving us intentional deflections; or to trust any other writer, reporting far from the events and without having a sense of whether the information they received was true or if it was just intentional diversion to support the cover-up. Aside from the propaganda and misinformation, researchers also encounter documents that are clear frauds.

A Will Without a Way

Since 1825, when Navarrete presented a *Mayorazgo*⁴⁴³ (Last Will) from 1498 with the phrase “being I born in Genoa,” it has been easy to accept that the famous Admiral and Viceroy had claimed to be a native Genoese.⁴⁴⁴

After half a decade investigating the life of the navigator it became apparent that the first Admiral was not a plebeian from Genoa. However, being that the *Mayorazgo of 1498* declared he was “born in Genoa” the document needed to be explained.⁴⁴⁵ How could such a proclamation of

⁴⁴² Certamente non mancano forti ragioni da credere, che Cristóbal Colón, creduto comunemente Genovese [...] fosse di Monferrato, di un Castello, chiamato Cuccaro, dove ancora sussiste una nobile Famiglia, discendente da un Francesco Colombo, Zio paterno di quel famosissimo Navigatore. Letto questo passo, scrissi al Sig. Denina l'anno 1780, per saper da lui più ampie pruove sul Luogo, e l'Anno della nascita di Colón CANCELLIERI, Francesco, *Notizie storiche e bibliografiche di Cristoforo Colombo di Cuccaro nel Monferrato scopritore dell'America raccolte da Francesco Cancellieri*, Francesco Bourlié, Roma, 1809, 12.

— Avete messa fuori di dubbio la vera sua origine da cuccaro, e non da Genova, o da Savona, o da Nervi, nella Riviera di Levante, nè da Pradello nella Valle di Nura, di Piacenza. *Idem*, 27.

⁴⁴³ *Mayorazgo* is a Spanish word for Majorat, used to define an entailed estate, inherited by primogeniture. It stems from the word “mayor” meaning, in this case, “first born.”

⁴⁴⁴ Nada dirémos sobre la cuestion suscitada y tan empeñada en nuestros días acerca de la verdadera patria del gran Colón, pareciéndonos resuelta y decidida por él en su testamento, donde confiesa en dos lugares que nació en la ciudad de Génova. NAVARRETE, T1, LXXVII.

⁴⁴⁵ Y manda al sucessor q sustente una persona de su linage en Genova [...] Porque de ella sali, y en ella naci [...] Encarga a sus sucessores, que miren mucho por la honra de Genova. SANCHEZ, Luis, *Alegacion en derecho*

birth be rationalized? Did Don Cristóbal lie when he claimed to be born in Genoa? Were the transcriptions of the *Mayorazgo* incorrect?

Transcriptions of the 1498 Mayorazgo in several languages all say the same thing. However, the text of the document is sometimes incoherent, partially doubtful and containing several errors that made it very difficult to accept that Don Cristóbal Colón had written it. And in fact, Colón would never write such errors as:

- *Among which is that of **Jamaica**, which we call **Santiago*** [Jamaica was insignificant in 1498].⁴⁴⁶
- *I beg the King and Queen, Our Lords, and **Prince Don Juan**, their Firstborn* [this Prince was already **dead** for nearly five months].⁴⁴⁷
- *That Admiral **Don Enrique** has in the Admiralty of Castile* [there was no Admiral Don Enrique in Castile].⁴⁴⁸

por Doña Francisca Colon de Toledo, sobre la sucession en posesion del Estado y Ducado de Veragua, (Exclusion de don Baltasar Colombo) Madrid, 1608.

⁴⁴⁶ *Entre las cuales es aquesta de Xamaica, a que nos llamamos de Santiago* (Entre elas [as terras] inclui-se a Jamaica, a que nós chamamos Santiago): ora, em 1498, suposta data em que teria sido redigido o documento, Colón não dava a menor importância à Jamaica, que nem sequer esteve ocupada pelos espanhóis, até 1509. Em 1498, Colón só estava concentrado na Espanha (Haiti/República Dominicana). A Jamaica não tinha qualquer significado, porque Colón visitara-a apenas uma vez, em Maio de 1494, e não voltou a falar sobre ela. A Jamaica só se tornou importante décadas após a morte de Colón, quando o neto, o almirante Don Luís Colón, foi designado marquês da Jamaica, em 1537. O título de marquês da Jamaica era um dos alvos de disputa entre os descendentes do navegador, daí o interesse de Baltazar pelo assunto. ROSA, *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, 2019, 186-188.

⁴⁴⁷ *E asin lo suplico al Rey y a la Reina, Nuestros Señores, y al Principe Don Juan, su Primogénito Nuestro Señor* (E assim o rogo ao rei e à rainha, nossos senhores, e ao príncipe Don Juan, seu primogénito nosso senhor). O documento tem data de 22 de Fevereiro de 1498, contudo, o príncipe Don Juan, mencionado no documento, falecera em 4 de Outubro de 1497. O príncipe tinha morrido há quatro meses e meio, como poderia alguém suplicar a um príncipe morto que cuidasse do seu testamento? Os historiadores que aceitaram o documento como genuíno apressaram-se a justificar que Colón ainda não tivera conhecimento da morte do príncipe. Esquecem-se de que ele se encontrava em Espanha na altura da morte de Don Juan, e que, na qualidade de almirante do reino, deveria ser chamado a integrar a comitiva que acompanhou o funeral. Mas se acaso ainda subsistissem dúvidas, elas seriam dissipadas pelo facto de, no dia 2 de Novembro de 1497, Colón ter enviado os dois filhos, que haviam servido como pajens reais de Don Juan, apresentarem-se ao serviço da rainha Dona Isabel, devido à morte do Príncipe. Confirma-se, pois, que 27 dias após o falecimento de Don Juan, o almirante já sabia do sucedido e não fazia o menor sentido que mencionasse quatro meses mais tarde, no seu testamento, alguém que já sabia estar morto. *Idem*, 186-188.

⁴⁴⁸ *Que tiene el Almirante Don Enrique en el Almirantazgo de Castilla* (Como tem o almirante Don Enrique no Almirantado de Castela). Nunca existiu um almirante Don Enrique em Castela, nem em 1498 nem antes dessa data. O almirante de Castela em 1498 chamava-se Don Fadrique, e Cristóbal Colón, como almirante das Índias em representação de Castela, conhecia muito bem o almirante Don Fadrique. Don Fadrique não era Don Enrique. *Idem*, 186-188.

- *My coat of arms, which I will leave after my days, without intermingling anything else in them* [coats of arms were automatically inherited by the head of the household].⁴⁴⁹
- *Must sign with my signature* [how could one sign a legal document with a dead man's signature? In fact Don Diogo signed with his own name].⁴⁵⁰

Pleading with a dead Prince, calling the Admiral of Castile by the wrong name and mentioning Jamaica, of which the Admiral's yet to be born grandson Don Luis Colón would be created Marquis, but which held no value in 1498 are just three of the various falsities in the document.

Anyone who reads Navarrete's book will have the feeling that this fake *Mayorazgo* is a genuine document, because he claimed it is documented in the "Archivo del Duque de Veraguas, Regist. del Sello de Corte en Simancas."⁴⁵¹ However, Navarrete was wrong about this *Mayorazgo* being authenticated, as we will show below.

Visiting the Archivo de Indias in Seville to see the document in person, we immediately notice that the *Mayorazgo of 1498* was not written by Don Cristóbal. The first word of the document says *treslado*, thus the document declares itself to be a copy. However, this supposed **copy** has no notarial signature, no date when it was supposedly copied, and no signatures, as shown in Figure 18.

It is instantly understood why the Tribunal of the Indies rejected this document in the late 1500s, declaring that it was not authentic and worth as much as a blank piece of paper. It was presented as a copy of a document supposedly written by the Admiral who was already dead, but it appears to be signed as *el Almirante*! A dead man cannot sign! Furthermore, it does not have the signature of any witness to confirm that this text is a reliable copy of any factual manuscript.

⁴⁴⁹ Primeramente traerá Don Diego, mi hijo, y todos los que de mi sucedieren y descendieren, y así mis hermanos Don Bartolomé y Don Diego mis armas, que yo dejaré despues de mis dias, sin entreverar mas ninguna cosa que ellas, y sellará con el sello dellas. (Colón saberia muito bem que um brasão de armas automaticamente passava para o herdeiro ou primogénito. Não era necessário meter uma clausula destas num testamento.) NAVARRETE, T. II, 228-229.

⁴⁵⁰ Don Diego, mi hijo, ó cualquier otro que heredare este Mayorazgo, despues de haber heredado y estado en posesion de ello, firme de mi firma, la cual agora acostumbro, que es una X con una S encima, y una M con una A, romana encima, y encima della una S y despues una Y griega con una S encima con sus rayas y virgulas, como yo agora fago, y se parecerá por mis firmas, de las cuales se hallarán muchas, por esta parecerá. Y no escribirá sino el Almirante, puesto que otros títulos el Rey le diese ó ganase: esto se entiende en la firma y no en su ditado que podrá escribir todos sus títulos como le pluguiere; solamente en la firma escribirá, el Almirante. *Idem*, 229.

⁴⁵¹ *Idem*, 221.

Figure 18

The *Mayorazgo*'s first page on the left has as its first word *Treslado*. The last page on the right shows the signature “El Almirante” instead of a name. Colón’s cryptic cipher of S, SAS, XMY is incorrectly formatted. Inset (A) shows the signature as an afterthought with the top *S* colliding with the text above and dots between *XMY* where Colón never put them, as verified by Colón’s true signature in inset (C). Aside from the misplaced dots the *M* was corrected from an *A* that can be seen under it and the date 1598 was corrected to 1498, as seen on inset (B).



Arquivo Geral de Índias, PATRONATO, 295, N.101.

Worse, further investigation of this document reveals that it was presented as a prop by the Genoese pretender Baltazar Colombo in the Colón family's inheritance lawsuit (1578-1609).

Unfortunately, this document is not only fraudulent, but it had already been rejected circa 1598 by the Tribunal of the Indies when Baltazar Colombo presented it. Many of the 30-year-long inheritance lawsuit's proceedings were written down by Doctor Scipion Canova and lawyer Carlos Martucho, amongst others.⁴⁵² These legal reports describe Baltazar's manuscript as another "simple paper," "not authentic," and "*Nulla est ei fides adhibenda*", therefore worthless.⁴⁵³

It turns out that Baltazar Colombo was a false contender to Don Cristóbal's inheritance, fighting against Colón's true descendants. No original Testament with the date of 1498 was ever found among the Admiral's documents for Baltazar Colombo to be able to copy.⁴⁵⁴ Baltazar declared the Mayorazgo was copied from a 1497 document yet gave it the date of *February 22, 1498*.⁴⁵⁵ The

⁴⁵² These *Documentos de la Sucesión del Ducado de Veragua* compiled by Scipion CANOVA, Carlos MARTUCHO, Luis SANCHEZ, Francisco FRESNO DE GALDO, et. al., are stored in Microfiche at Brown University, catalog numbers, HA.NC 1-20 through 1-22 and HA-NC 8-11.

⁴⁵³ *Documentos de la Sucesión del Ducado de Veragua*:

— Visto en el Consejo ocularmente el dicho testamento por todo los juezes, no haciendo mas caso del que de **un papel viejo y simples** ... Y porque se dice seca y desnudamente que el dicho Don Baltazar presentó el dicho testamento, que el llama autentico, juntamente con otras escrituras, ha de ser V. M. servido de no recibir el engaño que desto podría resultar ... aunque Don Baltazar dize, que el dicho traslado está concertado con el original, pero atento que no está sacado con citación de parte, ni con ninguna de las otras solenidades necessarias, relieves tan poco la dicha presentación, como sino la haviere hecho ... no solamente el dicho testamento no es parte del proceso, pero quanto a todo lo que contiene, **nulla est ei fides adhibenda** ... que un testamento tan imperfecto, y no solene, que nunca lo fue ... que aya hecho tanto ruido, y sido causa de tan grande dilaciō, y de no averse executado la sentencia, (Para fundar la notoria justicia de doña Maria Colon de la Cueva), CANOVA, Scipion e MARTUCHO, Carlos, *Por Don Baltasar Colombo, contra Don Nuño de Portugal, y consortes, sobre el Almirantazgo de las Indias, Ducado de Veragua, y Marquesado de Iamayca...*, 1601.

— *De Don Nuno Colon y Portugal. Con Doña Francisca Colon, y Doña Maria de la Cueva y otros litigantes. Sobre la posesion del Estado mayorazgo de Veragua... Memorial del pleyto sobre la sucession en possession del Estado y Mayorazgo de Veragua, Marquesado de Iamayca, y Almirantazgo de las Indias, que fundò Don Christoval Colon primero descubridor, Almirante, Virrey y Governador general dellas* (Registro no. 147157), PR Real Biblioteca (XIV/3015, XIV/3025), 1607. Real Biblioteca, Espanha.

— CANOVA, Scipion and MARTUCHO, Carlos, *Por Don Baltasar Colombo, contra Don Nuño de Portugal, y consortes, sobre el Almirantazgo de las Indias, Ducado de Veragua, y Marquesado de Iamayca, que fundò el Almirante Don Christoval Colombo [sic], primer inventor y descubridor de las dichas Indias*. Baldassarre Colombo; Nuño Colón de Portugal Veragua, Duque de. 1601.

⁴⁵⁴ Inventario, hecho em 23 de Julio de 1566, de las escrituras y papeles existentes en el Monasterio e Las Cuevas. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?*, *Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 248, nota 2.

⁴⁵⁵ Estan al fin de la minuta, fol. 140. num 909. donde pretende Don Baltazar, que dezia **Iueves 22 de Hebrero de 1498** para dezir, que alli está el dia y el mes... en el auto con que comienza la minuta, y en que se avia de incorporar, que esta fol. 136. num 885. donde no hay dia ni mes, se dize, q fue año de 1497... pues este fue año de 1497 no pudo ser la minuta el de 98. FRESNO DE GALDO, Francisco, *De Don Nuno Colon y Portugal con*

invention of this false Mayorazgo of 1498 makes sense if we consider that someone required it to fraudulently claim that Colón was from Genoa.

When the Third Admiral, Don Luis Colón, died in 1572 without leaving a legitimate male heir, his daughter Dona Felipa Colón de Toledo married her cousin, Don Diego Colón de Toledo y Pravia. This is how Don Diego became the Fourth Admiral. But this marriage of two great-grandchildren of Filipa Moniz and Don Cristóbal produced no offspring, leaving a succession problem to be solved when the Fourth Admiral died in 1578.

At that moment, the doors to greed, confusion, underhandedness, and disappointment were opened through an inheritance lawsuit where the court needed to decide which of Don Cristóbal's many descendants was the next to inherit the title of Fifth Admiral. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit for the succession of the Dukedom of Veragua were fighting over gold, real estate, titles, benefits, and prerogatives that the representative of the House of Colón possessed in 1578, including *Admiral of the Indies, Duke of Veragua, Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica*.

This lawsuit dragged on in the Spanish Tribunal for 30 years. The court finally decided that the justified heir should be the son of Dona Isabel Colón, the First Countess of Gelves.⁴⁵⁶ But Don Álvaro de Portugal y Melo (1532-1581), Second Count of Gelves died during the lawsuit, therefore the titles and positions were assumed by his son, Don Nuno Álvares Pereira Colón y Portugal, in 1609.

During those thirty years of litigation there were countless maneuvers of deception by several descendants of Colón, as well as the Genoese Colombo pretenders attempting to inherit what would be, perhaps, the richest inheritance at the time:

In 1582, arrived Don Baltazar Colombo, Lord of Cuccaro in Italy, in Monferrato, but residing in Genoa. In 1588, another Italian, Don Bernardo Colombo, arrived [...] But this

Doña Francisca Colon, y Doña Maria de la Cueva y otros litigantes. Sobre la possession del Estado y mayorazgo de Veragua, (Juris allegatio pro Don Nuño de Portugal in causa officii Admiragli Novi Orbis necnon Ducatus de Veragua et Marchionatus de Xamaica) 1604.

⁴⁵⁶ Doña Isabel Colón de Toledo ... casando con el Veinticuatro de Sevilla don Jorge-Alberto de Portugal y Melo, Señor de Villanueva del Ariscal y Señor de los Gelves ... Camarero Mayor de Carlos Quinto. Este monarca, por Real cédula fechada en el año de 1529 lo creó I Conde de los Gelves. NIETO Y CORTAPELLAS, Rafael, *Los Descendientes de Cristobal Colon (Obra Genealogica)*, La Habana, 1952, 52.

*litigator was forced to withdraw because it was demonstrated during the litigation the falsity of the documents on which his claim was based.*⁴⁵⁷

Don Cristóbal Colón had enough living descendants to fight for the inheritance which belonged to them by right of blood descent. The Genoese Colombo pretenders inserted themselves into an inheritance lawsuit of a Colón family to which they did not belong.⁴⁵⁸

Baltazar Colombo prepared his deception very well. He asked the Pope for a *paulina*, a papal order that authorized the bearer to search all the documents without interference from the Admiral's descendants.⁴⁵⁹

Baltazar supported the defense of his cause through purchased witness testimony, including a monk who claimed under oath to remember the birth of the Colón brothers in the Castle of Cuccaro. Knowing that Admiral Colón was born circa 1455, and that the monk's testimony was written around 1580, how could he swear that he remembered something that had happened 125 years earlier?⁴⁶⁰

However, this Genoese Colombo pretender managed to persevere and fight for Colón's heritage for nearly three decades. With so much documentation forged in the lawsuit it became difficult for the judges of the Tribunal to decipher where the truth was, but lucidity persevered, as the transcripts from the lawsuit show:

⁴⁵⁷ GANDÍA, Enrique de, *Historia de Cristóbal Colón. Análisis crítico de las fuentes documentales y de los problemas colombinos*, Buenos Aires, 1942, pág. 52.

⁴⁵⁸ Baldassarre, uno de Signori del Castello di Cuccaro nel Monferrato, onde discende la Famiglia del Colombo, estinto il ramo dell'illustre Cristoforo in Ispagna, si portò in quel Regno, per adire all'Eredità. CANCELLIERI, Francesco, *Notizie storiche e bibliografiche di Cristoforo Colombo di Cuccaro nel Monferrato scopritore dell'America raccolte da Francesco Cancellieri*, Francesco Bourlié, Roma, 1809, 13.

⁴⁵⁹ Baldassare Colombo, l'irrequieto pretendente di Cuccaro, otteneva il 9 novembre del 1585 dal nunzio di Sua Santità una "paulina", colla quale s'invitava chi fosse in condizione di farlo, a dar notizia del testamento di Cristóbal Colón, rogato nel 1502 e, a quel che si credeva, tenuto allora nascosto da qualcuno degli interessati. Il 18 gennaio del 1586, il dottore Hurtado, avvocato di Madrid, dichiarava che essendo egli tutore ("curador ad litem") di Cristón Colón, figliuolo di Don Luigi, e quindi pronipote del primo ammiraglio, aveva avuto dal dottor Verastegui alcune carte lasciate a quest'ultimo da Don Luigi, e traesse una scrittura, che, a quanto ricordava, doveva essere un testamento firmato da Cristóbal Colón, primo ammiraglio. RACCOLTA, Vol. I, Parte I, CXXIII.

⁴⁶⁰ A monk is also mentioned among the witnesses, who made oath that Cristóbal and his brothers were born in that castle of Cuccaro. This testimony was afterwards withdrawn by the prosecutor; as it was found that the monk's recollection must have extended back considerably upward of a century. IRVING, Washington, *The works of Washington Irving*, Vol. 7, Bell, London, 1866, 808.

*Notoriously excluded [...] is the aforementioned Don Baltazar [Colombo], for not belonging, as he claimed to belong, to the same family of the [...] founder [Don Cristóbal Colón] [...] Don Baltazar is not, nor proved to be, a relative of the founder [...] [the Mayorazgo of 1498 that he presented was] **neither legitimate, nor public, nor authentic, nor solemn.***⁴⁶¹

Baltazar tried to link his Mayorazgo document to another presented by Gaspar de Çarate, criminally accused of providing a document that, after analysis by all the judges of the investigative Council, proved to be nothing more than **a simple paper**.⁴⁶²

What is clear is that a Colombo pretender who did not belong to the Colón family would have to forge all of his documents in order to have any chance of entering the inheritance lawsuit; and among the documents presented by Baltazar Colombo is the *Mayorazgo of 1498*. In the text, one can read, “I was born in Genoa.” The *Mayorazgo* was suspected at the outset as **not authentic**, thus fraudulent, and duly rejected. No other person connected with the lawsuit had ever seen the *Mayorazgo* of 1498 until it was presented by Baltazar:

*And because it was said, explicitly and openly, that the aforementioned Baltazar had previously presented the aforementioned mayorazgo, which he considers authentic, along with other writings, Your Majesty should not accept the **fraud** that may result, because what Baltazar previously presented was supposed to correspond only to a missing page of the [true] Testament of 1502.*⁴⁶³

Don Cristóbal Colón's original documents were safeguarded in a strongbox in the Monastery of las Cuevas.⁴⁶⁴ Several descendants of Don Cristóbal also investigated the contents

⁴⁶¹ CANOVA, Scipion and MARTUCHO, Carlos, *Por Don Baltasar Colombo, contra Don Nuño de Portugal, y consortes, sobre el Almirantazgo de las Indias, Ducado de Veragua, y Marquesado de Iamayca...*, 1601.

⁴⁶² Don Balthazar Colombo presenta una minuta de un testamento, que dize es del mismo del Almirante ... la minuta es un simples papel ... la minuta del testamento que Don Balthazar Colombo ha presentado, es un papel simple ... que es un papel simple sin fee, ni autoridad alguna. FRESNO DE GALDO, Francisco, *De Don Nuno Colon y Portugal con Doña Francisca Colon, y Doña Maria de la Cueva y otros litigantes. Sobre la possession del Estado y mayorazgo de Veragua*, (Juris allegatio pro Don Nuño de Portugal in causa officii Admiragli Novi Orbis necnon Ducatus de Veragua et Marchionatus de Xamaica) 1604.

⁴⁶³ *Idem.*

⁴⁶⁴ Está todo em el monasterio de las Cuevas de Sevilla em poder del prior é convento de la dicha casa. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, son origine, as vie...* 496.

of the Las Cuevas box from 1578 onwards, and none reported ever seeing a *Mayorazgo* from 1498 that Baltazar claimed to have copied and presented to the court years later. Furthermore, when the contents of the box in Las Cuevas were inventoried over the decades, there was no *Mayorazgo* of 1498.⁴⁶⁵

Even if the Tribunal of the Indies had not declared the document to be fraudulent, because much of the text in the 1498 document is fictional, it becomes easy to identify the document as a fraud. In addition to the falsehoods already presented, several fraudulent commands have been inserted specifically for the benefit of the City of Genoa. One of the declarations consists of the mandate to use all their money for the purchase of shares, called *logos*, at the Bank of Saint George, as Navarrete transcribed:

*Should buy them in his name and of his heir some acquisitions that are called logos which the office of San George has, the said [logos] are paying six percent and are very secure monies.*⁴⁶⁶

The above mandate claims the logos had a **six percent** yield in 1498 and were very secure monies. Precise details like the “six percent” are excellent ways to prove the document was a fabrication. A scammer wouldn’t bother verifying a hundred years later what was the interest rate paid on the shares by that bank in 1498, and the fraud can be exposed.

According to James Westfall Thompson, in 1498 the bank of Saint George sold “1600 logos with an interest rate of **four percent**.”⁴⁶⁷ Clearly, the four percent offered by the bank in 1498 did not correspond to the invented six percent in the suspicious *Mayorazgo*.

— El Licenciado Arteaga, Teniente de Asistente de Sevilla, en el monesterio de las Cuevas de Sevilla, al Prior d’el dijo que venía para que se abriese una caja de hierro que está en el dicho monesterio en la capilla de Santa Ana. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?, Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 248.

⁴⁶⁵ SERRANO Y SANZ, Manuel, *El archivo colombino de la Cartuja de las Cuevas*, Tip de Archivos, 1930.

⁴⁶⁶ Que el dicho D. Diogo, ó quien heredare el dicho Mayorazgo, envíe por vía de cambios, ó por cualquiera manera que el pudiere, todo el dinero de la renta que él ahorrare del dicho Mayorazgo, y haga comprar de ellos en su nombre é de su heredero, unas compras á que dicen Logos, que tiene el oficio de San Jorge, los cuales agora rentan seis por ciento, y son dineros muy seguros, y esto sea por lo que yo diré aquí. NAVARRETE, TII, 232.

⁴⁶⁷ THOMPSON, James Westfall, *Economic and Social History of Europe in the Later Middle Ages (1300-1530)*, Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1931, 448.

Further solid evidence of a forgery may be shown through a study by two Italian professors. The study carried out by Michele Frattianni and Franco Spinelli shows that the Bank of Saint George, contrary to what the forged *Mayorazgo of 1498* says, was so insecure that it had to close its doors to the public in 1445 and remained closed to new customers until 1530.⁴⁶⁸ Therefore, during the entire life of Don Cristóbal Colón, and throughout the life of Don Diogo Colón, the Bank of Saint George was closed to new customers.

In all the investigations made to the Bank of Saint George, the name of Colón or Colombo never appeared as a shareholder.⁴⁶⁹ The only rational conclusion is that Baltazar Colombo was working in collusion with the City of Genoa and the Bank of Saint George to share in the profits from the inheritance theft.

Since Don Cristóbal Colón never belonged to a Colombo family and considering that he was not born in Genoa, as it appears he was not, all Genoese documents must be observed with suspicion. All letters kept in the Genoese archives that are claimed to have been written by Don Cristóbal should be thoroughly investigated with modern technology, and if proven to be fraudulent, as suspected, they should be discarded as not being part of Don Cristóbal Colón's story.⁴⁷⁰

The puzzle of Don Cristóbal's identity became much more complicated because of false documents and false statements made by the impostor Baltazar and others that were later taken seriously by historians. Those deceptions continue to be accepted and promulgated nowadays. Such is the case of erroneously claiming that the surnames Colón and Colombo are the same.⁴⁷¹ Baltazar Colombo appears as Baltazar *Colon* in several of the lawsuit documents, something

⁴⁶⁸ Banking transactions **to the public were closed in 1445** and were resumed again in 1530; during this time interval, banking activities were restricted to the state, shareholders, tax collectors and suppliers [...] As mentioned, Banco di San Giorgio suspended operations with its "external" clientele in 1445 and resumed them again in 1530. FRATTIANNI, Michele, SPINELLI, Franco, *Did Genoa and Venice Kick a Financial Revolution in the Quattrocento?* Working Paper, September 2005, 22-23, 24.

⁴⁶⁹ HARRISSE, Henry, *Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George*, Chiswick Press; C. Wittingham and Company, London, 1888, 72.

⁴⁷⁰ In this list of letters are: Letter of Don Cristóbal Colón al Sr. Nicolao Oderigo, March 21, 1502, NAVARRETE T.II, 283. Letter of Don Cristóbal Colón al Sr. Nicolás Oderigo, December 27, 1504, NAVARRETE, T.II, 303 which Navarrete copied from a *Códice diplomático Colombo-Américo*. And letter of Colón to the Bank of S. George of Genoa, April 2, 1502, HARRISSE, *Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George*, 5.

⁴⁷¹ Aunque al Almirante dō Christoval, quando vino a España, se llamava Colôbo, no era este el nombre verdadero de sus passados, sino Colon. SANCHEZ, Luis, *Alegacion en derecho por Doña Francisca Colon de Toledo, sobre la sucession en posesion del Estado y Ducado de Veragua*, (Exclusion de don Baltasar Colombo) Madrid, 1608.

intolerable to accept because as we have shown the two surnames are very different in meaning and the two families were not related.⁴⁷²

How was it that the Tribunal of the Indies rejected the 1498 *Mayorazgo* as “not authentic” and this deception by Baltazar came to be accepted as authentic by historians who then presented it as the only Iberian proof of Colón’s Genoese birth?

As soon as the Tribunal decided to give the inheritance to Don Nuno Álvares Pereira Colón y Portugal, this new Admiral took possession of the documents related to his new titles, posts and positions. Mixed within the authentic documents were, most certainly, the fabricated ones presented by Baltazar and Bernardo Colombo.

When Martín Fernández de Navarrete compiled his prestigious work *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles*, he inserted a transcript of that 1498 *Mayorazgo*. Navarrete admitted that it was only a “copy that was presented in the proceedings and disputes that took place long ago for the succession of this House.”⁴⁷³ In other words, Navarrete copied the said worthless “not authentic, simple paper” from Baltazar Colombo that had been rejected by the Tribunal.

But Navarrete did not stop there, accepting that the *Mayorazgo of 1498* was a true document, he put it together with the “Authority Given to Admiral Don Cristóbal Colon to institute one or more *Mayorazgos* (Copy legalized by Alonso Lucas, Juan Fernández and Martin Rodríguez, Notaries of Seville, on May 28, 1501, housed in the Archives of the Duke of Veraguas, Regist. of the Seal of Court in Simancas.”⁴⁷⁴ Navarrete further commits a deception by inserting the text “juéves, en veinte y dos dias del mes de febrero” into blank spaces of the registered 1497 document that he transcribed.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² CANOVA, Scipion e MARTUCHO, Carlos, *Por Don Baltazar Colombo, contra Don Nuño de Portugal, y consortes, sobre el Almirantazgo de las Indias, Ducado de Veragua, y Marquesado de Iamayca...*, 1601.

— Ha sido, pues, un error histórico y etimológico la traducción del vocablo Colón en Colombo. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?*, *Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 267.

⁴⁷³ Copia de las que se presentaron [por Baltazar Colombo] en los autos y litigios seguidos de antiguo sobre la sucesión de esta Casa. NAVARRETE, T. II, 221.

⁴⁷⁴ Facultad al Almirante Don Cristóbal Colón para fundar uno ó más *Mayorazgos* (Copia legalizada por Alonso Lucas, Juan Fernández y Martin Rodríguez, Escribanos de Sevilla, en veinte y ocho de Mayo de mil quinientos uno, existente en el Archivo del Duque de Veraguas, Regist. Del Sello de Corte en Simancas. *Idem*, 221.

⁴⁷⁵ Compare the transcription with the blank spaces on page 221 of Navarrete’s Tomo II with the same text on page CXLV of Tomo I where the blanks for the date were filled in by Navarrete.

Right after transcribing the authentic document registered in Simancas, which is reliable, Navarrete inserted the text of the 1498 *Mayorazgo* as if it were part of the previous document and as if it was also registered at Simancas. Only at the end of the transcript fraud does Navarrete make the clarification, in a long note that many seem not to have read and that we transcribe here:

Although we have no well-founded reason to distrust the legitimacy of this [1498 Mayorazgo] document, which has been several times and from long ago presented at the courts, and never confirmed of being apocryphal or fictional,⁴⁷⁶ nevertheless we lack the satisfaction of having found in the archives that we have recognized and always cited, an original in the Admiral's own handwriting, or signed by him, or a legalized copy in every way as is the preceding Royal Authorization.⁴⁷⁷

As Navarrete makes clear, there is no confirmation that the said *Mayorazgo* presented by Baltazar is genuine, nor was the document ever signed by Don Cristóbal Colón since he had died some 90 years before this fraud was created.

The authors of the *Raccolta Colombiana*, the *obra-prima* for supporters of the theory that accepts Don Cristóbal Colón as being the Cristoforo Colombo weaver, realized how important the *Mayorazgo* of 1498 was for the defense of the Genoese hypothesis. The *Raccolta* describes the *Mayorazgo* as “il documento dove esplicitamente e solennemente Colón si dichiara genovese,”⁴⁷⁸ (the only document in which Colón declared himself, explicitly and solemnly, Genoese). There is not a single document that proves Colón was Genoese, only this false 1498 *Mayorazgo* could have proven it.

— Á los blancos consabidos y año de 1497 substituye el “22 de Febrero de 1498.” Y aún para hacer más patente el error, ó confusión, ó ligereza, escribe Navarrete que “la presentación que hizo Colón de la facultad Real para fundar Mayorazgo, y de su testamento en que lo instituye fue en la muy noble ciudad de Sevilla, jueves, á veinte y dos días del mes de Febrero, año de nacimiento de nuestro Salvador Jesucristo...” (y hasta se le olvida poner aquí el año, ó sea 1498.) Y ya hemos visto que todo esto habá sucedido en **1497**. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?*, *Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 254.

⁴⁷⁶ Navarrete must not have known that the document was rejected and distrusted when presented to the Tribunal of the Indies.

⁴⁷⁷ Aunque no tenemos motivo fundado para desconfiar de la legitimidad de este documento que ha sido varias veces y desde antiguo presentado en juicio ante los tribunales, y nunca convencido de apócrifo ó supuesto, sin embargo carecemos de la satisfacción de haber encontrado en los archivos que hemos reconocido y citamos siempre, un original de letra del Almirante, ó firmado por él, ó una copia legalizada en toda forma como lo está la facultad Real que antecede. NAVARRETE, T. II, 235.

⁴⁷⁸ RACCOLTA, Parte II - Vol. I, 51.

The historian Ángel de Altolaguirre, Spanish collaborator for the *Raccolta*, believing in the recorded document from 1501 in the Archives of Simancas proclaimed by Navarrete, concluded that the *Mayorazgo of 1498* must be genuine. However, the Simancas record declares that the document being registered was on “parchment signed with your [Don Cristóbal Colón’s] name and signed and sealed by public notaries [...] signed in the name of his Lordship, the said Lord Don Cristóbal Colón.”⁴⁷⁹

From this extract alone, we can ascertain that the document registered at Simancas was not the false *Mayorazgo of 1498*. The *Mayorazgo of 1498* is not signed by *Don Cristóbal Colón*, nor is it signed and sealed by any notaries.

Furthermore, the Simancas record was altered and mutilated by someone who, with all certainty, saw in that register a danger to their false intentions, leaving this document from Simancas with little value:

*This document is mutilated, missing the central leaves and leaving only the beginning and the end of the royal confirmation of 1501.*⁴⁸⁰

Many others trusted the wrong conclusions of Altolaguirre and accepted the *Mayorazgo* as authentic. And although Navarrete warned us in his note that no one has ever discovered any original 1498 *Mayorazgo*, the biographers of the last century accepted the document as genuine. This misguided acceptance dissuaded many researchers from continuing to challenge the impossible tale of a wool-weaver who had married a noble Lady Commander of Santiago. They believed that Colón himself wrote that he was born in Genoa.

Since the *Mayorazgo of 1498* was nothing more than a deceitful prop in a thievery scam, it is apparent that several other Genoese documents would have to be counterfeit as well, especially if Don Cristóbal Colón was not in fact from that city. This hypothesis would imply that everyone

⁴⁷⁹ Escrita en pergamino firmada de vuestro nombre e firmada e sygnada de escriuanos públicos... firmada del nombre de su señoría del dicho señor **Don Xpoual Colon**. ALTOLAGUIRRE Y DUVALE, Ángel de, *La real confirmación del mayorazgo fundado por Don Cristóbal Colón el 22 de febrero de 1498*, Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia, T. 88, 1926, 335.

⁴⁸⁰ Está mutilado este documento, faltándole las hojas centrales y no dejando más que el comienzo y luego el final de la confirmación regia de 1501. EZQUERRA ABADÍA, Ramón. *La nacionalidad de Colón: Estado actual del problema*. Sep. de Vol. 4 del XXXVI Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Sevilla, 1966, 421

who had heard that Colón was Genoese and repeated that he was from Genoa, or from a nearby town, did not know the truth.

Furthermore, if Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón had been a weaver named Cristoforo Colombo, son of another weaver named Domenico Colombo from Quinto and grandson of Giovanni Colombo, also a weaver, as the City of Genoa tried to prove with its famous *Raccolta*, then it would have been impossible for Baltazar Colombo to try to pass himself off as a relative of that weaver, being that Baltazar was a nobleman.⁴⁸¹

Instead of trying to prove that Admiral Colón was the weaver Colombo from Quinto, Baltazar Colombo was committed to proving that Admiral Colón was born in his same noble house of Cuccaro, in Monferrato. This was a completely different lineage than that of the Cristoforo Colombo weaver, son of Domenico Colombo, who the director of the Bank of Saint George, António Gallo, supposedly knew.⁴⁸²

Baltazar Colombo began by forcing the Tribunal of the Indies to accept the false idea that Colón and Colombo were versions of the same name and family. Then, he attributed to Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón an invented grandfather, a nobleman named Lancia Colombo. Lancia was Lord of Cuccaro, not the weaver Giovanni Colombo that the *Raccolta* would present to us 300 years later.

Baltazar Colombo falsely claimed in the litigation that the Colombos de Cuccaro were known by the name of Colón, feeding and perpetuating the confusion even more. Certainly, based on Baltazar Colombo's forgeries, the Academy of Turin, in Italy, published in 1805 "irrefutable evidence" that Admiral Colón was born in Monferrato.⁴⁸³

The *Mayorazgo of 1498* was the one and only document in the Iberian Peninsula that could link the First Admiral to Genoa, and since it is now discarded as a worthless forgery there is not a

⁴⁸¹ Probando por títulos y por sentencias y apelaciones, que Cristóbal Colón y él descendian de los Colones de Cuccaro. NAVARRETE, Martín Fernández de and NAVARRETE, Eustaquio Fernández de, *Colección de opúsculos*, Imprenta de la Viuda de Calero, Madrid, 1848, T. II, 133.

⁴⁸² Christophorus et Bartholomaeus Columbi fratres, natione Ligures, ac Genuae plebejis orti parentibus, et qui ex lanificii (nam textor pater, carminatores filii aliquando fuerunt). MURATORI, Lodovico Antonio *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, Raccolta Degli Storici Italiani dal Cinquecento al Millecinquecento*, T. Ventitreesimo, S. Lapi, 1910, 81.

⁴⁸³ Halló en estas piezas pruebas, que él creyó, irrefragables, de la patria de este gran hombre en el Monferrato. NAVARRETE, Martín Fernández de, NAVARRETE, Eustaquio Fernández de, *Colección de opúsculos*, Imprenta de la Viuda de Calero, Madrid, 1848, T. II, 131.

single document from the Castilian court nor from the numerous writings of the Admiral, linking Don Cristóbal to Italy.

Are there any documents in Genoa that link the weaver Colombo to Admiral Colón?⁴⁸⁴ Exactly one hundred years ago, in 1921, the most significant Genoese documents were summarized by Beltrán y Rózpide, from which we have chosen the following excerpts:⁴⁸⁵

- *According to a deed dated September 22, 1470, granted in Genoa, Dominico de Columbo and his son **Cristoforo** undertook to accept the decision of an arbitrator in a lawsuit or disagreement they had with a creditor. Six days later, on the 28th, the arbitrator issued a ruling condemning the father and son to pay.*
- *On October 31 of the same year, **Cristoforo** de Colombo, son of Dominico and at the time over **19 years of age**, in the presence and with the authorization, advice and consent of his father, declares that he owes a certain amount for a consignment of wine he had bought.*
- *In 1472 the father and son are in Savona. On March 20, **Cristoforo** de Colombo, **wool worker**⁴⁸⁶ from Genoa, is a witness in a Testament made in that city. The other witnesses, whose trade is also indicated, are three tailors, a shepherd and a shoemaker.*
- *On August 26, 1472, Dominico, a **wool worker**, and his son **Cristoforo** are recognized as debtors of a certain Juan Signorio, from whom they had bought seven quintals of wool.*
- *The following year, on August 7, 1473, Susana, daughter of Jacobo de Fontanarubea and wife of Dominico de Colombo, certified, before a notary in*

⁴⁸⁴ Colón the Ligurian can only be authenticated from four documents notarial deeds of 1470 and 1479, his 1502 letter to Genoa's bank, **above all** his entail or *mayorazgo of 1498*. BRONNER, Fred, *Portugal and Columbus: Old Drives in New Discoveries*, Mediterranean Studies, Vol. 6, Penn State University Press, 1996, 53.

⁴⁸⁵ BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón y Cristóforo Columbo...*, 7-9.

⁴⁸⁶ Bernardo Sambaldo saratore, Christoforo de Columbo lanerio de Ianua et Dominico Vigna sartore, civibus Saone, testibus ad hec vocatis et rogatis ore proprio ipsius testatoris. [Archivio Notarile Municipale di Savona, Atti del notaro Lodovico Moreno, bastardello 921-26, c. s. n.] Indicato dai BELLORO, Notizia &c. p. 9, Revista critica, p. 56, e nell'opera intitolata Osservazioni sul clima &c. della Liguria marittima di un coltivatore di Diano [Gio. AGOSTINO BIANCHI], Genova, De Grossi, 1817, I, 143. 20 Pubblicata la chiusa da H. HARRISSE, op. cit. II, append. A, doc. xiv. RACCOLTA, Parte II - Vol. I, 120.

*Savona, the sale of a house that her husband had made, with the consent and presence in the act of their sons, **Cristoforo** and Juan Pelegrino.*

These documents relating to the weavers of Genoa were published in a monumental collection of Colombian documents by the City of Genoa, from 1892-96, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the 1492 voyage. The *Raccolta di documenti e studi pubblicati dalla R. Commissione colombiana pel quarto centenario dalla scoperta dell'America*, attempted to aggregate all the documents in Italy and Spain related to the Genoese Colombo and the Iberian Colón, with the intent of proving that they were both the same person. This work is perhaps the most cited by the historians who claim that the navigator Colón was the weaver Colombo.

From the most relevant documents, namely those where the name Cristoforo Colombo is written, we can deduce that that weaver (who never appears described as a mariner) was born in 1451. He was over 19 years old on October 31, 1470, as shown in the document quoted above.⁴⁸⁷

There are a number of documents in Genoa concerning Colombo weavers who seem, at first glance, to fit perfectly in this story. Three weaver brothers named Cristoforo, Bartolomeo, and Giacomo Colombo in Genoa have been argued to be the same nobles Cristóbal, Bartolomé, and Diego Colón in Castile. But at the same time, contrary information contained in the Genoese documents does not allow us to accept that the three Genoese weavers were the same three nobles residing in Castile. “The historians who cling to the presence in Genoa and Savona of the wool weaver Cristoforo Colombo until 1476, [...] have wrecked their brains without finding a solution for the repeated statements of our protagonist Colón about his early navigations and adventures,” wrote Rumeu de Armas in 1982.⁴⁸⁸

There is a narrative attributed to Antonio Gallo, chancellor of the Bank of Saint George, in which he declares that he knew the weaver brothers and that they became linked to the discovery

⁴⁸⁷ In nomine Domini, amen. **Christofforus** de Columbo filius Dominici, maior annis decemnovem, et in presentia, auctoritate, consilio et consensu dicti Dominici eius patris presentis et autorizantis, sponte et ex eius certa scientia et non per aliquem errorem iuris vel facti, confessus fuit et in veritate publice recognovit Petro Belexio de Portu Mauricio, filio Francisci, presenti, se eidem daré et solvere deberé libras quadraginta octo, sóidos tresdecim et denarios sex Ianue; et sunt pro resto vinorum eidem Christofforo et dicto Dominico venditorum et consignatorum per dictum Petrum. [Archivio Notarile di Stato in Genova, Atti di Nicoló Raggio, fiza 2ª, 1470, 11. 905.] RACCOLTA, Parte II - Vol. I, 112.

⁴⁸⁸ Los historiadores que se aferran a la presencia en Génova y Savona del lanero Cristóforo Colombo hasta 1476, [...] se han devanado los sesos sin halar solución para las reiteradas declaraciones de nuestro protagonista [Colón] sobre sus primigenias navegaciones y andanzas. RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *El Portugués...*, 67.

of the New World. Like the other manuscripts from Italy, this Genoese manuscript also presents some anomalies.⁴⁸⁹

For example, the text published in Giustiniani's *Psalter* is a copy of Gallo's text. If it was kept as a private manuscript in the archives of the Bank of Saint George, how did Giustiniani have access to it? A report by Bartolomeo Senarega, *De rebus Genuensibus commentaria ab anno MCDLXXXVIII usque ad annum MDXIV*, written in 1514, two years before Giustiniani's *Psalter* also appears to be a copy of the same text by Gallo.

Although each author embellished the story here and there, the essential part of the text is the same as that supposedly found in Antonio Gallo's manuscripts, that is, Cristóbal and Bartolomé Colón were born into a plebeian Colombo family in Genoa. They were mere commoners who worked with wool until they went to live in Lisbon. There, they achieved enormous fame for discovering the New World as may be read in the excerpts taken from the supra mentioned manuscripts:

***GALLO:** Christophorus et Bartholomaeus Columbi fratres, natione Ligures, ac Genuae plebejis orti parentibua, et qui ex lanificii (nam textor pater, carminatores filii aliquando fuerunt)...*⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁹ De todos los demás que han escrito en latinno es de hacer caso alguno, porque, quanto distantes en lugares y lengua y nación han sido, tantos errores y disparates varios en sus relaciones dijeron. LAS CASAS, T. I, 33.

⁴⁹⁰ Christophorus et Bartholomaeus Columbi fratres, natione Ligures, ac Genuae plebejis orti parentibus, et qui ex lanificii (nam textor pater, carminatores filii aliquando fuerunt) mercedibus victitarent, hoc tempore per totam Europam, audacissimo ausu, et in rebus humanis memorabili novitate in magnam claritudinem evasere. Hi si quidem intra pueriles annos parvis literulis imbuti, et puberes deinde facti, de more gentis in navigationes exiverant. Sed **Bartholomaeus minor natu, in Lusitania** demum Ulissipone constiterat, ubi intentus quaestui tabellis pingendis operam dedit, queis ad usum nauticum iustis iliineationibus, et proportionibus servatis, maria, portus, littora sinus insulae effligantur. Proficiscebantur ab Ulissipone quotannis, ac redibant emissa navigia, quae coeptam ante hos annos quadraginta navigationem per Oceanum ad occidentales Aethiopes continuatas terras, gentesque omnibus retro saeculis incognitas aperuere. Bartholomaeus autem sermonibus eorum assuetus, qui ab alio quodammodo terrarum orbe redibant, studio pingendi ductus, argumenta et animi cogitatum cum fratre rerum nauticarum peritiore communicat, ostendens omnino necessarium, si quis Aethiopum meridionalibus littoribus relictis in pelagus ad manum dexteram occidentem versus cursum dirigeret, ut is procul dubio continentem terram aliquando obviam esset habiturus... MURATORI, Lodovico Antonio, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, Raccolta Degli Storici Italiani dal Cinquecento al Millecinquecento*, T. Ventitreesimo, S. Lapi, 1910, 81-83.

SENAREGA: *Christophorus & Bartholomæus Columbi, fratres, Genuæ plebejis parentibus orti, & lanificii mercede victitarunt. Nam pater textor, carminatores filii aliquando fuerunt [...]* Sed **Bartholomæus minor natu in Lusitania demum Ulissipone...**⁴⁹¹

GIUSTINIANI: *Christophorus cognomento Columbus pátria genuensis, uilibus ortus parentibus, nostra etate fuit qui sua industria, plus terrarum & pelli explorauerit paucis mēsis [...]* Hic puerilibus annis uix prima elementa edoctus, pubescēs iam rei maritime operam dedit, dein pfecto in lusitaniam fratre, ac ulissippone...⁴⁹²

The first two texts were only published by Muratori in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Milan, 1723-51, while Giustiniani's, published in 1516, as we have already pointed out, was rejected by Don Hernando Colón. But Antonio Gallo's hypothetical original from before 1510 has not been located.⁴⁹³ In a Preface published in 1910 by Emilio Pandiani, it appears that the chancellor of the Bank of Saint George bought a manuscript *pro historia Colochut et Columbi* where he may have

⁴⁹¹ Christophorus & Bartholomæus Columbi, fratres, Genuæ plebejis parentibus orti, & lanificii mercede victitarunt. Nam pater textor, carminatores filii aliquando fuerunt. Sed ne frontem contrahas Lector, quod Carminatores dixerim, declarabo nomen, non quia omnibus, vel mediocriter literatis apertum non sit, sed cum publicum múnus geram, ita æquum est, & dicere cogor etiam pro plebejis hominibus, ut hæc intelligant. Carminatores ji sunt, quos vulgus Scarzatores appellat Volo ego humili & plebejo nunc dicendi genere incedere, cupiens etiam populo satisfacere, & per manus omnium tractari, non curans quicquam præter veritatem dicere. Qui fratres hoc tempore per totam Europam audacissimo ausu, in rebus humanis mirabili novitate in magnam claritudinem evasere. Hi siquidem intra pueriles anos parvis literis imbuti, deinde puberes facti de more gentis nostræ in navigationes exiverant. **Sed Bartholomæus minor natu in Lusitania demum Ulissipone** constitit, ubi intentus quæstui, tabelis pingendis operam dedit, queis ad usum nauticum, justis climatis, & proportionibus servatis, maria, portus, littora, Sinus, Insulæ effinguntur. Proficiscebantur Ulissipone quotannis, & redibant emissa navigia, quæ cæptam ante hos annos quadraginta navigationem per Oceanum ad Occidentales Æthiopes, terras gentesque omnibus retro seculis incognitas aperuere. THACHER, Vol I, 196.

⁴⁹² Igitur Christophorus cognomento Columbus pátria genuensis, uilibus ortus parentibus, nostra etate fuit qui sua industria, plus terrarum & pelli explorauerit paucis mēsis, quam pene reliqui omnes mortalhes uniuersis retro actis feculis. Mira res, tamen plurimum iam non nauium modo, sed classium & exercituum euntium redeuntium testimonio explorata & certa. Hic puerilibus annis uix prima elementa edoctus, pubescēs iam rei maritime operam dedit, dein pfecto in lusitaniam fratre, ac ulissippone questum instituite, pingendarum tabellarum ad usum maritimum, effigiantium maria & portus & litora, huiusmodi maritimos sinus atq. insulas didicit ab eo, que ibi tum forte is a plurimus acceperat, qui ex regio instituto ibant quotannis ad explorandas inaccessas ethiopum terras, & oceani intra meridiem & occasum, remotas plagas. GIUSTINIANI, Antonio, *Psalterium, Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, & Chaldaicum cum tribus Latinis interpretationibus & glossis*, Petrus Paulus Porrus in aedibus Nicolai Iustiniani Pauli, Génova, 1516.

⁴⁹³ He succeeded his father Ambrosio in that office in 1488, and held it until 1510, when his son Bernardo became his successor. Antonio Gallo was also official chronicler of the Republic, from June 14th, 1477, to the time of his death. He is the same Gallo who a few years before wrote an account of the first two voyages of Colón: *Antonii Galli de Navigatione Columbi per inaccessum antea Oceanum Commentariolus*. HARRISSE, Henry, *Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George*, Chiswick Press; C. Wittingham and Company, London, 1888, 95.

found the information about the famous navigator.⁴⁹⁴ Emilio Pandiani writes that the following copies of Gallo's manuscript exist in the archives:

1. *Biblioteca Ambrosiana di Milano*, written in the 17th century.
2. *Biblioteca Civica Berio di Genova*, written in the 18th century.
3. *R. Archivio di Stato di Genova*, (fondo Federici) written in the 17th century.
4. *Kongelige Bibliotek de Copenhague*, written in the 16th century “manca il terzo opuscolo sul viaggio di Colombo” (missing the third entry regarding Colón’s voyage).
5. *Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova*, written in the 18th century.
6. *British Museum*, written in the 17th century.
7. *Biblioteca Civica Berio di Genova*, (ms. 803) written in the 17th century.
8. *Biblioteca Civica Berto di Genova*, (ms. 1063) written in the 17th century.
9. *R. Archivio di Stato di Torino*, written in the 18th century.

Of these nine manuscripts only four contain the tale of the *Columbi*, being that “the codices of the Colombian commentary are only **four** and all of them are already known to us,” as stated by Pandiani.⁴⁹⁵ These four are the manuscripts of the British Museum (17th century), Torino (18th century), Civica (ms. 1063, 17th century), and the *Codex Feredici* (17th century).

Note that the oldest codex, the only one from the 16th century, held at the Royal Library in Copenhagen does not include the text about the Colombo brothers, nor do any of the other three codices located in Genoa from the 17th and 18th centuries contain the tale of those so famous *Columbi*, alleged Genoese.

In the codex of the British Museum, the pages about the *Columbi* are inserted in the middle of the manuscript, not at the end.⁴⁹⁶ The fact that most copies do not contain the chapter on the *Columbi fratres*, at the very least gives motive to question the tale’s authenticity. What reasons could there be to leave out part of a manuscript when copying it? More so if the text was being copied by Genoese for whom the Colombo tale would bring fame to the City of Genoa.

⁴⁹⁴ MURATORI, Lodovico Antonio *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, Raccolta Degli Storici Italiani dal Cinquecento al Millecinquecento*, T. Ventitreesimo, S. Lapi, 1910, xxiv.

⁴⁹⁵ I codici dei Commentario Colombiano sono quattro e tutti già da noi conosciuti. *Idem*, xxxvi.

⁴⁹⁶ Le pagine del Commentariolo Colombiano (pp. 93-100) siano state incluse fra le pp. 88-89. *Idem*, xxxii.

Gallo's supposed account, copied by Giustiniani and Senarega and described as a false story by Don Hernando Colón does not appear in all known copies of Gallo's manuscript. Only four out of the nine copies contain it. This creates yet another suspicious case in this story of Genoese uncertainties.

Did someone try to deceive us into believing that Gallo had written this text by adding it to one or another copy in the archives, but without knowing that there were more scattered copies that needed to be manipulated? How can we explain that copies made after the date of Gallo's initial writing do not contain the tale of the great Colombo, supposed hero of Genoa?

But an even more interesting point from this *Columbi fratres* manuscript is that it ignores the third brother, Diego Colón, and claims Bartolomé Colón was born in Portugal. This fact completely destroys the theory of the Colón brothers being born in a Colombo family in Genoa, even if they were from some noble Genoese family, since Gallo appears to say that his *Bartholomaeus* was born in Lusitania.⁴⁹⁷ Due to all its inconsistencies, Gallo's supposed narrative should be discarded as another Genoese Colombo aberration that is not relative to the Iberian Admiral Colón's life.

Continuing with the documents that support the peasant weaver's narrative, they are reduced to only three key documents, which are here listed:

1. The *Mayorazgo of 1498*, found in Spain where it reads, “**being I born in Genoa...**” (a fraud by Baltazar Colombo rejected as a **non-authentic simple paper** by the 1578-1609 Spanish tribunal).
2. The document dated October 31, 1470, which reads that the weaver Cristoforo Colombo, son of Domenico, was “**over 19 years old...**” (born in 1451 or earlier.)⁴⁹⁸
3. The *Assereto Document*, in which a Cristoforo Colombo, without affiliation, who supposedly went to Madeira to buy sugar, declares to be “**27 years old in 1479...**” (born in 1451.)⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁷ Sed Bartholomeus, minor, natus in Lusitania. SARFATY, David E., *Columbus Re-Discovered*, Dorrance Publishing, 2010, 394.

⁴⁹⁸ Christoffbrus de Columbo filius Dominici, **maior annis decemnovem**. RACCOLTA, Parte II, Vol. I, 112.

⁴⁹⁹ ASSERETO, Ugo, *La data della nascita di Colombo accertata da un documento nuovo*, Giornale storico e letterario della Liguria, 1904, 5-16.

Having dealt with the fraudulent *Mayorazgo* above and considering that nothing more needs to be explained about the October 31, 1470, document, let us now review the *Assereto Document*.

After the publication of the *Raccolta Colombiana*, with which the City of Genoa tried to convince the world that the weaver Colombo was the same navigator Colón, uncertainties still remained. The *Raccolta* did not have a single document that determinately eliminated all doubts. There were no common documents linking the Colón family in Castile to the Colombo family in Genoa, and vice versa. But if there was a document in Genoa linking the Cristoforo Colombo who was born in 1451 to Iberia, then we could be made to believe that the weaver was the same person as the navigator.

Amazing good fortune was on Genoa's side. Colonel Ugo Assereto found a document in the archives of Genoa about a Genoese Cristoforo Colombo that was not only born in 1451, but also had the much-needed connection to Iberia.⁵⁰⁰

The document presented in the article *La data della nascita di Colombo accertata da un documento nuovo* was published by Ugo Assereto in 1904, in the newspaper *Giornale storico e letterario della Liguria*.⁵⁰¹

Suddenly everything seemed to fit like a glove to a hand and quickly many scholars accepted that the two men were the same person.⁵⁰²

Although some academics warned that the *Assereto Document* appeared to be another Genoese fraud, they failed to convince those who had been eager for a final piece of evidence. On this matter, Ezquerro Abadía wrote that "its authenticity has been questioned [...] Vignaud seems to have accepted it without sufficient criticism and it is easy to be suspicious of it. Ulloa's criticism in this case does not seem trivial and has been seconded by Armando Cortesão."⁵⁰³

⁵⁰⁰ These two dry, impersonal public documents constitute the major basis for **concluding** that Cristóbal Colón in all likelihood was Genoese. Though the notarial deeds do not say explicitly that he was born in Genoa. GRANZOTTO, Gianni, *Christopher Columbus The Dream and The Obsession: A Biography*, London, 1986, 9.

⁵⁰¹ https://www.storiapatriagenova.it/Scheda_vs_info.aspx?Id_Scheda_Bibliografica=2779.

⁵⁰² Dos documentos claves hay que enlazan a Colombo con Colón; precisamente su mismo carácter decisivo no les libra de sospechas, y en sí una crítica libre de prejuicios debe mirarlos con precaución. Si ambos fueran indiscutibles, serían en absoluto irracionales todas las hipótesis adversas a la genovesa y carecerían del menor fundamento sólido: las anularían desde sus cimientos. Se trata del llamado documento Assereto y de la institución del mayorazgo. EZQUERRA ABADÍA, Ramón. *La nacionalidad de Colón: Estado actual del problema*. Sep. de Vol. 4 del XXXVI Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Sevilla, 1966, 418-419.

⁵⁰³ El documento Assereto apareció suelto, en una simple minuta, y ha sido juzgado raro por su aislado descubrimiento, sus circunstancias de escritura y contenido y lo mucho que demuestra; por tanto se ha puesto en duda su

Miles Davidson agreed, saying “Salvador Madariaga wrote that it is a fraud. And it really looks like it is a fraud.”⁵⁰⁴

As early as 1907, one of the supporters of the Genoese Colombo, Henry Vignaud, published the article *Proof That Columbus Was Born in 1451: A New Document*,⁵⁰⁵ giving the case of the identity of the navigator resolved, postulating that the noble Don Cristóbal Colón had to be the weaver Cristoforo Colombo and had to be born in Genoa in the year 1451.⁵⁰⁶

But things continued to be unclear to many researchers. The *Assereto Document* has several flaws that make it suspicious, as for example, the calligraphy written by several different writers, the pages not being numbered consistently among themselves, some pages being written on both sides while others only up to half, erasures in the text, and writing that crosses the page gutters. Furthermore, the pages cannot be joined into a booklet format in order to make a cohesive document, because the page numbers fall out of sequence. It looks like they were loose papers that were joined together in an attempt to mislead those less methodical, since the pages could never have been stitched together as one unit.

Similar criticisms and declarations of forgery were made about a hundred years ago,⁵⁰⁷ but leaving the questionable appearance of the *Assereto Document* aside, let's look at the essential parts of the text below:

- the document is an interrogation dated 25 August 1479;

autenticidad [...] Vignaud, parece que se la ha aceptado sin la suficiente crítica y no deja de prestarse a sospechas. La crítica de Ulloa en este caso no parece baladí y le ha secundado Armando Cortesão. *Idem*, 419-420.

⁵⁰⁴ Still another example of the attempt to prove that Cristoforo Colombo and the Admiral [Colón] are the same person is the deposition dated August 25, 1479. Ugo Assereto writes that he found this document in Genoa in the year 1904. Salvador Madariaga writes that **it is a forgery. It looks that way**. DAVIDSON, Miles, *Columbus Then and Now: A Life Reexamined*, U. of Oklahoma Press, 1997, 51.

⁵⁰⁵ The deed of 1479 therefore definitely settles the question of the date of the birth of Colón [...] only during either the month of September or that of October 1451, which Colón was born. VIGNAUD, Henry, *The American Historical Review*, The Macmillan Company, 1907, Vol. XII, 270-279.

⁵⁰⁶ There is no mystery about the birth, family or race of Cristóbal Colón. He was born in the ancient city of Genoa sometime between August 25 and the end of October, 1451, the son and grandson of woolen weavers. MORISON, Samuel Eliot, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, Time Incorporated, New York, 1962, 5.

⁵⁰⁷ It was an extraordinary coincidence, so great that several colombists consider it a **forgery**. It is amazing that such an important document had never been noticed before in the archives of Genoa, which had been searched by hundreds of investigators; and that a notary document like this was not in a book, but in loose sheets. The skill of forgers is so great, especially in Italy, that one is not surprised at another forgery. STRAHAN, A. *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. 151, United Kingdom, 1937, 323-324.

- the person being questioned is a “Cristoforo Colombo citizen of Genoa”, without any declared affiliation or profession;
- this Cristoforo Colombo declared “quod est etatis annorum viginti septem vel circa” (that he is about 27 years old);
- asked if he has to leave, he replied that “yes, tomorrow for Lisbon”;
- taking his oath on the Bible, he said that Paolo Di Negro, who was with him in Lisbon, sent him in 1478 to the island of Madeira to buy a quantity of sugar;
- arriving in Madeira, **he hired a ship captained by Fernando Palensio** on which he intended to load the sugar;
- and, because the money for the sugar purchase never arrived, since Paolo Di Negro never sent it, he was unable to finalize the purchase.⁵⁰⁸

Even if we choose to ignore all the physical irregularities of the document, we are left with an unlikely scenario. This Colombo had been sent by Di Negro to buy sugar at the end of the world,

⁵⁰⁸ Paulo de Nigro de commissione ipsius Lodisii et dicti Cazani vel alterius eorum deberet mittere ad insulam Almadere causa emendi certam quantitatem sucharorum, et ipse Lodisius misisset, dicta occaxione, ducatos mille ducentos nonaginta, sive groxados mille ducentos nonaginta sive valorem ipsorum dicto Paulo, qui debebat emere rubas duo millia quadringentas in plus sucharorum, **Christofforus Columbus** de ordine dicti Pauli missus fuit ad insulam Almadere et ibi incaparavit seu emit summam sucharorum supradictam [...] Noverint universi et singuli presens publicum in ystrumentum testimoniale inspecturi quod constitutus in presentia mei notarij et testium infrascriptorum ad hec specialiter vocatorum et rogatorum **Cristoforus Columbus civis Janue**, requisitus hic in testem et pro teste recepi et examinari [...] Qui quidem Cristoforus testis predictus, eius juramento corporaliter tactis scripturis de veritate dicenda et testificanda testificando dixit se tantum scire de contentis in titulo, videlicet quod veritas fuit et est quod cum anno proxime preterito de mense julli ipse testis et dictus Paulus essent in loco Ulisbone, transmissus fuit ipse testis per eundem Paulum ad insulam Amaderie causa emendi rubas duomilia quadringentas sucharorum in plus, cui quidem testi dacti ex tune fuerunt per dictum Paulum vel alium pro eo, occaxione predicta, regales centum quindecim milia et inde, dum ipse testis esset in dicta insula Amaderie, etiam transmissi fuerunt ipsi resti per eundem Paulum seu alium pro eo, occaxione premissa, usque ad summam regaliū trecentum duodecim milia vel circa, computatis dictis regalibus centum quindecim milia, et hoc usque ad illud tempus quo ad dictam insulam apulit navigium patronisatum per Ferdinandum Palensium portugalensem, in et super quo navigio onerari debebat dicta sucharorum quantitas [...] Interrogatus si est de proximo recessurus, respondit L: sic, **die crastino de mane pro Ulisbona**. Interrogatus qottannis est, quantum habet in bonis et quam partem vellet obtinere, respondit quod **est etatis annorum viginti septem vel circa**, habet florenos centum et ultra et vellet obtinere jus habentem. <http://www.cristoforocolombo.com/cristoforo-colombo/articoli-storici/atto-rogato-in-genova-il-25-agosto-1479>.

— He declared on oath that in the month of July of the preceding year he was at Lisbon with Paulo di Negro, who commissioned him to purchase on his account at Madeira 2,500 arrobas of sugar; that Paulo handed him a portion of the funds necessary for this purchase and forwarded to him another portion at Madeira, where he [Colombo] had contracted to buy the required amount of sugar, but that, the balance of the amount not having been remitted, when the Portuguese captain sent by Paulo di Negro to fetch the sugar arrived, the sellers who had sold for cash down refused to allow the goods to be shipped. VIGNAUD, Henry, *Proof That Columbus Was Born in 1451: A New Document*, The American Historical Review, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Jan., 1907), 278.

since Madeira and the Azores, in 1478, were the known end of the European world to the west; but Di Negro did not give him the money to make the purchase!

Would a commercial agent, as Di Negro supposedly was, act with such incompetence by sending a buyer so far to buy sugar and without giving him the money that Centurione had allegedly given Di Negro to make the purchase?⁵⁰⁹

Knowing from Colón's writings, that he started his sailing career at the age of 14 and that he was a captain of ships in the Atlantic, how can we believe that a 27-year-old Colón would go to Madeira as a mere merchant's errand boy and there hire a ship captained by somebody else?

But the most important detail of all contained in the *Assereto Document* is the age of this Colombo citizen of Genoa. Both the weaver and this supposed sugar merchant were born in 1451 according to the Assereto and the October 31, 1470 notary deed:

*It follows, then, that, according to the documents and quotations mentioned, Cristoforo Colombo was a wooler or weaver, like his father, and that with him he was engaged in the purchase of wool and wine; that the social and intellectual environment in which he lived was that of artisans or skilled laborers; that in none of the writings in which Cristoforo and the Colombos appear is there the slightest allusion to voyages that he made by sea or to his profession as a mariner; that in the years 1470 to 1473 he was in Genoa and Savona; that on October 31, 1470, he was 19 years old, and that, consequently, he had been born in 1450 or in 1451.*⁵¹⁰

Now, perhaps no more evidence is needed than the year of birth to prove that Colombo was not Colón. Don Cristóbal Colón wrote several times that he was 28 years old in 1484,⁵¹¹ therefore the Admiral was born in 1455 or 1456, not in 1451. A person cannot be 27 years old

⁵⁰⁹ Centurione had given Di Negro 1290 ducats for this purpose, but Di Negro gave Colombo only 103½ ducats. MORISON, Samuel Eliot, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, Time Incorporated, New York, 1962, 33.

⁵¹⁰ Resulta, pues, que, según los documentos y citas mencionados, Cristóforo Columbo fué un lanero ó tejedor, como su padre, y que con éste se dedicaba á la compra de lana y de vino; que el medio social é intelectual en que vivió era el propio de artesanos ó gentes de oficio; que en ninguna de las escrituras en que aparecen Cristóforo y los Columbos hay la menor alusión á viajes que aquél hiciera por mar ni á su profesión de marino; que en los años 1470 á 1473 estuvo en Génova y en Savona; que en el día 31 de Octubre de 1470 tenía diez y nueve años cumplidos, y que, por consiguiente, había nacido en 1450 ó en 1451. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón y Cristóforo Columbo...*, 10-11.

⁵¹¹ Yo vine á servir de veintiocho años. CARTAS, 380.

in 1479, and then be 28 years old in 1484. The only explanation is that Colón and Colombo were two different people.

For all the problems inherent in the *Assereto*, it would be ludicrous to accept it as proof of any truth related to Admiral Colón other than another attempt by the Genoese to manipulate the facts. In the early published images of the *Assereto*, the various blank pages had been cut out, leading readers to believe that the text was written in consecutive pages - see Figure 19.

And the *Raccolta* itself is not exempt of suspicion. Ángel de Altolaguirre, Spanish historian and avid supporter of the Genoese Colombo who collaborated with the City of Genoa in the production of the *Raccolta* books, distrusted some of the documents published in the *Raccolta*:

*I referred to his articles from 1918, published in "Manhã", and where, only with the "Raccolta" documents, he had proven the Genoese theory; and I point out to him [Altolaguirre], that many of the documents from the Genoese books, are undoubtedly false [...] He replied that it is true, and it was a shame. He himself said it forthrightly, when the Municipality [of Genoa] asked him for his opinion, as they offered him the first copy of the edition, with many honors [...] They should have eliminated those [false] documents as worthless. But, when they put photographs of documents contained in archives that are indicated, and that everyone can go and verify, they have no right to mix them with the others that are worthless.*⁵¹²

The *Raccolta Colombiana* was a propaganda incentive that served the purpose of grafting a Genoese Colombo into this story. It was not a search for the truth.

In 1937 there was an article in *The Contemporary Review* stating that “the forgery of documents referring to Colón has not stopped, being more intensified after his death.”⁵¹³

⁵¹² Refiro-me aos seus artigos de 1918, que lera na “Manhã”, e onde, só com os documentos da “Raccolta”, ele demonstrara já a tese genovesa; e observo-lhe que muitos dos documentos do livro de Génova, são indubitavelmente falsos, segundo tenho lido [...] Responde-me [Altolaguirre] que é verdade isso, e foi pena – ele próprio o disse francamente, quando a Municipalidade (de Génova) lhe pediu a sua opinião, ao oferecer-lhe o primeiro exemplar da edição, com muitas honrarias [...] Deviam ter-se eliminado esses documentos [falsos] como nulos. Mas, quando se dão fotografias de documentos contidos em protocolos que se indicam, e toda a gente pode ir verificar, não há o direito de os confundir com os outros que nada valem. NAIA, Alexandre Gaspar da, *Perpetuam Rei Memoriam*, Revista de História N° 25, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 1956, 114.

⁵¹³ STRAHAN, A. *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. 151, United Kingdom, 1937, 322.

Figure 19

The early publications of the Assereto Document (A) left out eight blank pages of the actual document (B) making it seem like it was all written in consecutive pages. Note how the handwriting is different on some pages and how some pages are written to the end and others not.



A



B

Source: AGOSTO, Aldo, *Documenti Genovesi e Liguri*, Roma: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1993.

Armando Cortesão wrote that many Genoese documents “were later discovered to be forgeries” and was astonished that such a keystone document as the *Assereto* had never been found in the Genoese archives until the Genoese needed to prove 1451 as the year of their Colombo’s birth.⁵¹⁴

Consuelo Varela describes several forged documents even stating that “the great celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the Discovery brought out forgers that were better experts”⁵¹⁵ and Guadalupe Chocano mentions the doubts and contradictions inherent in the Genoese documents.⁵¹⁶ In her publication, *Los Colón que descubrieron el Nuevo Mundo*, Chocano emphasizes that many doubts exist about Colón being born in Genoa and discards many of that city's weaver documents for not being related to the Admiral from Iberia. She calls into question how Juan Antonio who was captaining ships in Castile for Admiral Colón could be at the same time signing notarial acts in Genoa as Giovanni Colombo.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁴ Although there were some documents which referred to Colón as a Genoese, they were later discovered to be forgeries. Nevertheless, not long after the Congress of Americanists assembled at Paris in 1900 had **settled on 1451 as the date of Colón's birth**, the Italian General Assereto in 1904 discovered in the Archives of Genoa a document of 1479 in which Colombo himself says that at this date he was 27 years old. It clears up many other doubtful points. It was an extraordinary coincidence, so great that several colombists consider it a forgery. It is amazing that such an important document had never been noticed before in the archives of Genoa, which had been searched by hundreds of investigators; and that a notary document like this was not in a book, but in loose sheets. The skill of forgers is so great, especially in Italy, that one is not surprised at another forgery. CORTESÃO, Armando, *The Mystery of Columbus*, The Contemporary Review, Vol. 151, 1937, 324.

⁵¹⁵ TEXTOS, LXIV

⁵¹⁶ Circunstancia muy al contrario de lo sucedido con las muchas escrituras que nos han llegado gracias a ese pleito; pero, además, nuestra opinión está afianzada por la lectura de los numerosos legajos originales del pleito de mayorazgo colombino. Sus memoriales y sumarios revelan el sospechoso galimatías en que se vieron envueltos los documentos de testamento y mayorazgo del Descubridor, repitiéndose las irregularidades, contradicciones e incluso falsificaciones. CHOCANO, Guadalupe, *Los Colón que descubrieron el Nuevo Mundo*, Congreso Internacional, Cristóbal Colón, 1506-2006, Historia Y Leyenda, Universidad Internacional de Andalucía, Palos de La Frontera (Huelva), 2006, 132.

⁵¹⁷ En cuanto a la relación existente entre Juan Antonio y Andrea, únicamente consta la noticia que ofrece el propio Almirante en carta que dirigió a Gorrício desde Sevilla, 4 de enero de 1505, en la que identificaba a Andrea, portador de la misiva, como “hermano de Juan Antonio.” **Se pretende** que la frase de Don Cristóbal fue un descuido, pretensión que propugna la tesis genovista al identificar a Juan Antonio con Giovanni Colombo. Aluden los genovistas al Giovanni Colombo, hermano de Amighetto y Matteo, que aparece reflejado en las actas notariales genovesas, como hijo de Antonio, hermano menor de Domenico Colombo, al que cifra la tesis genovista padre de Don Cristóbal. **Suponen** que dicho Giovanni adoptó en España como segundo nombre el de su padre, y que sería así el mismo Giovanni de catorce años que, según acta notarial de 4 de junio de 1460, en Génova, había sido confiado por su padre, Antonio Colombo, a un taller de lanas genovés en calidad de aprendiz; y que, a la vista de otro acta posterior (igualmente conservada en los archivos genoveses), fechada en 10 de febrero de 1500, que registra la presencia en Génova de Giovanni Colombo, habría que suponer que Juan Antonio volvió a Génova después de desembarcar de uno de los cinco navíos que envió el Descubridor a la Península el 18 de octubre de 1498. La opinión expresada por los genovistas obligaría a aceptar ese cambio de nombre y, además, teniendo en cuenta que Juan Antonio siempre estuvo junto a la familia del Descubridor, habría que aceptar que abandonó a su esposa e hijos, familia de Giovanni citada en las actas genovesas, y era bastante mayor que el Almirante pues, aún en 1515 vivía Juan Antonio *Colombo* (posiblemente en Cuba donde entonces estaba Andrea), lo que llevaría a

Ezquerria Abadía observed that many Genoese documents were not authentic, saying that “they have dispensed of those very doubtful or frankly lacking in authenticity, that with a certain abundance have appeared in the current century.”⁵¹⁸

In 1888, HARRISSE published a forged letter that had been so perfectly executed that the only way to tell which was the original are the small holes created during its filling, as seen in Figure 20.

There may be hundreds of documents about some Cristoforo Colombo weaver from Genoa, including many forgeries, as Altolaguirre, Strahan, Ulloa and others have declared.

Perhaps fraud is the only explanation for the large number of documents that were found in Genoa in support of a plebeian weaver as being the noble navigator,⁵¹⁹ but none of these Genoese documents match the Iberian life of Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón.

It is evident that the problem of the true nationality of Don Cristóbal Colón is not new, but a consequence of the efforts made by Admiral Colón, his family, and friends in doing everything possible to hide the truth about his past.⁵²⁰ In some of his letters we see how careful the Admiral guards his information.⁵²¹

alcanzar unos 70 años, esto es, más de 10 años mayor que Don Cristóbal según el cómputo de nacimiento calculado para éste por los genovistas. CHOCANO, Guadalupe, *Los Colón que descubrieron el Nuevo Mundo*, Congreso Internacional, Cristóbal Colón, 1506-2006, Historia Y Leyenda, Universidad Internacional de Andalucía, Palos de La Frontera (Huelva), 2006, 126-127.

⁵¹⁸ Se ha prescindido de los muy dudosos o francamente carentes de autenticidad, que con cierta profusión han aparecido en el siglo actual. EZQUERRA ABADÍA, Ramón. *La nacionalidad de Colón: Estado actual del problema*. Sep. de Vol. 4 del XXXVI Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Sevilla, 1966, 406.

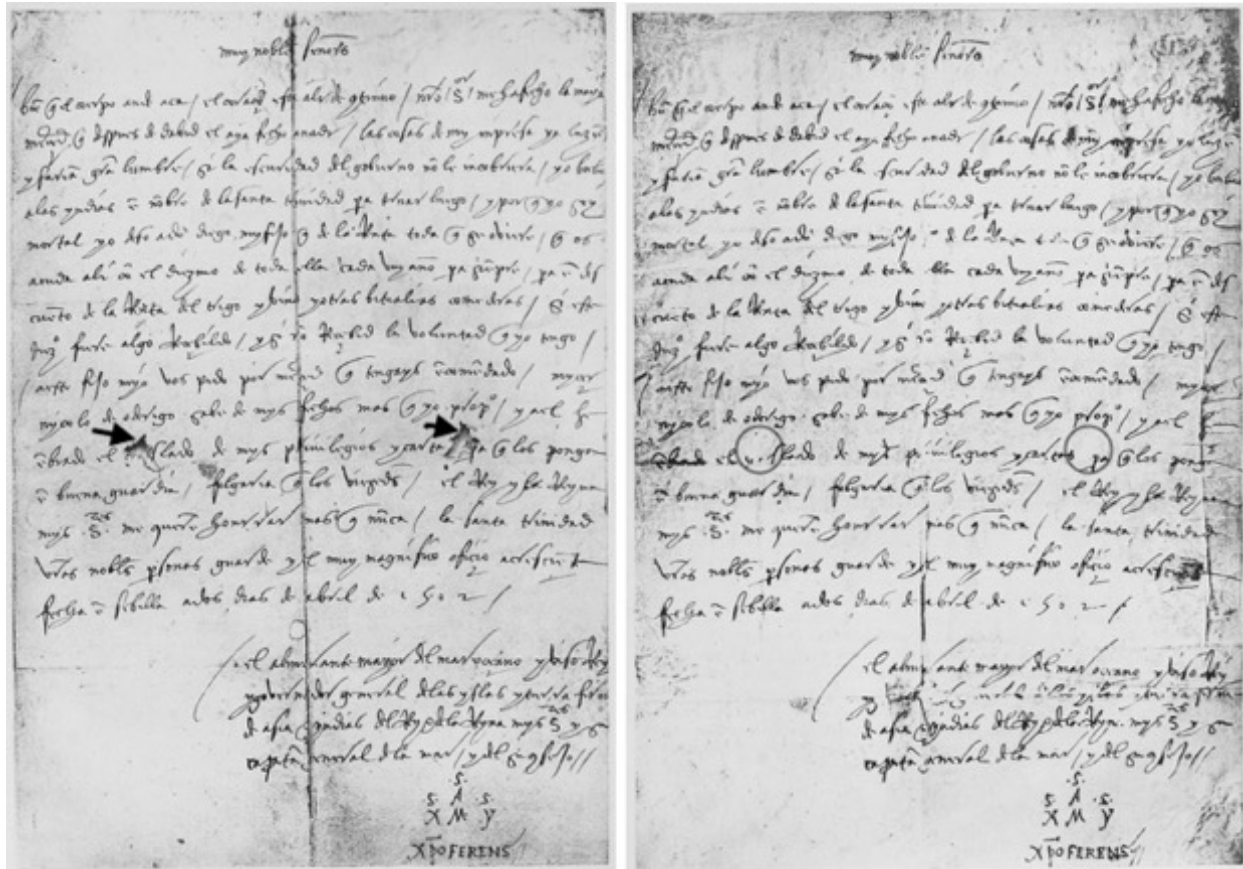
⁵¹⁹ A tese genovesa é baseada em documentos falseificados [...] segundo historiadores como Ricardo Beltrán y Rózpide, Armando Cortesão, Luis Ulloa, Antonio Rumeu de Armas, o qual diz expressis verbis ‘el llamado documento Assereto (25 de Agosto de 1479) reúne indicios bien patentes de falsificación’. KLAWE, Janina Z., *Bartolomeu Dias e a viagem de Cristóvão Colón*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época. Actas, Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1989, Vol. II, 265.

⁵²⁰ La idea de la nacionalidad extranjera del Descubridor, y los efectos que le infringió, la siguieron recogiendo los historiadores dentro y fuera de España, acentuando incluso sus consecuencias, diríamos que escenificando al máximo sus relatos. Conviene recordar que había sido el propio don Cristóbal el primer interesado en no desvelar su ascendencia y su patria, actitud que confirma su hijo Hernando escribiendo al comienzo de su “*Historiae*... La razón reside a nuestro juicio en el secretismo practicado por el Descubridor y su familia, de manera que, además de algunos testimonios representativos, la certeza de la localidad de origen solo nos ha podido llegar a través de documentos de carácter secreto, que bajo ningún concepto podían salir a la luz. CHOCANO, Guadalupe, *Los Colón que descubrieron el Nuevo Mundo*, 140.

⁵²¹ Algunas cosas quería que supiesedes mas non por carta ny tercero y ansi se quedan. FALCÓ Y OSORIO, María del Rosario, Duquesa de Berwick y Alba, *Nuevos Autógrafos de Cristobal Colón Relaciones de Ultramar*, Madrid, 1902, 15.

Figure 20

A nearly perfect forgery. The original on the left has two holes (arrows) from a desk spike where it had been filled, while the counterfeit on the right has no holes (circles). The forgery is so perfect that without the holes there would have been no way for Harrisse to tell which was the original and which was the forgery. However, the original is most likely itself a forgery because the Admiral never signed any other of his letters the way this one is signed.



Source: HARRISSE, *Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George*, pages 40-41.

The weaver and the navigator were not the same person and the similarities of their surnames created confusion between Colón's family and the Genoese Colombo weavers.⁵²² Those "Cristoforo e Bartolomeo Colombo" described by Gallo and others as "born to *plebejis parentibus*, living off their labor of wool weavers, the father was a weaver and the children were sometimes carders,"⁵²³ continued to be accepted by historians as being the same three cultured, educated, and noble seafaring Colón brothers living in Castile, because Don Cristóbal's marriage to Filipa Moniz was discarded as an irrelevant novelty.

* * *

From the Iberian documents, we recognize that Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón was, not only by marriage, but also in all his writings, deeds, relations with the nobility, and connections to the courts, a very cultured person, full of authority, immersed in matters of the sea since his childhood; a person who studied throughout his youth, who never worked in manual labor, and who, in his own words, told us he started sailing the sea at a very tender age.

The Genoese Colombo weaver documents do not integrate into this story. Even if we set aside the fact that the navigator's name was never Colombo and that he was not a commoner, we can still show that the weaver was not the explorer.

Two of the three principal documents supporting the weaver theory, as presented in this chapter, are scientifically unacceptable and must be rejected. There is not a single piece of documentary evidence today to maintain that the two men, the weaver and the navigator, were one. The *Mayorazgo of 1498* is a counterfeit manipulation. The *Assereto Document* and the Genoese notary document of October 31, 1470, state that the Colombo weaver was born in 1451.

However, Don Cristóbal Colón was born in 1455/56, because in a July 7, 1503, letter to the court the Admiral wrote that he was 28 years old in 1484 when he entered Castile.⁵²⁴

⁵²² If Colón's origins and even his physical appearance have been subject of doubt and conjecture, part of the blame can be laid at the feet of Colón himself. He rarely wrote about his origins or his family, and there is good reason to believe that he was deliberately reticent, rather than merely shy or too interested in other matters to say much about his family. The reasons probably relate to his powerful ambition for wealth and status. Colombo's family was too humble to do him any good, and fifteenth century did not necessarily value a man who rose to great wealth and status from humble beginnings. PHILLIPS, William D. and PHILLIPS, Carla Rahn, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 87.

⁵²³ THACHER, Vol. I, 192-193.

⁵²⁴ Yo vine á servir de veintiocho años, y agora no tengo cabello en mi persona que no sea cano y el cuerpo enfermo, y gastado cuanto me quedó de *aquellos*,* y me fué tomado y vendido, y á mis hermanos fasta el sayo, sin ser oído ni visto, con gran deshonor mío. CARTAS, 380-381. [* we believe it should read *abueltos*]

Occam's logic tells us that if we are going to doubt any of the documents, we must start by doubting those of the Colombo weaver which are foreign to the Admiral, and those documents written by other people who lived in another world and, thus, separated from the events by time and space; undoubtedly, before we choose to put under suspicion the documents written by the subject about his own life.

We must not fall into the same mistakes as the investigators of the past and discard the words of a noble Admiral and Viceroy to impose facts that clearly do not fit his life, just because Rui de Pina wrote *Italian* or because Las Casas wrote *Genoese*, but “without knowing the truth of it.” We must demand the truth, by every means possible, and not allow ourselves to be left with a truth based on documents that are noticeably fraudulent, composed of uncertainties and not even related to the person whose life we are scrutinizing.

CHAPTER 5

DON CRISTÓBAL'S IBERIAN LIFE

Interpreting the documents in Portugal and Castile

We cannot find it acceptable nor logical that the Admiral, living in Castile, could control what was, or was not, written about him by the official court chroniclers in Portugal. Everything seems to have been done to leave historians without a trail that could be used to reveal Don Cristóbal's identity. It appears to us, as we will explain further along, that the Court of Castile was cautious with what information pertinent to the Colón brothers ended up written in their documents.⁵²⁵ The Portuguese court chroniclers, probably not on their own initiative, wrote more doubts than certainties.⁵²⁶

It would be nearly impossible for the court of Portugal to sterilize all the records and manuscripts prior to 1493 in order to erase the Portuguese life of the navigator. Therefore, there is a good possibility that some documents still exist. There may be a dowry entered into the documents of the Court, the captaincy of Porto Santo, the House of Viseu, or some document from the Order of Santiago. Some researchers may even have leafed through documents from the 1470s and 80s where the name of Filipa Moniz's husband was mentioned, but because that name would be nothing similar to *Cristóvão Colombo* or *Cristóbal Colón*, it did not arouse any interest.

Instead of giving us some facts about the Portuguese life of the navigator, the Portuguese chroniclers tried to speak harshly and scornfully of his Portuguese memory. The tone found in Resende's chronicle illustrates this well in the following excerpt, "the so-called Colombo [sic]

⁵²⁵ Evidentemente que detrás de todos estos enigmas históricos que envuelven la vida del Almirante, se esconden motivos graves, comprometedores, que había que guardar como secreto de estado. BRANDT, Carlos, 12.

⁵²⁶ Ni Joan Barros, ni García de Resende se ocupan en sus historias del casamiento del Almirante; y así continuaba hablándose de ello en Portugal con escasso interés. ASENSIO, José María, *Cristóbal Colón: su vida, sus viajes, sus descubrimientos*, Espasa y Compañía, Barcelona, 1888, T. I, 49.

being of a boastful comportment [...] because he was discourteous and unrestrained, they could easily scuffle with him so that each one of his defects could appear to be the cause of his death.”⁵²⁷

João de Barros, who was only ten years old when Don Cristóbal Colón died, and who perhaps had never seen the Admiral in person, gives us a whimsical account of the supposed reputation of fantasies and imaginations that Colón had in Portugal. Barros even says that the navigator went, (like a dog,) “to bark” his proposal at the Court of Castile.⁵²⁸

It should be noted that although Barros implied that the navigator resided in Portugal, he did not write a single word about his noble wife, nor about all of their noble relatives that served the kings and princes in Portugal. He also did not tell us about the Admiral’s vast experience in navigating the routes of Guinea, as well as the islands of Madeira and Azores.

Barros and Resende described Don Cristóbal as a worthless halfwit who disrespectfully barked in the courts he attended and who had no respect for the king, nor the king for him. These narratives, which all seem now to be falsehoods, must be seen as nothing more than a technique employed in Portugal to sully Colón’s Portuguese memory, discredit his Portuguese connections, and curtail anyone’s interest in learning more about the great navigator’s life in Portugal.

It worked! No Portuguese academic that we know of has ever desired to profoundly investigate the life of such a discredited navigator, perceived as disrespectful and delusional.

Contrary to what all the chroniclers wrote, King João II’s words to the Admiral, and the Admiral’s words about João II, leave no doubt that both had immense respect for each other. The

⁵²⁷ O dito Colombo por ser de sua condição alevantado, no modo do contar das cousas fazia isto em ouro e prata e riquezas muito maior do que era, e acusava El-Rei por se escusar d’este descubrimento, e não no querer mandar a isso, pois primeiro se lhe viera offerecer que aos Reis de Castella, e que fora por lhe não dar credito. E El-Rei foi cometido que houvesse por bem de lho matarem ahi, porque com sua morte o descubrimento não iria mais avante de Castella. E que dando Sua Alteza a isso consentimento, se poderia fazer sem suspeita, porque por elle ser descortez e alvoraçado podiam com elle travar de maneira que cada um d’estes seus defeitos parecesse a causa de sua morte. Mas El-Rei como era mui temente a Deos, não sómente o defendeo, mas ainda lhe fez honra e mercê, e com ella o despedio. RESENDE, 21.

⁵²⁸ Não tanto por aprazer a ElRey, quanto, por o magoar com fua vista [...] E porque Colom fallava maiores grandezas, e cousas da terra do que nella havia, e isto com huma soltura de palavras, accusando, e reprehendendo a ElRey em não acceptar sua oferta, indignou tanto esta maneira de fallar a alguns Fidalgos, que ajuntando este avorrecimento de sua soltura, com a mágoa que viam ter a ElRey de perder aquella empreza, offerecêram-se delles que o queriam matar [...] veio a fanteziar que per este mar Oceano Occidental se podia navegar tanto, té que fossem dar nesta Ilha Cypango [...]. Com as quaes imaginações, que lhe deo acontinuação a navegar [...] não confiado tanto em o que tinha sabido, (ou por melhor dizer Sonhado,) [...] El Rey, porque via ser este Christovão Colom homem fallador, e glorioso em mostrar suas habilidades, e mais fantastico, e de imaginações com sua Ilha Cypango, que certo no que dizia, dava-lhe pouco credito [...] se foi pera Castella, onde tambem andou **ladrando** este requerimento em a Corte delRey Don Fernando, sem o querer ouvir. BARROS, João de, *Da Asia...*, Década I, Liv. III, Cap XI, 246-250.

Admiral's own words seem to deny everything that the Portuguese chroniclers wrote, as we can see in the excerpt below taken from his logbook:

*The King also received him with great honor [...] and he always ordered him to be seated and do much honor [...] Today he said goodbye to the King [...] always showing him a lot of love*⁵²⁹

In what concerns King João II's attitude, there is the abovementioned letter from 1488 to the future Admiral in which the good reputation that Colón had before the King is clearly illustrated.

The lack of details in the Portuguese chronicles leads us to accept that the real name of Filipa Moniz's husband was never to be known. It appears that the Portuguese Court has succeeded in not letting anyone discover the concealed identity of Filipa's husband by imposing his name as *Colombo*. And, according to Carlos Brandt, it is likely that "we may never come to know what this extraordinary man was called."⁵³⁰

The only compass to guide our way in this darkness is Don Hernando's *Historie* and a few of Colón's own letters and notes, even though the Admiral did everything he could to censor himself and to reveal nothing. The meager references that Colón makes of his Portuguese life and family should leave no doubt that he wanted everything related to Portugal to remain buried in the shadows of time.

Only the tip of the iceberg is visible and thus we are forced to imagine the rest. This is a gigantic task that we have been trying to accomplish for 30 years now. In the end, we could only

⁵²⁹ **Sábado 9 de Marzo:** El Rey le mandó resçebir a los principales de su casa muy honrradamente, y el Rey tanbién le rescibió con mucha honrra, y le hizo mucho favor y mandó sentar y habló muy bien [...] El Rey graçiosamente respondió que tenía él por çierto que no avría en esto menester terçeros. Dióle por güéspedes al prior del Clato que era la más prinçipal persona que allí estava, del qual el Almirante resçibió muy muchas honrras y favores. **Domingo 10 de Marzo:** Oy después de missa le tornó a dezir el Rey si avía menester algo que luego se lo daría, y departió mucho con el Almirante sobre su viaje, y siempre le mandava estar sentado y hazer mucha honrra. **Lunes 11 de Marzo:** Oy se despidió del Rey e le dixo algunas cosas que dixese de su parte a los Reyes mostrándole siempre mucho amor. Partióse después de comer, y enbió con él a don Martín de Noroña, y todos aquellos cavalleros le vinieron a acompañar y hazer honrra buen rato. DIARIO

⁵³⁰ Porque el caso del Almirante es trágico, no tanto para él, como principalmente para la historia, para nuestra civilización ya que más nunca se podrá saber ni siquiera cómo se llamaba esse hombre extraordinario [...] El Almirante tuvo tanto éxito en descubrir medio mundo, como en ocultarle al mundo entero su propia historia. BRANDT, Carlos, 15, 17.

theorize in Chapter 17 of our latest book about who Don Cristóbal Colón was when he lived in Portugal.⁵³¹

The lack of any Portuguese information, even three words like “married in Portugal” in Rui de Pina's account is quite disconcerting. The state of affairs today is that we know of no Portuguese documents related to the navigator, other than those of 1475 and 1479⁵³² from All-Saints related to Filipa Moniz.

In the case of Castile, we are more fortunate. In addition to the numerous documents from the Court, almost all published by Navarrete, there are a few dozen letters and many notes from the Admiral himself.

Colón's social prominence is demonstrated by the people with whom he mingled in Castile. At an initial stage, he lived with the Duke of Medinaceli for two years,⁵³³ who helped him become acquainted with the Catholic Kings.

At the Court of Castile, although they rejected the proposal to finance his voyage, the Navigator was monetarily rewarded with some regularity since the beginning of 1486. What would be the reason for the Kings of Castile, after meeting Colón in Alcalá de Henares on January 20, 1486, to decide to dispense monetary rewards to him?

These payments lasted for several years and began six years before Colón did anything for the monarchs. On May 12, 1487, Queen Isabel and King Fernando issued an order of support to Don Cristóbal that makes clear not only the importance attributed to him by the Crown of Castile, but also that he travelled with his own personal entourage:

Counties, Justices, Regents, Knights, Squires, Officers, and Good Men from all Cities, Towns, and Places in our Kingdoms and Landlords: Cristóbal Colón will come to our Court to deal with some things relative to our service [...] we order that you host him in

⁵³¹ ROSA, *Filho Oculto de um Rei Eremita* in Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo, 494-564.

⁵³² MATA, Joel Silva Ferreira, *A Comunidade Feminina da Ordem de Santiago: A comenda de Santos na Idade Média*, Dissertação de Mestrado em História Medieval, apresentada à Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 1991, 255.

⁵³³ NAVARRETE, T. II, 20.

*good inns where he can stay with **his people** free of charge and not in lodges [...] And do not antagonize him or **those he takes** with him [...] under penalty...*⁵³⁴

This order, issued in favor of the navigator and his entourage, was not the only assistance given to him by the Castilian Crown, as confirmed by the records of some payments the Court of Castile made to the future admiral:⁵³⁵

- May 5, 1487, 3,000 maravedís
- July 3, 1487, 3,000 maravedís
- August 27, 1487, 4,000 maravedís
- October 18, 1487, 30 gold doubloons (or 26,100 maravedís)
- June 16, 1488, 3,000 maravedís

The total of the payments made in 1487 amounted to 36,100 maravedís. In 1492, one ounce of gold was equivalent to 3,000 maravedís, and on the first voyage a sailor earned a monthly salary of 1,000 maravedís (12,000 per year), while a shipboy received 666 maravedís per month. On October 18, 1487, Colón received 26,100 maravedís, twice the annual salary of a sailor. There was another payment of 20,000 maravedís on December 10, 1491.⁵³⁶

These facts again support the point of view that Colón was quite an important nobleman, having his own entourage and whom the Castilian court felt as a duty to support. However, this court support was not only monetary. The court also utilized its power and control to aid in the cover-up of his identity.

This mystery has not been solved over the past five centuries because it was really never meant to be solved. Proof that the kings of Castile participated in this international cover-up can be seen in the naturalization letter of Don Diego Colón, brother of the First Admiral. This

⁵³⁴ Cristóbal Colomo ha de venir á esta nuestra Corte, é á otras partes é logares destos dichos nuestros Reinos, á entender en algunas cosas cumplideras á nuestro servicio. Por ende Nos vos mandamos que cuando por esas dichas Ciudades, é Villas, é Logares ó por alguna dellas se acaesciere, le aposentedes é dedes buenas posadas en que pose él é los suyos sin dineros, que non sean mesones; é los mantenimientos á los precios que entre vosotros valieren por sus dineros. E non revolvades con él ni con los que llevase consigo, ni con alguno dellos roidos. E non fagades ende al por alguna manera so pena de la nuestra merced é de diez mil maravedís para la nuestra Cámara á cada uno que lo contrario ficiere. Fecho en la Ciudad de Córdoba é doce de Mayo de ochenta y nueve años. = YO EL REY = YO LA REINA. *Idem*, 6.

⁵³⁵ RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *El Portugués...*, 18.

⁵³⁶ VARELA MARCOS, Jesús and LEÓN GUERRERO, María Montserrat, *El itinerario de Cristobal Colón: 1451-1506*, IIEIP, 2003, 112

document excluded the most important detail that should come in a naturalization letter, which is the nationality of origin of the naturalized subject:

*Dona Isabel, by the Grace of God, etc. In order to favor and reward you, Don Diego Colón, brother of the Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón, and having in mind your fidelity and loyal services that you have performed for us and that we expect you will do from now on, by this present we make you a natural of these our kingdoms of Castile and Leon [...] Given at the town of Medina del Campo on the eighth day of the month of February year of our Lord Jesus Christ of fifteen hundred and four years*⁵³⁷

This naturalization document is extraordinary, because the first thing that should have been written in such a document would be the nationality of the person asking for the naturalization. By omitting Don Diego's nationality, this document was not only the single example of such exclusion during Queen Isabel's 30 years reign, but also went against the law that was then in force in the kingdom of Castile, as was reported by Rumeu de Armas:

*It was an established custom of Castilian public law that the naturalization letters **always identify the nationality of origin**. In the Seal Register of the Archives of Simancas, at least a hundred documents of this nature are kept, corresponding to the reign of the Catholic Kings. In all of them, the indicated requirement is fulfilled [the nationality is written, as required by law].*⁵³⁸

Here is one, out of a hundred naturalization documents issued in accordance with Queen Isabel's law, making note of the Genoese nationality:

*Don Fernando and Dona Isabel by the Grace of God king and queen of Castile and Leon [...] you Françisco de Riberol, **Genoese** merchant living in the city of Seville...*⁵³⁹

Magellan, Américo Vespucci, and other foreign navigators had to be naturalized Castilians in order to attain their respective Castilian posts and titles. However, this requirement was not

⁵³⁷ RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *El Portugués...*, 87.

⁵³⁸ *Idem*, 52.

⁵³⁹ *Idem*, 85.

demanding from Don Cristóbal Colón when they elevated him to no less than Viceroy, Admiral, and Governor; and all these titles were conceded to him before setting sail, though dependent on a successful outcome.⁵⁴⁰ This fact insinuates that Don Cristóbal's birth had to be at a social rank similar to Don Álvaro de Portugal, who does not appear to have been naturalized to receive the post of Governor of Justice of Castile.

Don Diego Colón was the only foreigner given enough consideration by the monarchs to break their own laws and not mention his birthplace. This naturalization proves that the Colón brothers were of high enough political importance to have their identities and nationality kept secret by the Court. By describing Don Cristóbal merely as a foreigner and omitting any mention of a nationality of origin in his brother's naturalization document, it is demonstrated that the Castilian Court participated in covering up the nationality of the person that was obtaining Castilian naturalization.

Considering this as a whole, one should accept that when any nationality was publicly attributed to Don Cristóbal, that nationality must not be the authentic one. It is illogical to have so much secrecy amongst the family and the courts about the identity and place of origin if the public already knew who Don Cristóbal was; and where he came from. For this reason, we must believe that all the nationalities that were presented to the public are false.

A Portuguese at the Castilian Court

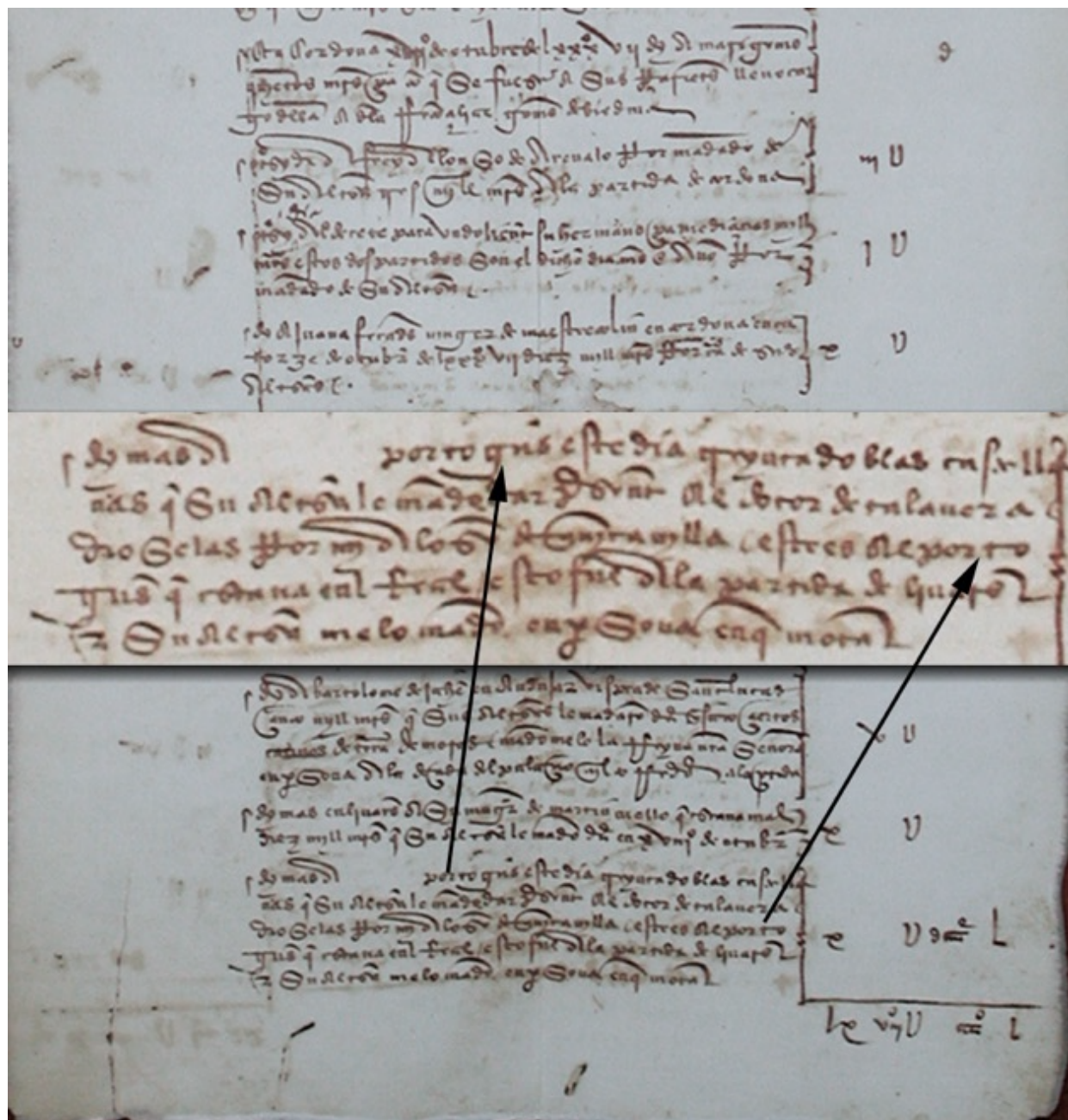
In the Castilian court documents Colón is ordinarily referred to as *extranjero*, meaning foreigner to the kingdom of Castile. This appears to be a premeditated approach to concealing Colón's true nationality. Accordingly, we must accept that the Castilian court knew his true nationality as well as the monumental reason that forced Don Cristóbal to conceal his identity. In our view, Queen Isabel was privy to the truth and this explains why Pedro de Toledo, the queen's almoner, did not write the name of the navigator in his accounting ledger - see Figure 21.⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴⁰ BRANDT, Carlos. *El misterioso almirante y su enigmático descubrimiento: biografía*, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, Dirección de Cultura, Venezuela, 1949, 36.

⁵⁴¹ Todos los protectores de Cristóbal Colón en la primera hora de sus negociaciones con la administración castellana aparecen implicados en el donativo de la reina Isabel. RUMEU DE ARMAS, *El Portugués*, 29.

Figure 21

The last entry on the page shows Pedro de Toledo's account describing Don Cristóbal as Portuguese. *Libro de los maravedíes que por mandado de la Reyna nuestra Señora, recibió y gastó Pedro de Toledo, su Limosnero. De Alcalá de Henares, año de LXXXVI fasta Çargoça, fin de LXXXVII, fl. 6.* Original conservado en el instituto "Valencia de Don Juan" de Madrid (signatura 26-I-29).



Source: Antonio Rumeu de Armas, *El "Portugués" Cristobal Colon en Castilla*, Madrid 1982.

Pedro de Toledo identified Colón only by his nationality of “Portuguese,” as Queen Isabel understood Colón to be.⁵⁴²

The extract below from the court document states, “this is the **Portuguese** that was at El Real” and “Your Highness ordered me personally:”

*I also gave to [name blank]⁵⁴³ **Portuguese**, this day thirty Castilian doubloons⁵⁴⁴ that Your Highness ordered me to give to him in the presence of Doctor de Talavera. Alonso de Quintanilla gave them [to him] for me. This is the **Portuguese** that was at the Royal Court. This was at the departure from Linares, and Your Highness **ordered me personally**.⁵⁴⁵*

Those 30 gold *doblas castellanas* was the equivalent of 26,100 *maravedís*, a noteworthy amount⁵⁴⁶ since an average seaman on the 1492 voyage earned only 12,000 *maravedís* per year.⁵⁴⁷

Recognizing that the recipient’s name was blank, António Rumeu de Armas investigated the document to find out who was the mysterious **Portuguese** that deserved this confidential treatment. After cross-referencing this document with the paid entries in the books of the treasurer

⁵⁴² La estimación de Cristóbal Colón como portugués en la corte de Castilla, dos años después de su acceso a la misma (1487), debe interpretarse como que escribía dicho idioma. RUMEU DE ARMAS, *El Portugués...* 44.

⁵⁴³ Pedro de Toledo não podia ignorar o nome de Colón e certamente o escreveu no documento. Mas o nome devia ter sido apagado anos depois por alguém que não queria que se espalhasse a notícia da nacionalidade portuguesa do “immortal nauta” como os espanhóis chamam a Colón. Em todos os documentos existentes em Espanha – com esta única exceção – Colón é sempre identificado como “extrangero”, quer dizer, oculta-se a sua verdadeira nacionalidade. Aliás, é um caso único nos documentos. KLAWE, Janina Z., *Bartolomeu Dias e a viagem de Cristóvão Colón*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época. Actas, Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1989, Vol. II, 264.

⁵⁴⁴ During Isabel's reign, there were two coins called Castilian *dobla*: one was worth twice the other; this was the true *dobla*, meaning "double. “Mostróle el Almirante una moneda de oro fino, que solia en aquellos tiempos haber en Castilla, que se llamaba «excelente», que valia *dos castellanos* (que yo que escribo esto vi é alcancé).” LAS CASAS, T. I, 381.

⁵⁴⁵ Dj mas a (?) **Portugués**, este dia treynta doblas castellanas, que Su Altesa le mando dar presente el dotor De Talavera. Dioselas por mj Alonso De Qunjntanjlla. Este es el **Portugués** que estava en El Real. Esto fue a la partida de Linares, et Su Altesa [Dona Isabel] me lo mandó en persona. RUMEU DE ARMAS Antonio, *El Portugués...*, 29.

⁵⁴⁶ The standard gold coin, the *dobla castellana*, was entitled the *excelente* and valued at 870 *mrs*, while the *enrique* and *castellano* continued at 435 *mrs*. EDWARDS, John. *Christian Córdoba: The City and its region in the late Middle Ages* (Print Edition: Cambridge University Press, 1982) Appendix 2, *Money and its Value*, The Library of Iberian Resources Online, <http://libro.uca.edu/edwards/appendix2.htm>:

⁵⁴⁷ PHILLIPS, William D. and PHILLIPS, Carla Rahn, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 143.

González de Sevilla, he was able to demonstrate that the unnamed Portuguese was none other than the future First Admiral and Viceroy, Don Cristóbal Colón.

“If we compare this entry in the accounts of Pedro de Toledo with the payments made by the treasurer González de Sevilla ... they match up perfectly,” affirmed Rumeu de Armas, proving that the recipient of the 30 gold coins was Don Cristóbal Colón.⁵⁴⁸

Circa October 18, 1487, the court gave the future Admiral 30 *doblas*,⁵⁴⁹ yet there is no name on the document declaring who Queen Isabel personally ordered to be paid, only a reference to Colón as “the Portuguese that was at the court.”

Consequently, Portuguese was the first and only official nationality ever attributed to Don Cristóbal in the Court of Castile’s documents, even though his name was concealed.

Rumeu de Armas notes that there were five people involved in that 1487 payment, because in addition to the almoner **Pedro de Toledo**,⁵⁵⁰ his note mentions the **Queen** “Your Highness ordered me in person.”⁵⁵¹ He also says that **Doctor** [Rodrigo Maldonado] **Talavera** was present⁵⁵² and that it was **Alonso de Quintanilla** who paid the Portuguese.⁵⁵³ Yet, there was still the involvement of **Friar Hernando de Talavera**.⁵⁵⁴ All five of them understood who the **anonymous Portuguese** was that Pedro de Toledo referred to.

⁵⁴⁸ Si compaginamos esta partida de las cuentas de Pedro de Toledo con los acostamientos del tesorero González de Sevilla de 5 de mayo, 3 de julio, 27 de agosto y 15 de octubre en ensamblaje resulta perfecto. RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *El Portugués...*, 29.

⁵⁴⁹ La lismona a Cristóbal Colón fue librada por el obispo de Avila, fray Hernando de Talavera. Se hizo efectiva en Linares el 18 de octubre de 1487, registrada al folio 6 recto del manuscrito general. *Idem*, 27.

⁵⁵⁰ Pedro de Toledo [...] lo identificó con tal cuidado, que no admite duda ni vacilación. *Idem*, 27.

⁵⁵¹ Como antes se ha dicho, todos los protectores de Cristóbal Colón en la primera hora de sus negociaciones con la administración castellana aparecen en el Donativo de la reina Isabel. En primer término la propia soberana. La caridad regia no tomó para hacerse efectiva una decisión rutinaria. El testimonio de Pedro de Toledo es contundente: “et Su Alteza me lo mandó en persona.” *Idem*, 29.

⁵⁵² En la decisión regia de otorgar la lismona se halló “presente el doctor Talavera”, personaje que fácilmente se identifica con el consejero real y miembro de la Junta examinadora Rodrigo Maldonado de Talavera. *Idem*, 31.

⁵⁵³ Alonso de Quintanilla, contador mayor de los Reyes Católicos, recibió encargo expreso de atender al promotor en sus demandas y necesidades. [...] El tercer protector implicado en el documento es el contador Alonso de Quintanilla, quien arrebatará materialmente de las manos del lismonero las 30 doblas para entregárselas con la mayor premura a Cristóbal Colón. *Idem*, 13, 31.

⁵⁵⁴ Fray Hernando de Talavera, no figura en el texto del asiento, pero sí en folios anteriores. Pedro de Toledo tiene buen cuidado en consignar que todas las lismonas se habían hecho “por libramiento del obispo de Avila [fray Hernando de Talavera].” *Idem*, 32-33.

The fact that five people at the Castilian court accepted the future Viceroy to be a Portuguese national in 1487, and simultaneously understood why he needed to remain anonymous, makes the mystery much more complex.⁵⁵⁵

Why would Queen Isabel assist this mysterious **Portuguese** (who was there “doing certain things for our service,”) ⁵⁵⁶ in concealing his true identity from us? ⁵⁵⁷ Why would the court later decide to refer to him only as *foreigner*?

It is a fact that the Portuguese nationality was the only nationality ever attributed to Colón in all the documents of the Castilian Court, and that in all the other documents the court glosses over the nationality calling him merely foreigner, but never Genoese.

We should face this fact in a logical way: either the Court made a mistake in saying that he was Portuguese, knowing that the future Admiral was not Portuguese; or they knew that he was Portuguese, but as there was a need to cover up his birthplace, he became just a foreigner. In other words, the Court pretended he was from an unknown place.

It is not logical to believe that a court would not know the true nationality of a person to whom they afforded frequent audiences and made regular payments. Neither is it logical that a court could not discover such information within a few weeks or months. The powers at that time, like the powers of today, had their ways and means of getting information, especially about a person like Colón, who had lived in their realm for years.

Everyone needed to identify themselves during their court audiences. Even if Don Cristóbal were to refuse identifying himself to the court, an impossible thing to imagine, the courts had their ways of knowing who people were and where they came from when granting audiences. Courts could easily obtain someone’s true name and lineage from their own agents and spies.

Don Cristóbal’s relatives were well-known to the court and even related to Queen Isabel. Don Álvaro de Portugal (Bragança), exiled in the Castilian court, was a cousin of Queen Isabel.

⁵⁵⁵ Como persona ya vecino y cuasi natural de Portugal; y porque algún tiempo vivió en la dicha isla de Puerto Santo, donde dejó alguna hacienda y heredades su suegro Perestrello. LAS CASAS, T. I, 54.

⁵⁵⁶ Extranjero que está aqui haciendo algunas cosas complideras á servicio de Sus Altezas. Archivo de Simancas, Contadurías generales, 1ª época, n.º 43, Colecc. de docum. Inéd. de Indias, t. xix, p. 456-457. *Bibliografía Colombina*, Enumeración de Libros y Documentos Concernientes á Cristobal Colón y Sus Viajes, Obra Que Publica la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 1892, 3-4.

⁵⁵⁷ *Idem*, 18, 29.

His deceased brother, Don João de Bragança, had been married to Filipa Moniz's cousin, thus not being necessary to carry out much of an investigation.⁵⁵⁸

The Monarchs of Castile had installed the Portuguese Don Álvaro de Portugal as their Court Justice Minister. It would also be very easy for Queen Isabel to learn who Colón really was from her cousin Don Álvaro de Portugal and other exiled Portuguese nobles. Assuming the navigator had truly refused to identify himself, an unlikely scenario, Don Álvaro de Portugal could identify him. Is it not realistic to accept that Colón's Portuguese family members living in Castile did not know who the Admiral was while living in Portugal nor who his parents were.

The Castilian Court always knew who Don Cristóbal was and understood the political consequences of revealing Colón's real name, nationality, and lineage to the public. Or, should we conclude that the Queen of Castile would help to suppress all of the Colóns' personal information without knowing the reasons why she was doing so?

The nationality being portrayed merely as foreigner served perfectly well the ulterior motives of never having to write "Portuguese" again, as Pedro de Toledo had done.

Calling him merely **foreigner** would not betray the truth, while at the same time would not point to a false nationality. Faced with the Castilian court's declaration of Colón's Portuguese nationality, Rumeu de Armas wrote:

Pedro Díaz de Toledo, the almoner, proclaims the Portuguese nationality of the future discoverer of America. After the first identification, he emphasizes, a few lines ahead, the attribution in these terms, "this is the Portuguese that was at the Court [in Malaga]." Faced with this proclamation of his [Portuguese] homeland, it is necessary to adopt one of these postures:

1st Cristóbal Colón was Portuguese.

⁵⁵⁸ João de Bragança's connections to Filipa's cousin and Queen Isabel

D. João I, King of Portugal		
1. D. João, Prince of Portugal	1. D. Afonso, 1st Duke of Bragança	1. Filipão Perestrelo
2. D. Isabel de Portugal	2. D. Fernando, 2nd Duke of Bragança	2. Branca Dias Perestrelo (Filipa's aunt)
3. D. Isabel I <i>la Católica</i> , Queen of Castilla	3. D. João, Marquis of Montemor ==	3. D. Isabel de Noronha (Filipa's cousin)

<https://geneall.net/en/name/12443/joao-marquis-of-montemor-o-novo/>

*2nd The immortal navigator, due to his close ties with Portugal, was considered a Portuguese and he made himself pass as such.*⁵⁵⁹

However, Rumeu de Armas still believing that Colón was the Genoese Colombo continued explaining his **Portuguese** nationality as follows:

*If Cristóbal Colón was not Portuguese by birth or by lineage, his description as Portuguese must be justified by his residence in Portugal, by the marriage he contracted with a native of that kingdom, by the birth of his children in the same place and in the services provided to the crown of the said kingdom in navigations and enterprises.*⁵⁶⁰

Further on, Rumeu de Armas noting the inconsistencies in the accepted story, but unable to see Colón except as the Genoese, does not hesitate in stating that “the Genoese navigator’s residence in Portugal was much longer and more intense than has been believed up to now.”⁵⁶¹

These problems of rationality evidenced by Rumeu de Armas - being called Portuguese, having lived in Portugal for a longer time, and having learned Portuguese as his first written language, when he says “learning to write was not done by Colón, as it looks, except for Portuguese, Spanish and Latin”⁵⁶² – seem to prove not a Genoese, but a Portuguese nationality.

If we imagine for a moment that Colón had no nationality attributed to him in any chronicle or publication of the time, what would Rumeu de Armas or any other scientist's reaction have been when faced with an official court document proclaiming Colón to be Portuguese, and realizing that

⁵⁵⁹ Pedro Díaz de Toledo, el limosnero, **proclama la nacionalidad portuguesa del futuro descubridor de América.** Después de la primera identificación, recalca, líneas adelante, la atribución en estos términos: “este es el portugués que estava em el Real [de Málaga].”Frente a esta proclamación de patria se impone adoptar una de estas posturas: 1.^a Cristóbal Colón era portugués. 2.^a El inmortal navegante, por sus estrechos vínculos con Portugal, era considerado como lusitano y él mismo se hacia pasar por tal. RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *El Portugués...*, 35.

⁵⁶⁰ Cristóbal Colón no era portugués por el nacimiento ni por la estirpe, la estimación como lusitano hay que justificarla en la residencia en Portugal, en el matrimonio que contrajo con una natural de este país, en el nacimiento de sus hijos en idéntica tierra y en los servicios prestados a la corona de dicho reino en navegaciones y empresas. *Idem*, 39.

⁵⁶¹ La residencia del nauta genovés en Portugal fue mucho más larga e intensa de lo que hasta ahora se ha supuesto. *Ibidem*.

⁵⁶² El aprendizaje de la pluma no lo hizo Colón, por visto, sino respecto al portugués, al castellano, e al latín. *Idem*, 42.

Colón had Portuguese as his first written language? The logical slash by Occam would leave us with a Portuguese Colón.

Rumeu de Armas comprehended that the puzzle pieces did not match the picture that we had been painted. Turning the accepted tale upside-down, he continued by saying that “it does not fit in any way with the dogmatic date of arrival of 1476, historians have resorted to the strangest contortions to find an explanation to this enigma.”⁵⁶³ This same point of view is supported by José María Asensio in his 1888 publication, which places Colón’s arrival in Portugal as early as 1470.⁵⁶⁴

It is impossible to deny Colón’s actions, his family ties, and his court relationships in Castile and Portugal. Through an impartial review of his actions and writings it may be possible to further clarify his true identity and nationality.⁵⁶⁵ It is through the interpretation of the nuances of his life, and not the words of distant strangers that we hope to get there.

Consuelo Varela also questioned the Italian version of the story, admitting that this official version made little sense, even though she also could not look beyond a Genoese Colón, as quoted below:

*Here is a point in Colón's life that has not been sufficiently explained, because it is not credible that a mere sailor, no matter how courtly he pretended to be, would learn to speak and write Castilian in Portugal.*⁵⁶⁶

Understanding that Don Cristóbal’s writings, deeds, and actions represent the life of a well-educated courtier, Varela expressed her doubts that he could have been a mere sailor.

Faced with the facts of Admiral Colón’s extensive naval experience, Fernando Pedrosa wrote that “the current official version is the one that is illogical and far-fetched: the discoverer of

⁵⁶³ *Idem*, 69.

⁵⁶⁴ Conviene todos en fijar el de su llegada á Portugal entre 1470 y 1472. ASENSIO, José María, *Cristóbal Colón : su vida, sus viajes, sus descubrimientos*, Espasa y Compañía, Barcelona, 1888, T. I, 44.

⁵⁶⁵ Voltando à nossa convicção de ser Colón de nacionalidade portuguesa, queremos frisar que para um observador bem informado, imparcial e desapaixonado, a história ‘oficial’ de Colombo, fabricada pelos italianos e apoiada por uma parte de espanhóis, carece de qualquer viabilidade lógica. KLAWE, Janina Z., *Bartolomeu Dias e a viagem de Cristóvão Colón*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época. Actas, Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1989, Vol. II, 262.

⁵⁶⁶ TEXTOS, XXV.

America was a humble artisan, with no experience at sea, who first embarked in 1474 or 1475 (aged 23 or 24), as a mere commercial agent. It's illogical, far-fetched and even ridiculous.”⁵⁶⁷

In turn, Rogério d'Oliveira, president of the Academia de Marinha, understood that Colón had to be “not just a skilled sailor and a navigator. He had to be a captain, experienced in seafaring and ship armament, with sureness in ocean navigation, a condition that is obligatory that he had by the initiative, organization, and perseverance that he demonstrated in his expedition, with a fleet of three ships manned by rough and demanding sailors.”⁵⁶⁸

Don Cristóbal, a non-Castilian, could never have been given command as captain-general of a fleet with almost 100 Castilians if the Court of Castile was not sure of his aptitude and experience as a seafaring Captain. This experience was acquired from the beginning of his maritime career at the age of 14, in 1469,⁵⁶⁹ giving him 15 years in Portugal to sail, navigate, and learn to hire crews, and captain ships.

It becomes increasingly obvious to any investigator who has taken the time to review the lives of the three Iberian Colóns that we are not dealing with humble sailors, nor commoner weavers who pretended to be noblemen; but rather with true aristocrats who had received a thorough education as children and decades of maritime training.

Don Cristóbal's life was not that of a would-be nobleman who hid his low status, as we have been forced to accept. The tale of a commoner – be he Genoese, Portuguese, or from any other place – is clearly a nonsensical tale.

Since the court of Castile accepted him, his brothers, and his sons as nobles, it demonstrates that it was not a plebeian Colón who invented a noble persona for himself, but instead the historians who invented a weaver persona for Colón. Horta y Pardo's well-thought-out viewpoint of 1912 remains true today:

From Colón until the present day, no historian has verified the true birthplace of the Admiral, nor has he proven anything about his true homeland. What some Spanish and

⁵⁶⁷ PEDROSA, Fernando, *Cristóvão Colombo: corsário em Portugal, 1469-1485*, Academia de Marinha, 1989, 52.

⁵⁶⁸ PEDROSA, 6.

⁵⁶⁹ Yo he andado veintitrés años en la mar, sin salir della tiempo que se haya de contar, y vi todo el Levante y Poniente, que dice por ir al camino de Septentrión, que es Inglaterra, y he andado la Guinea, mas en todas estas partidas no se hallará la perfección de los puertos. CARTAS, 112.

*Italian chroniclers did was merely to cast shadows that made Colón's birthplace more obscure.*⁵⁷⁰

Writing in a Maritime Academy publication in 1989, Fernando Pedrosa said that “Cristóbal Colón intended to conceal the days of his youth in impenetrable clouds and indecipherable mysteries. Hundreds of authors have tried to clarify the doubts, through zealous and passionate controversy, purposely throwing clouds of smoke into the smoke of the clouds.”⁵⁷¹

Everything about Colón's life leans towards a Portuguese nobleman. It was the first documented nationality in all the known writings, and it was the only one documented by the Court of Castile. Contemporary chroniclers either did not know, did not want to disclose, or were misled about his nationality.

The incredible thing about this 500-year-old story is that the deeper the investigation goes, the more unconvincing the official Genoese account becomes because the truth about Colón's origins was never supposed to be revealed. In 1937, Armando Cortesão saw this long-standing uncertainty as a mystery constructed by the Admiral, declaring:

*He succeeded so well that even to-day the point of the veil can scarcely be lifted! And nobody can make any affirmation about his origin, birth, or life before 1492 without being contradicted. Why did Colón do this? What reason had he to hide his origin in such a dense mystery? Nobody can yet answer satisfactorily this question, which might illuminate one of the most important features of modern history [...] The mist which veils this origin, the first coming to Portugal, his marriage, flight to Spain, the letter addressed to him by João II in 1488, the silence of the Portuguese chroniclers, his fight to convince us that he had reached Asia though he knew himself that he had not, disguise of his name in a cabalistic signature (he never signed as Cristóbal Colón), the ignorance of the Italian language of this so-called Genoese, the impossibility of finding in Genoa any of his relatives, in short—the mystery of Colón begins to clear through this hypothesis.*⁵⁷²

⁵⁷⁰ HORTA Y PARDO, 48.

⁵⁷¹ PEDROSA, 39.

⁵⁷² CORTESÃO, Armando, *The Mystery of Columbus*, The Contemporary Review, Vol. 151, 1937, 323, 329.

Likewise, Professor Félix Martínez Llorente of Valladolid University reported in 2006 that “None of the theories so far enunciated regarding his family ended up being satisfactory nor fully enlightening.”⁵⁷³

The undeniable fact is that Colón’s true origins and place of birth have never been proven.⁵⁷⁴ This presents an opportunity for any locality that finds infallible documentation to prove that it was the Admiral’s actual birthplace.

But if the nationality of the First Admiral was Portuguese as firmly acknowledged by Pedro de Toledo, how can so many authors and documents claiming that he was Genoese be explained? Was all this a planned deception set in motion by the navigator with the aid of the Iberian courts? Or was it all fortuitous confusion?

The fact is that there is not a single document from Don Cristóbal where he claims to be from Genoa; but there is also no document where he claims to be from any another locality other than a March 4, 1493, letter to the court.⁵⁷⁵ If only one document from the court calls him Portuguese, could this be enough proof to claim Colón was a Portuguese aristocrat?

The navigator was a person who travelled with his own entourage⁵⁷⁶ and had participated in military campaigns together with the Castilians, as he himself writes about the battle to conquer the kingdom of Granada:

*This present year of 1492, after Your Highnesses oversaw the end of the war with the Moors who reigned in Europe and having ended the war in the very large city of Granada where this current year, on the second day of the month of January by force of arms I saw the royal flags of Your Highnesses be put on the towers of the Alhambra.*⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷³ MARTÍNEZ LLORENTE, Félix, *El escudo de armas de Cristóbal Colón*, 14.

⁵⁷⁴ Four cities have dedicated four marble monuments to their son Cristóbal Colón; two possess the register of his baptism, and eight or ten present diverse title-deeds to consider themselves his cradle. KIRK, Hyland C., *The Secret of Columbus*, Press of the Hayworth Publishing House, 1912, 7.

⁵⁷⁵ Vine de **mi tierra** a les servir. ZAMORA, Margarita, *Reading Columbus*, University of California Press, 1993, 187.

⁵⁷⁶ NAVARRETE, T. II, 6.

⁵⁷⁷ Este presente año de 1492, después de Vuestras Altezas aver dado fin a la guerra de los moros que reynavan en Europa y aver acabado la guerra en la muy grande çiudad de Granada adonde este presente año a dos días del mes de enero por fuerça de armas vide poner las vanderas reales de Vuestras Altezas en las torres de la Alfambra. DIARIO, 1st paragraph.

Don Cristóbal had to be on the battlefield of Granada as a fighting knight alongside the other combatants. Protesting in a letter in the year 1500, he lamented that the Castilian Court did not understand the problems he faced in the governance of the New World, where there was neither law nor a city structured in form, but a jungle far from European civilization:

*There you judge me as a governor who was sent to Sicily, or to a regimented city or town where the laws can be upheld [...] I must be judged as a Captain who went from Spain to conquer the Indies [...] of warlike people [...] without them or us having a settled town [...] judge me as a Captain who has been carrying arms from long ago until today without leaving them for an hour and as knights of conquests and the customs [of knighthood].*⁵⁷⁸

As a knight of Christ against the enemies of his faith, he fought for a long time alongside *Colombo the Younger*⁵⁷⁹ and had big dreams to captain an army in the liberation of Jerusalem. He was eagerly pleading with the queen in September 1501 to, “as you did with this of the Indies, try me now with this of the Holy House, and as I say, I shall lead them as your servant, not as your adversary.”⁵⁸⁰ Not resting on his laurels, Don Cristóbal, like the knights of the Portuguese Order of Christ, was obsessed with the idea of leading the liberation of Jerusalem with its Temple of Solomon from Muslim control:

- **December 26, 1492:** Within three years to ready and prepare to conquer the Holy House “that this way, I protested with Your Highnesses that all my earnings from this enterprise be spent in the reconquest of Jerusalem.”⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁸ Allí me juzgan como gobernador que fué á Cecilia ó ciudad ó villa puesta en regimiento y adonde las leyes se pueden guardar por entero sin temor de que se pierda todo, y rescibo grande agravio. Yo debo ser juzgado como capitán que fué de España á conquistar fasta las Indias á gente belicosa y mucha, y de costumbres y seta á nos muy contraria: los cuales viven por sierras y montes, sin pueblo asentado ni nosotros; y adonde por voluntad divina he puesto só el señorío del Rey é de la Reina nuestros Señores otro mundo; y por donde la España, que era dicha pobre, es la más rica. Yo debo ser juzgado como capitán que de tanto tiempo fasta hoy trae las armas á costas sin las dejar una hora, y de caballeros de conquistas y del uso, y no de letras salvo si fuesen de griegos ó de romanos, ó de otros modernos de que hay tantos y tan nobles en España, ca de otra guisa rescibo grande agravio porque en las Indias no hay pueblo ni asiento. TEXTOS, 269-270

⁵⁷⁹ Un'huomo segnalato del suo nome, & famiglia, chiamato Colombo, molto nominato per mare, per cagiō dell'armata, ch'ei conduceva contra gl'infedeli, & ancora della sua patria [Constantinople]: tal che col suo nome spaventava i fanciulli nella culla. La cui persona, & armata è da credere che fosse molto grande [...] mentre in compagnia del detto **Colombo giovane** l'Ammiraglio navigava, il che fe lungamente. HISTORIE, Cap. V, 10, 11.

⁵⁸⁰ TEXTOS, 303.

⁵⁸¹ TEXTOS, 101.

- **February 3, 1500:** I think you will remember that the good friar, Juan Perez [...] that he and I came to your court solely with this [project] of the Indies and appropriating it for the conquest of the Holy House [...] and it will please Your [Highnesses] that just as the Temple of Jerusalem was erected with wood and gold from Ophir, that now the very same be restored to the Holy Church and re-erected more sumptuous than it first was. The Holy Trinity, the life, and very high state of Your Highnesses increase and prosper in His holy service.⁵⁸²
- **August-September 1501:** Most Christian Queen: I am the servant of Your Highness. The keys of my will I gave them to you in Barcelona [...] Fray Juan Perez would say so, as well as the governess [of prince Don Juan], and because of it I am more assured [...] This saddens me from two sides: one is because of Jerusalem, that I beg Your Highness that you do not look down on it, or think that I talked of it only as a ploy [...] See now if you be pleased to let me try this other of the Holy House, as was with this of the Indies.⁵⁸³
- **February 1502:** (Letter to Pope Alexander VI) Holiest Father: This enterprise was begun in order to spend what was gained from it to garrison the Holy House for the Holy Church [...] That in seven years I would pay 50,000 foot soldiers and 5,000 cavalry for its conquest and in another five years another 50,000 foot soldiers and another 5,000 cavalry, which would be 10,000 cavalry and a 100,000 foot soldiers for this.⁵⁸⁴
- **Jamaica, July 7, 1503:** Jerusalem and Mount Zion are to be reconstructed by the hand of a Christian.⁵⁸⁵

Colón did not say that he sailed across the Atlantic with the idea of getting rich, but to fill his coffers with gold so that he could finance a large army for the liberation of Jerusalem. He wrote that any profit that was made would be “spent on the defense of the *Casa Santa*, (Holy House).” He never wrote that his aim was to prove that India was to the west.

⁵⁸² COLÓN, Cristóbal, *Libro Copiador*, Archivo General de Indias.

⁵⁸³ TEXTOS, 303.

⁵⁸⁴ TEXTOS, 312.

⁵⁸⁵ TEXTOS, 327.

After convincing the Court to support his voyage, Don Cristóbal sent his agent to negotiate a written contract with the representative of the Catholic Kings, which was signed on April 17, 1492. Known as the *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe*, it reveals how Colón negotiated from a position of prominence and power.

The future admiral asked for huge rewards and the fact that the monarchs attributed all that he asked for, such as titles, powers, privileges, and profits hints at Colón's true social status. A crown would never attribute a commoner or a lower-class nobleman half the rewards that the monarchs of Castile agreed to give Don Cristóbal. He had not yet done anything useful for Castile, but they were already agreeing to reward him with all that he requested.

Perhaps the oldest copy of that contract was entered in the records of the Secretary Juan de Coloma, in the volume *Diversorum Sigilli Secreti*.⁵⁸⁶ It was this Juan de Coloma who negotiated the *Capitulaciones* on behalf of the crown of Castile. The text begins with "The things asked for and that Your Highnesses give and grant to **Don** Christóval de Colón", and some of these things in the contract were the following:⁵⁸⁷

- Your Highnesses [...] have made from now on the said Don Cristóbal Colón your **Admiral** on all those islands and mainland [...] and after he dies, onto his heirs [...] the same way that Don Alonso Enríquez, Admiral Major of Castile, has and his predecessors had in the said office, and in their districts. *Plaze a Sus Altezas* (It pleases Their Highness). *Juan de Coloma*.

⁵⁸⁶ Contiene las capitulaciones que Cristóbal Colón firmó con los monarcas Fernando II de Aragón y Isabel I de Castilla, en Santa Fe el 17 de abril de 1492, pocos meses después de la toma de Granada. En sus capítulos se estipulan las condiciones con las que partirá Colón en su primer viaje, que supuso el descubrimiento de América el mismo año. Copia registral del secretario Juan de Coloma en un volumen de la serie "Diversorum Sigilli Secreti". La denominada "carta magna del descubrimiento" aparece en los registros de la Corona de Aragón. Los autores de las Capitulaciones son los Reyes. Ambos autorizaron con su rúbrica, el 17 de abril de 1492, la empresa colombina ... El registro quedó ubicado en el volumen correspondiente de la serie Diversorum Sigilli secreti. Se siguió de este modo el funcionamiento cotidiano de la Cancillería, que se basaba en la práctica de copiar todas las ordenanzas, pragmáticas, concordias y licencias expedidas y selladas en el Libro Registro correspondiente, vigilado por el Protonotario, jefe del personal de la escribanía regia y el que hacía observar las Ordenanzas u "Ordinacions" de 1344. *Capitulaciones del Almirante don Cristóbal Colón o "de Santa Fe"*, 1492-04-17, Santa Fe de la Vega de Granada. ARCHIVO DE LA CORONA DE ARAGÓN, ES.08019.ACA/ ACA, CANCELLERÍA, Registros, NÚM.3569, folios 135v-136v.

⁵⁸⁷ Las cosas suplicadas e que Vuestras Altezas dan and otorgan a Don Christóval de Colón. *Ibidem*

- Your Highnesses make the said Cristóbal Colón your **Viceroy** and Governor General in all the said continents and islands [...] It pleases Their Highness. Juan de Coloma.
- Of any and all goods, whether precious stones, gold, silver, spices, [...] within the limits of the said Admiralty, that from now on Your Highnesses favor the said Don Cristóbal and want him to have and keep **one tenth of everything**. – It pleases Their Highness. Juan de Coloma.
- Due to the preeminence of his position as Admiral, it is his right to know such claims. It pleases Your Highnesses that he, or his lieutenant, and no other judge know such claim and thus grant it to him starting now. It pleases Their Highness if it belongs to the said office of Admiral [...] Juan de Coloma.
- All ships outfitted for said trade and commerce [...] the said Don Cristóbal Colón [...] may also have and take **as profit one eighth** of what results from such fleets. It pleases Their Highness. Juan de Coloma.
- They are granted and dispatched [...] I the King. I the Queen. By order of the king and queen: Juan de Coloma. Registered Calcena.

This contract is astonishing: First of all, we must understand that Don Cristóbal had been in Castile from 1484 to 1492, seven years of pestering the Catholic Kings to finance his voyage. Once the kings decided to support his voyage, it was not enough for him to simply accept the financial support that he worked so hard to achieve. The monarchs were compelled by Friar Juan Pérez, Colón's agent,⁵⁸⁸ into signing this contract. The Crown of Castile gave a person who had not yet done anything the posts, titles, and privileges he demanded — it seems that the kings merely accepted the demands without trying to negotiate:

They have the appearance of a letter of grant, but a quasi-contractual legal relationship is hidden under this text, inasmuch as it lacks two of the essential notes of a magnanimous

⁵⁸⁸ Ésta se llevó a cabo por dos preciosos personajes, el secretario Juan de Coloma, representando a los Reyes Católicos, y fray Juan Pérez, defendiendo las aspiraciones y los intereses del futuro descubridor. RUMEAU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *Nueva luz sobre las capitulaciones de Santa Fe de 1492 concertadas entre los Reyes Católicos y Cristóbal Colón: estudio institucional y diplomático*, Editorial CSIC, 1985, 50.

*concession, unilateralism, on the one hand, and the recognition of accomplished services, on the other.*⁵⁸⁹

Would a person without noble lineage, authority, or high status be able to demand an agreement be reached in which the court would agree to make him Admiral and a Viceroy? A person of plebian birth would not be elevated to an Admiral or Viceroy, even for an extraordinary feat such as discovering new lands. The fact that Colón's high titles were agreed to in advance shows that Don Cristóbal was accepted as an elite nobleman, as Janina Klawe points out:

*Is it credible that in the 15th century an unknown sailor and without any [noble] status, coming from a foreign plebeian family, is it credible, we repeat, that such a man would dare to present such high demands to a king? If even a Fernão Teles, a great Portuguese noble, Captain of Flores and Corvo islands, who had provided the king with extraordinary services, and who volunteered to discover other islands in the Atlantic, only asked for and received the donation of whatever islands he discovered?*⁵⁹⁰

Klawe's disbelief of a plebeian Colón is well-founded, especially when compared to Sebastian Elcano's case. Elcano, who completed the circumnavigation voyage in 1522 that Magalhães had started, wrote a letter to King Carlos I requesting rewards. Some of those rewards included becoming a knight of the prestigious Order of Santiago and made Captain General of the next Spanish fleet.⁵⁹¹ He was denied these requests and was forced to sail as an underling to Jofre de Loyasa. Elcano's requests were minor in comparison to the Admiral and Viceroy titles granted to Don Cristóbal Colón.

⁵⁸⁹ Tienen la apariencia de una carta de merced, pero se oculta bajo este dictado una relación jurídica cuasi contractual, por cuanto carece de dos de las notas esenciales de una concesión graciosa, la unilateralidad, por un lado, y el reconocimiento de servicios prestados, por otro. *Idem*, 52.

⁵⁹⁰ Será crível que no século XV um marinheiro ignorado e sem nenhum prestígio, oriundo de uma modesta família estrangeira, será crível, repetimos, que um tal homem se atrevesse a apresentar ao rei condições tão exageradas? Se mesmo um Fernão Teles, grande senhor português, Donatário das ilhas Flores e Corvo, que prestou ao rei assinalados serviços, e que se prontificou a descobrir outras ilhas no Atlântico, só pediu e recebeu a doação das ilhas que descobrisse? KLAWE, Janina Z., *Bartolomeu Dias e a viagem de Cristóvão Colón*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época. Actas, Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1989, Vol. II, 263.

⁵⁹¹ Elcano le pide bastantes cosas al rey Carlos I [...] ¿Pero cómo se atreve a pedirle a Carlos I el hábito de la Orden de Santiago!?!? https://elpais.com/cultura/2017/09/21/actualidad/1505951978_854948.html

Can anyone imagine the same Colombo described in the *Assereto*, who was not even able to acquire sugar for Di Negro, in a place where sugar was everywhere, not only conceiving such a contract as the *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe* but also getting the kings to sign off on it?

However, things did not go as planned for the famous navigator. Although it seemed to him that his contract was infallible through the signatures of the kings, and although he held the posts and positions of Viceroy, Governor, and Admiral, it was all useless against Francisco de Bobadilla, the inquisitor and judge sent by those same monarchs to the New World to arrest him in 1500:⁵⁹²

The outraged Kings decided to take away his governance, sending Commander Francisco de Bobadilla, to govern this island and all these lands.⁵⁹³ They gave Bobadilla faculties and the name of Investigator, so that from the start he could enter this island, and also the capacity of Governor [...] they gave him very comprehensive orders, and, among them, many letters and blank certifications.⁵⁹⁴

Our favor and will is that Commander Francisco de Bobadilla have, for us, the government and office of justice of said islands [...] having seen our Charter, without any other allegation or delay or jusion, receive the said Commander [...] as our Governor and Judge of said islands.⁵⁹⁵

The *Capitulaciones* gave Colón the right to implement justice, but his adversarial conduct in the new colony, where he mistreated noble Castilians who were rebellious against a foreigner's

⁵⁹² Cuando la Reina, que santa gloria haya, y yo, lo enviamos por gobernador a essa isla. *Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar*, Segunda Serie, Publicada por La Real Academia de la Historia, T. 7, I de los Pleitos de Colón, Madrid, 1892, xxii.

⁵⁹³ Los Reyes indignados proveyeron de quitarle la gobernación, enviando al comendador Francisco de Bobadilla, que esta isla y todas estas tierras gobernase. LAS CASAS, T. II, 199-200.

⁵⁹⁴ Diéronle provisiones y nombre de Pesquisidor, con que al principio en esta isla entrase, y también de Gobernador [...] diéronle muy cumplidos despachos, y, entre ellos, muchas cartas y cédulas en blanco. *Idem*, 473.

⁵⁹⁵ Nuestra merced y voluntad es, que el comendador Francisco de Bobadilla tenga, por Nos, la gobernación y oficio del Juzgado desas dichas islas y tierra firme, por todo el tiempo que nuestra merced y voluntad fuere, con los oficios de justicia y jurisdicción civil y criminal, Alcaldías y alguacilazgos dellas, por que vos mandamos á todos y á cada uno de vos, que luego, vista esta nuestra Carta, sin otra alegación ni tardanza ni jusion, recíbades del dicho Comendador el juramento y solemnidad que en tal caso se acostumbra hacer, el cual por él hecho, le rescibais por nuestro Juez Gobernador desas dichas islas y tierra firme. *Idem*, 483.

control over them, even hanging noble Castilians for insubordination, brought him a bad reputation in the kingdom, as Don Hernando related:

*Look at the children of the Admiral of the Mosquitoes, of the one who has discovered lands of vanity and deceit for the graves and misery of the Castilian noblemen.*⁵⁹⁶

The court's perception that Colón was deceiving them about those lands being India and rumors that he planned to revolt with the New World contributed to his imprisonment. In 1500, Don Cristóbal was deposed by Bobadilla and sent in handcuffs to Castile with his two brothers. As soon as Colón arrived in Castile, Queen Isabel released him immediately, apologizing for the mistreatments he had received, as the queen herself wrote:

*And be certain that your arrest **weighed heavily on us**, and you saw very well, and everyone clearly learned, that as soon as we heard of it, we immediately ordered that it be remedied, and you know the **deference** with which we have always ordered that you be treated.*⁵⁹⁷

And here, again, we must consider whether someone of a low social pedigree, who had put noble Castilians to death by hanging, would be released as soon as the ship touched Castile's port without even holding a hearing to review the inquiry that Bobadilla used to arrest him. Would a queen apologize for the mistreatment of a person with commoner blood, regardless of how noble that commoner presumed himself to be in his own mind? Would a queen order her subjects to always treat such a person with his due reverence?

⁵⁹⁶ Et era tanta la loro sfacciateza, che, sé il Re Catolico vsciua fuori, tutti lo circondauano, e toglieuanlo in mezo, gridando paga, paga. Et, se per auentura io & mio fratello, ch'erauamo paggi della Serenissima Reina, passauamo doue essi erano, gridauano fino al cielo, & ci perseguitauano, dicendo, Ecco i figliuoli dell'Ammiraglio de' Mosciolini, di colui, che ha trouate terre di vanità, & d'inganno, per sepoltura, & miseria de' gentilhuomini Castigliani; soggiugnendo molte altre maluagità. Perche noi ci guardammo di non passar loro auanti. HISTORIE, Cap. LXXXV, 189.

⁵⁹⁷ Y tened por cierto que de **vuestra prision nos peso mucho**, y bien lo vistes vos y lo conocieron todos claramente pues que **luego quelo sopimos lo** mandamos remediar, y sabeys el favor conque os avemos mandado tratar siempre, y agora estamos mucho mas en vos honrrar y tratar muy bien, y las merçedes que vos tenemos fechas vos seran guardadas entera mente, segund forma y tenor de nuestros privilegios que deltas teneys, syn yr encosa contra ellas, y vos y vuestros fijos gozareys dellas como es razon, y si neçesario fuere confirmarlas de nuevo las confirmaremos, y a vuestro fijo mandaremos poner en la posesyon de todo ello. Y en mas que esto tenemos voluntad de vos honrrar y fazer merçedes, y de vuestros fijos y hermanos, nos ternemos el cuydado que es razon, y todo esto se podra fazer yendo vos en buen ora, y quedando el cargo a vuestro fijo, como esta dicho. STEVENS, Benjamin Franklin, *Christopher Columbus His Own Book of Privileges 1502, Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript in the Archives of the Foreign Office in Paris*, London, 1893, 210.

It is also unacceptable to imagine that Don Cristóbal would keep the secret of his noble bloodline from his two sons. The fact that their Portuguese relatives (including a countess and a marquise) lived with his children in Seville. Not only was Violante Moniz D. Diogo's Portuguese aunt, but the Second Admiral also knew that the countess of Penamacor was his second-cousin.⁵⁹⁸ This proves that the sons had to know their true lineage.

Perhaps Don Hernando Colón and his brother Don Diogo could shed some light on the true lineage of the navigator through their words to the Court of Castile, as the family's first lawsuit unfolded over the titles and posts granted in the 1492 contract. Don Cristóbal's sons claimed that the court could not refuse to honor the 1492 contract with their deceased father, because "the said Admiral, my father, was neither a vassal nor a subject of Your Highnesses", "he gave the Indies to you, neither being your vassal nor your subject nor belonging the said conquest to Your Highnesses", and "the said privileges and capitulations were contracted between Your Highnesses and my father as between a prince and a **non-subject**."⁵⁹⁹

These words, written to the Court of Castile, would certainly not be unfounded since the Court had to know the whole truth about Don Cristóbal's status. Colón was not a subject of the Kings of Castile, but at the same time those kings created a viceroy without there being any phrase in the *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe* that demanded his vassalage, even after being viceroy.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁸ Manda décima: E mando que de la dicha limosna del dicho diezmo serán [fean] dados por el dicho padre Don Fray Gaspar, ó por quien de tal cargo tuviese, para las necesidades de la **Condesa de Penamacor* mi tia**, sobre cien ducados que tiene recibidos, todo lo que faltare para el cumplimiento de lo que yo le mandé por una mi cédula; y este resto será pagado por partes ó juntamente, al albedrio y posibilidad del dicho padre Don Fray Gaspar. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb: son origine, sa vie...* T. II, 457-458. [*] HARRISSE wrote *Benanico*.

⁵⁹⁹ Es notorio quel Almirante mi padre vino nuevamente a servir vuestra Alteza con la empresa de las Ynidas e ge las dio, no siendo su vasalo ni súdito ni pertenesçiendo la conquista dellas a vuestra Alteza ... no hera su súdito y en lugar de premio e galardón de tan notable e gran servicio como fue dar ls Ynidas a vuestra Alteza, resçiba mengua y desonor... mi padre, no hera vasallo ny súbdito de sus Altezas, salvo que por les servir les ofresçió la empresa destas partes e, seyendo esto asy verdad, los dichos previllejos e Capitulaciones fueron echos entre sus Altezas e mi padre como entre príncipe y no súbdito. COLÓN DE CARVAJAL, Anunciada and PÉREZ-PRENDES MUÑOZ-ARRACO, José Manuel, *La herencia de Cristóbal Colón: estudio y colección documental de los mal llamados pleitos colombinos, 1492-1541*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas; Fundación Mapfre, Madrid, 2015, Vol. 1, I-88.

⁶⁰⁰ Si la donación ó enajenación se hiciera en persona no natural ni vecino del Reino ó extranjero del Reino, en tal caso la donación ó enajenación de las dichas cosas no vale ni debe ser guardada, de donde se concluye que pues el dicho D. Cirstóbal Colón era extranjero, no natural ni vecino del Reino ni morador en él, según la disposición de la dicha ley (Ordenamiento de Alcalá), la merced que fue hecha, aunque fuera para siempre e para sus herderos no valió ni se debe guardar, que según derecho común e leyes del Ordenamiento... BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?*, *Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 275.

Don Cristóbal needed to be from such an elite bloodline that he could be elevated to viceroy by kings of whom he was not even a subject.⁶⁰¹ To consider otherwise would be to not understand the society of the early Modern Age in which the discoverer was immersed, the politics in its courts, stages, and backrooms of power where he journeyed; and how the highest elites from one kingdom could travel and hold posts, govern towns and counties, and even sit on thrones in other kingdoms.⁶⁰²

In the face of all this, to imagine that Don Cristóbal would be able to keep his true identity secret from the court when making an introduction of himself to the same, as was the protocol, is to not deal with the reality of the time.

“The complete absence of personal details in Bernáldez, Pedro Martyr d'Anghiera, Marineo, Geraldini, the obvious errors of Las Casas and those of the author of the *Historie* also indicate that in Spain his compatriots and friends, even his own family, knew almost nothing of his past,” wrote Harris in 1884 wrongly convinced that Colón alone had managed to hide his past from the public.⁶⁰³

Let us imagine this scenario as it is reported in the commonly accepted biography - the Colombo weaver appears in Castile with his name changed to Colón and posing as a nobleman with a stolen coat of arms. How did the courts act in those days with any unknown foreigner who declared himself to be noble? Is it conceivable that the Catholic Monarchs would not be able to unravel the true lineage of a person who appeared before them right on the spot, or even in a few days after such an audience?

Not understanding the rules of verification of nobility and lineage that nobles were required to follow at the time has led many historians to accept that the Court of Castile did not really know anything about the identity of the navigator.

⁶⁰¹ A maioria dos indivíduos titulados na 2.^a dinastia é originária da camada superior da nobreza, e já possuíam à data da titulação, por herança ou casamento, um conjunto significativo de senhorios, ou até mesmo o próprio senhorio de que viriam a ser titulados. RODRIGUES, Miguel Jasmins e OLIVEIRA, Luís Filipe, “Um processo de reestruturação do domínio social da nobreza. A titulação da 2.^a dinastia”, *Revista de História Económica e Social*, nº 22, Janeiro-Abril, 1988, 84.

⁶⁰² The holy emperor Sigismund awarded to Prince Pedro [from Portugal] the County of Treviso near Venice, and Álvaro Gonçalves de Ataíde was made its governor. ROSA, *Columbus the untold story*, 2016, 29.

⁶⁰³ L'absence complète de détails personnels dans Bernáldez, dans Pedro Martyr d'Anghiera, dans Marineo, dans Geraldini, les erreurs manifestes de Las Casas, celles de l'auteur des *Historie*, indiquent aussi qu'en Espagne, ses compatriotes et ses amis, même sa propre famille, ne savaient presque rien de son passé. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, son Origine, sa Vie...*, T. I, 72.

We must accept what was normal at the time. Nobles needed to prove their nobility when arriving in a new kingdom if they wanted to be accepted as nobles in that new kingdom. If Don Cristóbal, his brothers and children were accepted as noblemen at the Court of Castile, then that court had solid evidence of their nobility.

Don Cristóbal made a contract between the monarchs of Castile as an equal, and not as a subject.⁶⁰⁴ He was so noble in blood that after being arrested for the murder of Castilian nobles in the New World, he was released with an apology from the Queen of Castile who wrote “your arrest weighted heavy on my heart ... as soon as I heard of it, I ordered it redressed!”⁶⁰⁵ All the high considerations the crown gave him means that they were dealing with a man of high noble lineage.

The major problem of this story is not limited to the uncertainties that are part of the initial mystery about Colón's life, lineage, and nationality. The biggest and most difficult part of this story is the sheer amount of falsehoods, misinformation, and disinformation, which has been written, accepted and repeated by authors in all parts of the world, century upon century.⁶⁰⁶ Without an easy way to verify documents, even if these documents have ever existed, few people would be in a position to refute so much erroneous information published over and over by acknowledged experts on *Columbus*!

Oviedo, for example, could not even get the simplest of the information correct, as Las Casas explains to us, “because Oviedo says that the Adelantado Don Bartolomé Colón arrived at this port of Santo Domingo on August 5, 1494, and this seems manifestly false, because he arrived at this island on April 14 of 1494, before the Admiral went to discover Cuba [...] Thus, it is all fables and embellishments that Oviedo makes on his own, or from those who pretended to know, but did not know.”⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁴ COLÓN DE CARVAJAL, Anunciada and PÉREZ-PRENDES MUÑOZ-ARRACO, José Manuel, *La herencia de Cristóbal Colón: estudio y colección documental de los mal llamados pleitos colombinos, 1492-1541*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas; Fundación Mapfre, Madrid, 2015, Vol. 1, I-88.

⁶⁰⁵ *Christopher Columbus His Own Book of Privileges* I502, Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript in the Archives of the Foreign Office in Paris, STEVENS, Benjamin Franklin, London, 1893, 210.

⁶⁰⁶ Imaginaria y supuesta es la nobleza de la estirpe del Almirante [...] según las leyes de la República de Génova, al dedicarse á um ofcio mecânico. ASENSIO, José María, *Cristóbal Colón: su vida, sus viajes, sus descubrimientos*, Espasa y Compañía, Barcelona, 1888, T. I, 18.

⁶⁰⁷ Porque dice Oviedo que llegó el Adelantado Don Bartolomé Colón a este puerto día de Sancto Domingo, a 5 de agosto del año 1494, y esto parece manifiesto ser falso, porque el llegó a esta isla en catorce días de abril del mismo año 94, antes que el Almirante viniese de descubrir a Cuba [...] Así que, esto es todo fábula y añiduras que hace Oviedo suyas, o de los que no sabían el hecho, que se lo refirieron, fingidas. LAS CASAS, T. II, 119.

A Noble with a Coat of Arms

In 1493, the Monarchs of Castile created a new Grant of Arms where they declare that Don Cristóbal already possessed a coat of arms before 1493, “your coat of arms that you have.”⁶⁰⁸ Analogous to other pieces of Colón’s life, his original coat of arms is also surrounded by confusion and distortions.⁶⁰⁹ In 1942 Gandia commented on what he believed to be the original coat of arms of the Admiral, stating:

*Those original arms were a field of gold with a blue band and a red chief. Colón’s descendants, as evidenced by the coat of arms published by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo in 1535, added a mantel to the primitive arms and in the fourth quarter placed five anchors.*⁶¹⁰

However, in the 1493 document the five anchors were already part of the fourth quarter, and it was Colón who modified the coat of arms in 1502, not his descendants. Gandia was dead wrong in his claim that it was the descendants who added the five anchors, as demonstrated by the 1493 Royal Charter of Arms - see Figure 22. It so happened that in 2006, after five centuries of being kept in the archives of the Dukes of Veragua, the 1493 Royal Grant of Arms was finally revealed in a study published in the *Cuadernos de Ayala*:

Taking as the main source of this study the original and unpublished grant of June 1493, unknown to most researchers, we proceed with an analysis of both the heraldic composition actually granted, as well as all those aspects that, directly or indirectly, are related to it.⁶¹¹

— Parece también la inconsideración de Oviedo que, en su Historia (defraudando y quitando la gloria y privilegio, que la bondad de Dios quiso que alcanzase, al que tan justa y condignamente ante todo el mundo. LAS CASAS, T. I, 290.

⁶⁰⁸ En el otro quarto baxo, a la mano yzquierda, **las armas vuestras que soliades tener**, las quales armas sean conosciadas por vuestras armas. MARTÍNEZ LLORENTE, Félix, *El escudo de armas de Cristóbal Colón*, 20.

⁶⁰⁹ Un bref résumé de l’histoire de la noblesse génoise au XV^e et au XVI^e siècle nous permettra de démontrer combien cette prétention est peu fondée, malgré les armoiries que Cristóbal Colón fournit au héraut d’armes des Rois-Catholiques, comme les tenant, de ses ancêtres, lorsque ces monarques l’anoblirent, le 20 mai 1493. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb, Son Origine, Sa Vie...* T. I, 160.

⁶¹⁰ Estas armas eran un campo de oro con una banda azul y el jefe de gules. Los descendentes de Colón, como se comprueba con el escudo que publicó Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo en 1535, agregaron una manteladura a las primitivas armas de Colón y en el cuarto cuartel colocaron cinco áncoras. GANDIA, Enrique de, *Historia de Cristóbal Colón Análisis crítico de las fuentes documentales y de los problemas Colombino*, Buenos Aires, 1942, 137.

⁶¹¹ Tomando con fuente principal de estudio el privilegio original e inédito de la merced, de junio de 1493, desconocido para la mayor parte de los investigadores, se procede a un análisis tanto de la composición heráldica efectivamente

Figure 22

The Charter of Arms as drawn in 1493 and signed by the Catholic Monarchs shows that the fourth quarter (arrow) already had the five gold anchors on a blue field.



Source: *La Real Provisión Original que los Reyes Católicos otorgaron a Colón, a subasta por más de un millón de euros*, https://www.abc.es/cultura/abci-real-provision-original-reyes-catolicos-otorgaron-colon-subasta-mas-millon-euros-201811221901_noticia.html

outorgada, como de todos aquellos aspectos que, directa o indirectamente, guardan relación con ella. MARTÍNEZ LLORENTE, Félix, *El escudo de armas de Cristóbal Colón. Estudio de un acrecentamiento heráldico*, Revista de la Federación Española de Genealogía y Heráldica, Cuadernos de Ayala 26 – Abril 2006. Universidad de Valladolid, 20.

Figure 23

Coat of arms inside Don Diogo's palace in Santo Domingo (A) and as it is drawn in Colón's 1502 Book of Privileges (B). Note that the colors on the first and second quarters are now those of the Monarchs of Castile and the of gold anchors on a blue field are much more prominent.



A (Source: Author photo 2001.)



B (Source: STEVENS, Benjamin Franklin, *Christopher Columbus His Own Book of Privileges 1502, Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript in the Archives of the Foreign Office in Paris, London, 1893.*)

Through this 1493 document, errors and misunderstandings surrounding the coat of arms in the history books were corrected, and more importantly, we have gained a better sense of the truth. Without knowing about the existence of the 1493 Grant of Arms, we had already written that the original coat of arms should be the one with the five golden anchors that we photographed in 2001, in Santo Domingo, as shown in Figure 23.

Historians debated and contradicted each other, but always working in the dark because the actual content of the royal charter was not known, as Gandia observed:

*Henry Harrisse, Vignaud, and others who repeated this assured that the Colón family did not possess any coat of arms and that the discoverer invented the one that he declared to the Catholic Monarchs that he possessed.*⁶¹²

Many historians were wrong about the coat of arms, not only because of the lack of documents, but also because of the levity with which they accepted that a person in those times could just steal a coat of arms and present it to a court as theirs.⁶¹³ However, when new documents come to light, we, as historians of this topic, are responsible for reading and studying this new information. In our 2006 publication we wrote that:

We disagree with those historians who accept with open arms the golden field with a blue stripe, because doing so, we would have to explain where the anchors in the lower quarter came from. Nobody can be sure about this because Colón couldn't put them there of his self-creation and if he did, they would have ordered him to remove them because they didn't belong to his coat of arms. The Queen's refusal to describe the elements in her letter means that historians can choose and assume as good any version that best fits their ideas.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² Henry Harrisse, Vignaud y demás repetidores aseguraron que la familia de Colón no poseyó ningún escudo y que el descubridor inventó el que aseguró poseer a los Reyes Católicos [...] Las armas de la familia de Cristóbal Colón no se conocen [...] no se ha hallado ningún escudo de los Colón a que pertenecía el descubridor. GANDIA, Enrique de, *Historia de Cristóbal Colon Análisis crítico...* 137.

⁶¹³ MORISON, 9.

⁶¹⁴ Discordamos com os outros historiadores que aceitam de braços abertos o campo dourado com faixa azul, porque nessa altura, teríamos de explicar de onde vieram as âncoras do quartel inferior. Ninguém pode ter certezas sobre isto porque Colón não as podia colocar lá por sua autocriação e se as colocasse ter-lhe-iam mandado que as retirasse por não pertencerem ao seu brasão. A recusa da Rainha em descrever a patente na sua carta faz com que os historiadores possam escolher e assumir como boa a versão que melhor se encaixar nas suas ideias. Foram já muitos os historiadores que escreveram que a versão correcta era a da faixa azul sobre campo dourado, com o

There are two reasons why historians accepted **the blue band on a gold field with a red chief** as the original coat of arms - first, they accepted the description of the shield made by Oviedo as an accurate representation of the Admiral's original coat of arm;⁶¹⁵ and second, they attributed the five anchors to an addition made by Colón or his son, for wanting to usurp "symbols of the Admirals of Castile."

Both conclusions were wrong. They ignored that Oviedo (like Andrés Bernaldez) made many mistakes in his book. Furthermore, Oviedo wrote many years after Colón's death, and Colón had already used the five anchors in his *Book of Privileges* in 1502. Therefore, the original version drawn by Don Cristóbal supplants Oviedo's inaccurate description and shows the evident error of the historians. One truth keeps being exposed: over these 500 years, no author has been able to correctly report all the details of Don Cristóbal Colón's life.

It is perplexing how such an important figure in our modern history is surrounded by so much wrong information, lies and doubtful facts to the point that, in 30 years of research and with more than 4,000 books and documents read, we have never managed to find a single book with a 100% solid and verifiable version of the facts.

chefe vermelho, mas apresentam para tal argumentos que não nos parecem válidos. Os motivos que os levam a aceitar este desenho são, em primeiro lugar, o facto de aceitarem a descrição das armas de Colón feita por Fernández Oviedo; em segundo lugar, o facto de atribuírem as cinco âncoras a um acrescento feito pelo seu filho, por querer usar "símbolos dos Almirantes de Castela" dizem eles. As duas conclusões estão erradas. Eles ignoram que Oviedo (tal como Andrés Bernaldez, o Cura de los Palácios) cometeu muitos erros no seu livro. Além disso, Oviedo escreveu muitos anos após a morte de Colón; contudo, Colón já usara as cinco âncoras no seu Livro de Privilégios em 1502. Portanto, a versão original traçada por Don Cristóbal Colón suplanta a descrição inexacta de Oviedo e mostra o evidente erro dos historiadores [...] As âncoras aparecem, sem dúvida, no Livro de Privilégios de Colón, não tendo sido, portanto, obtidas pelos seus descendentes, o que faz com que nos inclinemos para a possibilidade de estas cinco âncoras fazerem parte das suas armas originais. Como se pode ver, uma questão continua a vir sempre à tona: é que ao longo destes 500 anos, nenhum historiador logrou relatar correctamente os pormenores da história de Colón. Espanta-nos como é possível que uma figura tão importante na história do mundo moderno esteja rodeada de tanta informação errada, de tantas mentiras e factos duvidosos, como foi possível constatar nos livros de história dedicados a Cristóbal Colón, a ponto de, em 15 anos de investigação e com mais de mil livros lidos, nunca termos conseguido encontrar uma só versão sólida e passível de confirmação de todos os factos. ROSA and STEELE, *O Mistério Colombo Revelado*, 517-521.

⁶¹⁵ Le dieron las mismas armas reales de Castilla y de Leon, mezcladas y repartidas con otras que assi mesmo le concedieron de nuevo; aprobando é confirmando de su auctoridad real las otras armas **antiguas de su linaje** [...] ee el otro quarto siniestro del escudo ay cinco ancoras de oro en campo azul como insignia apropiada al mismo oficio y titulo de almirante perpetuo destas Yndias: y **en la parte inferior del escudo las armas de la prosapia del linaje de Colom**: cõviene saber, un chieph, o cabeça, o parte alta de goles: vel sanguina y de alli abaxo una vanda azul en campo de oro. OVIEDO Y VALDÉS, Gonzalo Fernández de, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias, Islas y Tierra-Firme del Mar Océano*, Publicala la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 1851, x.

Both Henry HARRISSE⁶¹⁶ and Henry VIGNAUD⁶¹⁷ denied that Admiral Colón had any coat of arms before 1493, because they claimed he was only a modest Colombo weaver who would not be permitted to carry a coat of arms. Others even invented, without an ounce of proof, that the original coat of arms that Cristóbal Colón had before 1493 would be descriptive arms with doves (*colombos*) from the ancient shield of the house of Colombo from Plaisance.⁶¹⁸

Although no coat of arms older than 1493 has been found,⁶¹⁹ the coat of arms from Santo Domingo shows the “original arms” according to the 1493 Royal Grant of Arms,⁶²⁰ as published in 2006 by Félix Martínez Llorente in the *Cuadernos de Ayala*. There is nothing better than an original document to shed light on so much darkness and help discard the erroneous information propagated over five centuries.

Martínez Llorente also acknowledged that the Admiral and his brothers had the status of nobles, with the title of **Don**, which was at the time **reserved and of exclusive use by the highest ranks of nobility** who possessed a known estate from their ancestors.⁶²¹ However, assuming that

⁶¹⁶ Cet écusson douteux, qu’il produisit lorsque Ferdinand et Isabelle l’autorisèrent, par une formule banale, à insérer ses armes dans le magnifique blason qu’ils venaient de lui octroyer, trahit aussi des prétentions à une origine patricienne tout à fait improbable. Il dut, dès lors, éviter les indiscretions de nature à divulguer la condition si modeste de ses proches, et rarement parler de commencements aussi difficiles qu’obscurs. Ses conversations, lorsqu’il s’agissait de son passé, ne portèrent, sans doute, que sur sa carrière maritime, Dont certains détails étaient évidemment colorés de ce ton vif que les méridionaux apportent dans leurs récits, tandis que d’autres circonstances de sa vie, moins intéressantes à ses yeux, étaient naturellement passées sous silence. HARRISSE, Henry, *Christophe Colomb: son origine, sa vie...*, 71-72.

⁶¹⁷ À ce moment donc Colomb prétendait avoir un blason qui lui appartenait. On dira peut-être que rien n’indique qu’il Donnât ce blason pour être celui de sa famille ou de ses ancêtres, et qu’on peut admettre qu’il s’agissait seulement d’armes qu’il avait prises après ses capitulations avec les Rois Catholiques qui lui conféraient une distinction nobiliaire. VIGNAUD, Henry, *Études critiques sur la vie de Colomb avant ses découvertes*, H. Welter, 1905, 75.

⁶¹⁸ *Idem*, 94-95.

⁶¹⁹ GANDIA, Enrique de, *Historia de Cristóbal Colon Análisis crítico de las fuentes documentales y de los problemas Colombino*, Buenos Aires, 1942, 137.

⁶²⁰ ROSA and STEELE, *O Mistério Colombo Revelado*, 517-518.

⁶²¹ Es indudable que, aunque sin ser determinante para el tema que nos ocupa, la condición no noble del Almirante y de los más significados miembros de su linaje conocido -sus dos hermanos, Bartolomé y Diego-, resulta evidente a la luz de las mercedes de reconocimiento que a la misma, y de manera privilegiada, vendrán a otorgarles los Reyes Católicos en 1492 y 1493. La utilización de dicho tratamiento se **encontraba reservada** por aquellas fechas, **con exclusividad**, a aquellas personas que disfrutaban de una condición jurídica personal nobiliaria. De ahí que su simple concesión por el rey produjera efectos terminantes en el beneficiario, principalmente probatorios de su privilegiado status personal, al estimarse que se trataba de un tratamiento de dignidad y honor **que bajo ningún concepto podría recaer en persona villana**, aunque dicha condición hubiese sido intencionadamente fingida -o interesadamente supuesta- por la Corona, de manera graciosa, como era el caso. Uno de los requisitos principales de todo linaje que se preciara era el disponer de un solar conocido en el que

the admiral was the weaver Colombo, thus completely disregarding Colón's life and family connections in Portugal, Martínez Llorente accepted the impossible possibility that Colón was not noble before 1493.⁶²² This provides a perfect example of how researchers take the position of always trying to deny the social norms of Colón's time in order to make the known facts of Colón's noble life fit the myths of Colombo's commoner life, thus maintaining the propagation of flawed conclusions.

Even today, 15 years after its publication, there are researchers who are unaware of the existence of the original 1493 charter of arms and continue to propagate information contrary to the truth. As an example, an encyclopedia about the navigator, published in 2016, continues to disperse incorrect information about the coat of arms, claiming that the navigator did not belong to the nobility before moving to Castile; and naming the Colom family of Aragon by the wrong name of Colón.⁶²³ In addition to describing Colón's original arms incorrectly as a "field of gold with a blue band and a red chief", the author of the encyclopedia makes reference to our theory of a Colón "with Polish royal blood", but with clear evidence of never having read our research.⁶²⁴ For, if they had read it, they would have already seen the image of the correct coat of arms on the grant from 1493 with the five gold anchors.

The Grant of Arms signed by the Catholic Monarchs does not describe the original coat of arms, it merely says:

radicaban los legitimadores antecedentes familiares. MARTÍNEZ LLORENTE, Félix, *El escudo de armas de Cristóbal Colón...*, 14.

⁶²² El padre de Cristóbal Colón -Doménico Colombo- aun siendo de origen humilde -presuntamente laneros. *Ibidem*.

⁶²³ It is not known when Columbus first conceived of **acquiring nobility status**, with a title and a coat of arms, as a reward for his achievement—but probably not before 1491 [...] (in 1502) **he added** a new sinistre quarter to represent the office of Admiral of the Ocean Sea. This consisted of a group of **five golden anchors** arranged horizontally in a blue field on **the family arms, blazoned as blue bend on a gold field with a red chief**, were now situated on the base between the third and fourth quarters in arched point [...] If Columbus had pretended to be of noble origin, an origin proposed but with no basis in fact by his son Fernando Colón, he would in all likelihood have selected pretentious symbols, like a flock of doves, appropriate to such a claim. A dove, for which the word in Italian is *colombo*, is generally featured in all known arms of patrician families bearing the Columbus name, including the Colombo families and the Colóns (*sic*) of Castille and Aragón. BEDING, Silvio A., *The Christopher Columbus Encyclopedia*, Springer, 2016, 127-128.

⁶²⁴ It is to be noted that none of the ingenious promoters of the "real Columbus," whether Portuguese, Jewish, Catalan, French, or Polish origin, has been able to show that his contender had a coat of arms bearing a blue bend in gold field under a red chief. *Idem*, 129.

*We give you license and authority so that you can carry and bring on your tapestries and shields and in any other parts where you want to display them, your coat of arms [...] and on the lower quarter, on the left side [right side facing the viewer], the “coat of arms that you customarily have.”*⁶²⁵

The text above shows the Crown of Castile accepted that the Admiral already had his own coat of arms before 1493. Many have faulted the crown for not describing in detail the original coat of arms. In a normal letter of arms, all the elements are described in minute detail so that the drawings could be verified. The fact that the Crown of Castile did not describe Colón's original shield design and wrote only the “arms to you customarily have,” must be seen as another attempt to not reveal his identity. Therefore, one must consider that the drawing on the fourth quarter of the shield, considered to be the Admiral's lineage, may itself be disguised in order to not reveal his actual lineage.

A nobleman or noblewoman's coat of arms could be used to identify their lineage, or at minimum their own identity. It is even possible that the gold anchors in the 1493 charter could be crosses disguised as anchors to maintain Colón's identity secret. The coat of arms of his relative, George Bissipat, *Colombo the Younger*, was a cross over a crescent which looks like an anchor - see Figure 24.

There was a fundamental secret in the genealogy of Don Cristóbal Colón that could not be revealed to anyone, and all the people involved must have known about that secret. In the private chapel of the Dukes of Veragua one finds the first known genealogy of this noble house, which was elaborated in 1793. Note that in this genealogy the three brothers, Cristóbal, Bartolomé, and Diego have no parents. It was as if they originated out of nowhere - see Figure 25.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁵ Vos damos licencia e facultad para que podades traher e traygades, en vuestros reposteros e escudos de armas e en las otras partes Donde las quisiéredes poner, demás de vuestras armas, encima dellas, vn castillo e vn león, que nos vos mandamos por armas, convyene a saber [...] y en el otro quarto baxo, a la mano derecha, vnas yslas doradas en ondas de mar; y en el otro quarto baxo, a la mano yzquierda, **las armas vuestras que soliades tener**, las quales armas sean conosçidas por vuestras armas e de vuestros fijos e desçendientes, para sienpre jamás. MARTÍNEZ LLORENTE, Félix, *El escudo de armas de Cristóbal Colón*, 20.

⁶²⁶ Columbus Chapel and Museum, <https://www.boalmuseum.com/columbus-chapel.html>.

Figure 24

The signature, seal, and coat of arms of Prince George Bissipat, Colombo the Younger. Notice on his seal how the cross and crescent resembles an anchor.



ex alto

Source: *Mémoires de la Société Académique d'Archéologie, Sciences & Arts du Département de L'Oise*, Tome XIV, Beauvais, Imprimerie de D. Pere, rue Saint-Jean, 1889.

Figure 25

In the first known genealogy of House of Colón, drawn up in 1793, Don Cristóbal Colon, (No. 1) and his two brothers, (No. 2 and No. 3) have no parents. No. 4 is Don Diogo Colón from whom all legitimate Colón's descend.



Source: Columbus Chapel and Museum, author photo 2004.

This genealogy drawing shows that even 300 years after becoming famous, the secret of the Colón brothers' pedigree still remained hidden. Is it not plausible that the family members did not know who the three brothers had for parents. It would be more likely that even in 1793 the family still understood that the identity of Colón's progenitor was to be kept a secret forever.

By today's standards, it may seem impossible that so many people were able to maintain the Colón brothers' secret so well and for so long. However, we must understand a fundamental fact - Colón's true identity was known by many on both sides of the border. They knew who he was but referred to him only by his invented name instead of his real name.⁶²⁷

The invented persona, the one the navigator became famous with in 1493, is the one written about in the chronicles and the one we all came to know him as.

We have a very comparable case in our time with *Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr.* The whole world knows what Cassius Clay looks like, yet very few people know who Cassius Clay is. This Cassius renounced his original name to adopt a new identity. In 1964, the boxing champion announced that he no longer would be named Cassius Clay, but instead Muhammad Ali. This invented persona is the one everyone knows and writes about. The famous Marilyn Monroe's real name was Norma Jean Dougherty. Even though we live in the information age, Cassius Clay and Norma Jean Dougherty are barely known by anyone.

Likewise, Don Cristóbal's true identity was obscured by the personality that became famous and written about and carries the name the whole world knows him as.

The many people that knew Don Cristóbal's true identity did not think about writing the secret down and putting it in a time capsule so that future generations would know it; nor would they dare to do so, if the secret was so essential to conceal!

In the society in which they lived information was passed along in two ways, handwritten and oral. Some families may have passed Don Cristóbal's secret along for a few generations, but we all know that oral history tends to get lost in time.

When all those who knew Don Cristóbal's secret died, not having written it down, the secret of the identity died with them.

⁶²⁷ Los Reyes respetaron siempre el misterio del origen de los tres Colones. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?, Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 287.

Can the secret of Colón's progenitor ever be revealed? It might be possible, through forensic sciences and DNA profiles to reach a scientific conclusion as to whom Don Cristóbal Colón was and where his ancestors lived, if there is the will among the Iberian academies to carry out such scientific analyzes.

Unless we locate a document related to the marriage of Filipa Moniz or are able to connect Colón's DNA to some family name, the puzzle of the true identity of Don Cristóbal Colón will continue to be a perfect crime without the possibility of being solved.

CHAPTER 6

A LIFETIME OF LEARNING

The Admiral's life according to his writings

"To Gutiérrez, your solicitor, I pray to God that he never lacks paper, because he writes more than Ptolemy and Colón, the one who found the Indies," wrote Don Francisco de Zúñiga in a letter to the Marquis of Pescara circa 1525.⁶²⁸

The admirable thing immediately apparent in Don Cristóbal's letters and notes is the clear evidence of his very extensive education, research, and hands-on practice. It is instantly understood that he was a person who spent many years in schooling and studying many subjects and sciences. Don Cristóbal certainly received an education at the level of the highest nobles of his time. Only through long years of study could he have mastered the various sciences, languages, and arts that he mastered. To understand his vast education, one needs only to leaf through his *Book of Prophecies*. Some ninety authors were utilized by the Admiral as its foundation.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁸ Carta de Don Francisco de Zúñiga, criado privado do imperador Carlos V, ao marquês de Pescara. CASTRO, Adolfo, *Curiosidades bibliográficas: colección escogida de obras raras de amenidad y erudición: con apuntes biográficos de los diferentes autores*, Biblioteca de autores españoles... Vol. 36, Rivadeneyra, 1855, 59.

⁶²⁹ ANCIENTS: Aristotle, Julius Caesar, St. Augustine, Eratosthenes, Josephus, St. Ambrose, Strabo, Marine of Tyre, St. Gregory, Ptolemy, Diodorus Siculus, Isidore, Seneca, Julius Capitoline, St. John Chrysostom, Solino, Ovid, St. Jerome, Plato, Pinda. MEDIEVAL: Saint Thomas Aquinas, Alfonso de Zamora, Pedro Comestor, Jean Gerson, Ben-Kothair-Ahmed, Averroes, Francis Meron, Breviary, Sacrobosco, Nicholas of Lira, Bede the Venerable, Duns Escoto, Pedro de Ailly, Valafrido Strabo, Albumazar, King Alfonso X, Pope Pius II, Regiomontano, Paolo Toscanelli, Rogério Bacon, Joachim de Fiore, John Mandeville, Aquila, Merlin, the Koran, Marco Polo, Alfragano, Almanac, Rabbi Samuel, Avicenna, Alfonso Tostato, Nicholas Secundino. BIBLE: Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, 1st Books of Kings, Ezra, Judith, Esther, 1st Book Maccabees, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Wisdom, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Revelation, Romans, Corinthians, Thessalonians, Second Letter to Timothy, Letter to the Hebrews. KLING, August and WEST, Delno C., *Libro de Las Profecías by Christopher Columbus, Cristoforo Colombo*, United Kingdom, University of Florida Press, 1991.

Among the expertise his studies provided him are the languages of Portuguese, Castilian, and Latin, in addition to familiarity with Greek and Hebrew.⁶³⁰ In the sciences he was acquainted with geography, cosmography, geometry, cartography, theology, mathematics, advanced navigation techniques, and even encryption. We know Bobadilla confiscated secret encrypted letters that Don Cristóbal wrote to his brother Don Bartolomé.

Don Bartolomé himself was not far behind Don Cristóbal, because aside from encryption, he wrote at least Castilian and Latin. Don Bartolomé was so well educated in Cartography and Navigation that he equaled his brother. In 1493, following written instructions left by Don Cristóbal, Don Bartolomé captained a fleet of ships directly to Haiti without ever having sailed there.

This fact alone proves two things: first, Don Cristóbal was so knowledgeable that he knew how to make a precise sailing chart, with correct routes, degrees and distances to leave for his brother; second, Don Bartolomé was so experienced that he knew how to follow a map and navigate 4,000 miles straight to where his brother was. We can thus show that Admiral Colón was not an inexperienced navigator who was disoriented during the First Voyage, as is commonly accepted.

As Las Casas wrote, Don Bartolomé joined his two brothers in the difficult task of building the first colony in the wildernesses of the New World:

*The Admiral had already sailed with his 17 ships, however, he found a note with instructions that the Admiral left him, in case Bartolomé Colón showed up at a future date. After reading the note, he left Seville for the court, which was in Valladolid, at the beginning of the year 1494 [...] the Catholic Kings received him with great joy and kindness. Then they titled him **Don** Bartolomé [...] He arrived on this island of Hispaniola on 14th of April of the year 1494.*⁶³¹

⁶³⁰ Neither have I ever found a Latin or **Greek scripture** that certifiably says where in the world the terrestrial Paradise is located. TEXTOS, 215.

⁶³¹ Porque el Almirante ya era partido con sus 17 navios, halló empero una instrucción que le dejaba el Almirante para si en algún tiempo Bartolomé Colón pareciera. Vista esta instrucción, partióse de Sevilla para la corte, que estaba en Valladolid, por el principio del año de 1494 [...] recibieronlo los católicos Reyes con mucha alegría y benignidad; llamáronle luego **Don** Bartolomé [...] Llegó á esta isla Española en 14 días de Abril del año de 1494. LAS CASAS, II, 79.

A very important fact that must be noted in this text is that the kings of Castile gave Bartolomé Colón the title of **Don**, a title reserved for high nobility, awarded by royal decree⁶³² and accordingly regulated in its use at the time that people could get disciplined for using it without the right to do so.⁶³³ What great feat had Bartolomé performed to receive such a noble title besides showing up at the Court? Having been granted the title of Don, a title reserved for the most privileged nobles, upon arriving in Castile and without having done anything yet for the kingdom should serve as further confirmation that the Monarchs of Castile knew the Colón brothers belonged to the high nobility, with a birthright to be entitled Don.

Both Bartolomé and Cristóbal had extensive experience in sailing. In a letter from Don Cristóbal written to the kings on July 7, 1503, he complained about how his ships had been denied entry into the Port of Santo Domingo in order to save themselves, because of a hurricane that was approaching. Facing the denial of entry to the port and the fury of the hurricane, the fleet had no choice but to turn its bows towards the sea and escape the obvious danger of ending up in pieces on the shore. Don Bartolomé, who was captaining one of the four ships, managed to survive by sailing through the storm. His feat in saving the ship is praised in his brother's excerpt below:

*The storm was terrible [...] The ship Sospechoso had put out to sea, to escape, towards Gallega island; she lost the ship's boat, and a large part of its supplies. The one that I was in, amazingly overpacked, our Lord saved it that there was no damage to even a piece of straw. My brother was on Sospechoso; and he, after God, was its salvation.*⁶³⁴

In 1498, Don Cristóbal sent to the court a long letter with a map showing the newly discovered lands of Central America.⁶³⁵ In 1513, Don Bartolomé painted his own map of the

⁶³² E neste ãno de oitenta e cinco pollos muytos serviços e merescimentos de Gonçalo Vaz de Castelbranco veador da Fazenda, e el-rey polo acrecentar fez a elle e a seus filhos a aos que delle descendessem de **dom**; e dahi em diante se chamou **Dom** Gonçalo. RESENDE, Vida e Feitos... 91.

⁶³³ La utilización de dicho tratamiento se encontraba reservada por aquellas fechas, **con exclusividad** [...] un tratamiento de dignidad y honor **que bajo ningún concepto podría recaer en persona villana**. MARTÍNEZ LLORENTE, Félix, *El escudo de armas de Cristóbal Colón*, 14.

⁶³⁴ La tormenta era terrible [...] El navío Sospechoso había echado á la mar, por escapar, fasta la isola la Gallega; perdió la barca, y todos gran parte de los bastimentos. En el que yo iba, abalumado á maravilla, nuestro Señor le salvó que no hubo daño de una paja. En el Sospechoso iba mi hermano; y él, después de Dios, fué su remedio. CARTAS, 364.

⁶³⁵ Como podrán ver Vuestras Altezas por **la pintura** d'elo que con esta les enbío ... Yo enbiaré a Vuestras Altezas esta escriptura y la **pintura de la tierra**. TEXTOS, 211, 219.

islands for which the court thanked him.⁶³⁶ Therefore, Don Bartolomé must have also spent many years studying as a child. Besides being an expert in piloting ships, the Catholic Monarchs looked to him as an expert who could help to locate the line of division for the Treaty of Tordesillas, as transcribed below:

*Regarding the line or limit that has to be fixed, because it seems to us to be a very difficult task, requiring a lot of knowledge and trust, we would like it if you yourself were there, and take part in it with the others that will decide this on behalf of the King of Portugal. And if there is too much difficulty in you going to do this, or it could bring some problem in what you are doing, see if **your brother** or someone else you may have that might be knowledgeable.*⁶³⁷

Don Bartolomé arrived in Castile from the Court of France and was named Don and sent as captain of a fleet. If Don Cristóbal could not participate in the demarcation procedures with the Portuguese experts, then his brother could be the expert to help the Castilian Court in this important work. It is clear that Don Bartolomé Colón, Captain of the Fleet and Lieutenant of the New World, was of another class of persons, not a weaver and mere commoner from Genoa.

Friar Las Casas noted that Don Bartolomé also wrote in Latin and that he knew his handwriting very well.⁶³⁸ Even more impressive are these words from Las Casas describing the Admiral's brother:

A brother of his, whose name was Bartolomé Colón. This was a very prudent and hardworking man, and more modest and cunning, than he seemed, and of less simplicity than Cristóbal Colón. A Latinist and very knowledgeable in all things of men, notably wise and experienced in the things of the sea. And I believe not less educated in Cosmography

⁶³⁶ En una carta escrita en Valladolid el 4 de julio de 1513 dieron las gracias los Reyes a Bartolomé Colón por la “**pintura de las islas.**” GIL, Juan and VARELA, Consuelo, *Cartas de particulares a Colón y Relaciones coetáneas*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1984, 29.

⁶³⁷ En lo de la raya o limite que se ha de hacer, porque nos parece cosa muy dificultosa y de mucho saber y confianza, querriamos si ser pudiese que vos os hallasedes en ello, y la hiciesedes con los otros que por parte del Rey de Portugal en ello hande entender, y si hay mucha dificultad en vuestra ida a esto o podria traer algun inconveniente en lo que ende estais, ved si **vuestro hermano** o otro alguno teneis ende que lo sepa. NAVARRETE, T. II, 155.

⁶³⁸ Estas son palabras escritas de la mano de Bartolomé Colón [...] la letra yo la conozco ser de Bartolomé Colón, porque tuve muchas suyas. Algún mal latin parece que hay é todo lo es malo, pero póngolo á la letra como lo hallé dela dicha mano escrito. LAS CASAS, T. I, 214.

*and what pertains to it, and in making of, or painting, of navigation charts and globes and other instruments of that art, than his brother. And I presume that in some of these things he surpassed him, even though he may have learned them from him. He was taller than average in size, he had an honest and authoritative character, although not as much as the Admiral.*⁶³⁹

Like Don Cristóbal, Don Bartolomé was a man of the sea,⁶⁴⁰ and not a wool weaver to whom Don Cristóbal entrusted important tasks like the governance of the New World in his absence, or the preparing of the ships, as he declared, “the Lord Lieutenant already left with the ships for careening in the old town.”⁶⁴¹ He was an “experienced” man, as Las Casas said, and in some tasks he even surpassed the First Admiral. Furthermore, the contemporary authors who wrote about the Admiral, those who knew him in Castile, speak of a youth spent studying and the same must be accepted for Don Bartolomé. Las Casas wrote that:

As a child, then, his parents got him studying to read and write and he ended up knowing the art of writing so well, forming such good and legible handwriting (which I saw many times) that he could have earned a living from it. From there he also went into Arithmetic and drawing and painting, that the same way he could have made a living at it if he so wished. He studied at Pavia the first rudiments of letters, especially grammar, and he became very proficient in the Latin language, and for this he is praised in the said Portuguese History,⁶⁴² saying that he was eloquent and a good Latinist; and this greatly

⁶³⁹ Un hermano suyo, que se llamaba Bartolomé Colon. Este era hombre muy prudente y muy esforzado, y más recatado y astuto, á lo que parecia, y de menos simplicidade que Cristóbal Colón; latino y muy entendido en todas las cosas de hombres, señaladamente sabio y experimentado en las cosas de la mar, y creo que no mucho menos docto en cosmografía y lo á ella tocante, y en hacer ó pintar cartas de navegar, y esferas y otros instrumentos de aquella arte, que su hermano, y presumo que en algunas cosas destas le excedía, puesto que por ventura las hobiese del aprendido. Era mas alto que mediano de cuerpo, tenia autorizada y honrada persona, aunque no tanto como el Almirante. *Idem*, 224.

⁶⁴⁰ En estos viajes y descubrimientos, ó en alguno dellos, se halló el almirante D. Cristóbal Colon y su hermano D. Bartolomé Colon, según lo que yo puedo colegir de cartas y cosas escritas que tengo de sus manos [...] Y porque Cristóbal Colon y su hermano Bartolomé Colon en aquellos tiempos vivían en Portugal, allende de lo que ellos se sabían de teórica y experiencia de navegación, en Portugal se debieran en esta facultad de perfeccionar. Anduvieron ambos muchas ó algunas veces, como arriba dije, ocupados y en compañía de los portugueses en estos descubrimientos. LAS CASAS, T1, 211, 213.

⁶⁴¹ THACHER, Vol. 3, 264.

⁶⁴² Homem esperto, eloquente, e bom Latino, e mui glorioso em seus negocios. BARROS, 247.

*served him to understand the human and divine books! These were the early stages of his childhood from which initiated the other sciences that in his adolescence and youth he worked to acquire.*⁶⁴³

Don Hernando wrote almost the same thing, stating that his father never labored in mechanical or manual arts, and that instead he spent his childhood learning letters; in his youth learning navigation and cosmography, and his adult age in seagoing endeavors (Portuguese and Castilian), as may be read below:

*At a young age he learned writing, and studied in Pavia sufficiently enough for him to understand Cosmography, a subject that he was very fond of, following which he turned to Astrology and Geometry because these sciences are so linked, that one cannot be without the other, and also, because Ptolemy in the beginning of his Cosmografia says that no one can be a good cosmographer if he is not also a painter, he also studied drawing, to draw lands and to draw the heavenly bodies flat as well as round.*⁶⁴⁴

These statements about a youth spent studying were dismissed as fantasy by many authors, declaring that both Admiral Colón and his son lied about the navigator's childhood. Conceiving no other character who could be the navigator except the Colombo weaver, the statements of schooling were discarded as lies. It was the only solution the biographers envisaged.

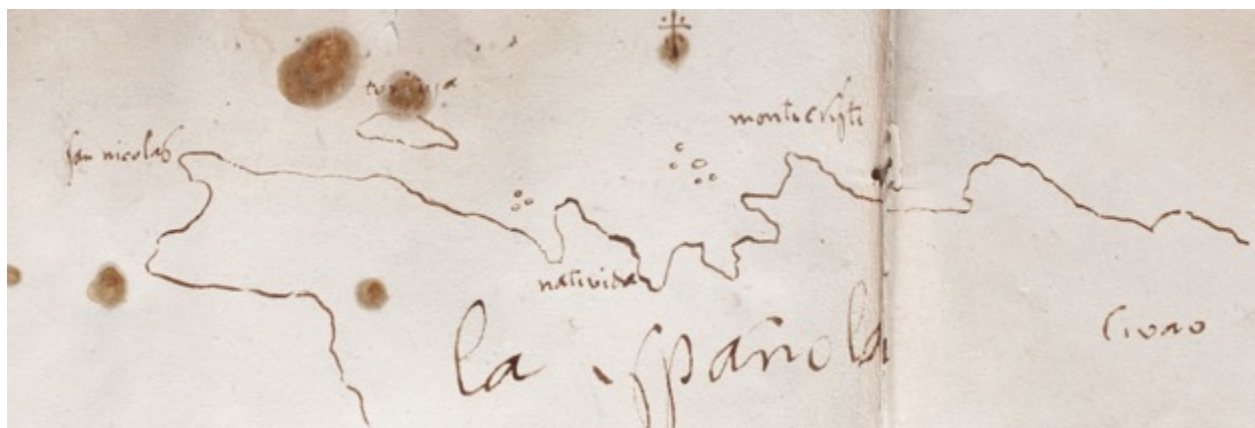
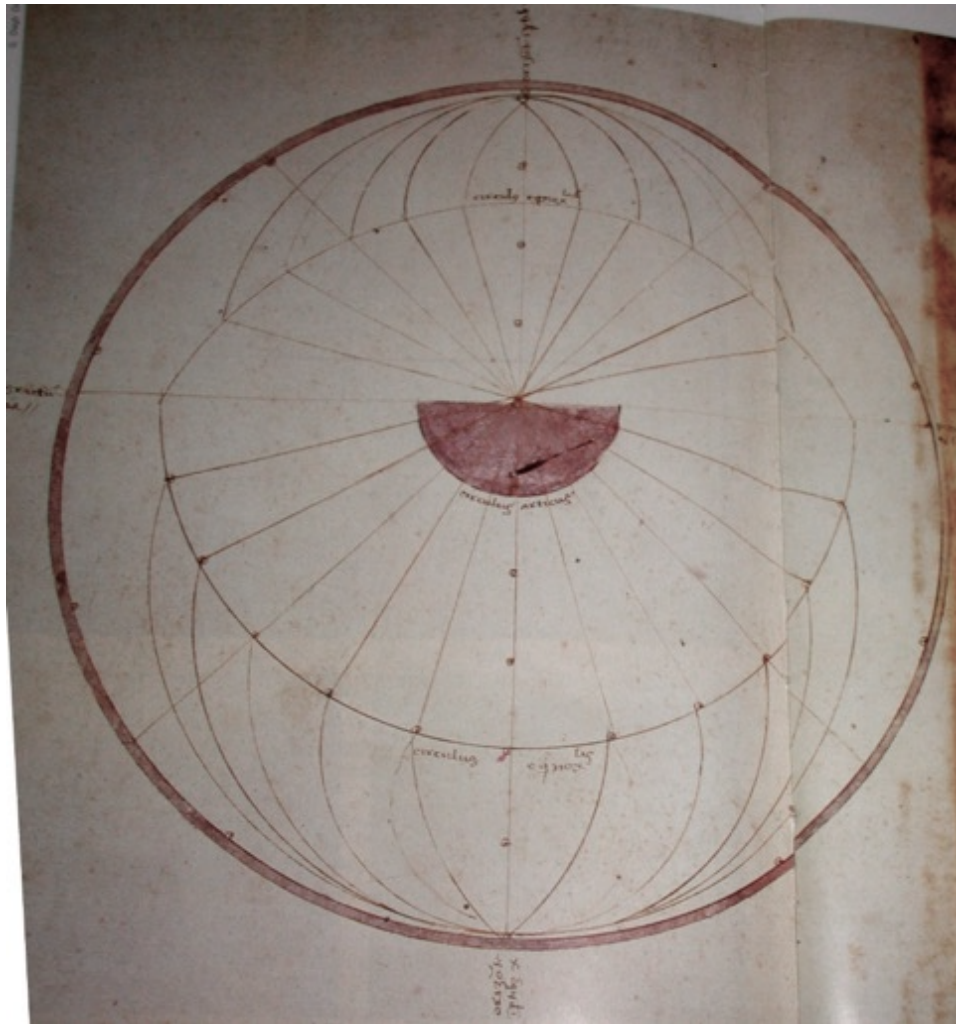
One thing is certain, a weaver would certainly not have spent his childhood studying instead of working. Although the drawings Colón made show his high ability to map coasts and understand the routes of the stars, as seen in Figure 26, the best proof of a youth spent studying are the words of the navigator himself.

⁶⁴³ Siendo, pues, niño le pusieron sus padres á que aprendiese á leer y á escribir, y salió con el arte de escribir formando tan buena y legible letra (la cual yo vide muchas veces), que pudiera con ella ganar de comer. De aquí le sucedió darse juntamente al aritmética y también á dibujar y pintar, que lo mismo alcanzara si quisiera vivir por ello; estudió en Pavia los primeiros rudimentos de las letras, mayormente la gramática, y quedó bien experto en la lengua latina, y desto lo loa la dicha Historia portuguesa, diciendo, que era elocuente y buen latino; y esto cuánto le pudo servir para entender las historias humanas y divinas! Estos fueron los principios en que ocupó su niñez, y con que comenzó las otras artes que en su adolescencia y juventud trabajó de adquirir. LAS CASAS, T. I, 46.

⁶⁴⁴ Nella sua piccola età imparò lettere, e studiò in Pavia tanto che gli bastava per intendere i cosmografi, alla cui lezione fu molto affezionato, per il qual rispetto ancora si diede all'astrologia e alla geometria perché queste scienze sono in tal maniera concatenate, che l'una non può star senza l'altra, e ancora, perché Tolomeo nel principio della sua Cosmografia dice che niuno può esser buon cosmografo se ancora non sarà pittore, partecipò ancora del disegno, per piantar terre e formar i corpi cosmografici in piano e in tondo. HISTORIE, Cap. III, 8.

Figure 26

Drawing by Don Cristóbal showing the movement of the celestial bodies around the Earth and his 1492-93 map showing the north and west coast of Española Island (Haiti/Dominican Republic) with the location of Natividad.



Source: Thacher, Volume III.

This being, we can affirm that his letters are full of examples of how highly educated he was, and in his First Voyage he gives several examples of that.⁶⁴⁵ The introduction to the *Diario* says that he is planning to create a “new navigational chart,” on which he will position all the land and sea in their proper places and under its winds, in addition to composing a book similar to Ptolemy's *Geografia*; and “painted in its likeness.”⁶⁴⁶ These are not endeavors compatible with a person who had been trained as a weaver. During the Third Voyage, the Admiral composed a map of the newly discovered lands.⁶⁴⁷ All this scientific insight, which is indisputably proven by his writings and deeds, would not have been learned in Castile after the age of 28, but instead when he was still young in Portugal.

In one of his letters he said, “I sailed many times from Lisbon to Guinea.” And in another letter to the kings he wrote, “setting aside all my sailing experience from a young age and the discussions that I have had with so many people in so many lands and from so many sects, and I set aside the many arts and writings that I said above.”⁶⁴⁸ All of these statements show, as he himself informs us, not only his scholarly wisdom but also his vast experience gained by navigating the world.

Even mermaids are mentioned, which he saw on the coast of “Malagueta, although they were not as similar to women as they are painted.”⁶⁴⁹ This African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*) only inhabits the west coast of Africa, and more specifically between the Senegal and Cuanza rivers.

Among the many books that the navigator owned, and in which he annotated their pages, was the *Historia rerum ubique gestaum*, by Eneas Silvio Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), the *Historia naturalis* by Pliny, the book on the travels of Marco Polo, the *Geografia* of Ptolemy, the *Almanach*

⁶⁴⁵ **Domingo 30 de setiembre:** Las estrellas que se llaman las guardias, quando anochece, están junto al brazo de la parte del Poniente, y quando amanece están en la línea debajo del brazo al Nordeste, que parece que en toda la noche no andan salvo tres líneas, que son nueve horas, y esto cada noche. DIARIO.

⁶⁴⁶ También, Señores Príncipes, allende de escrevir cada noche lo que el día passare, y el día lo que la noche navegare, tengo propósito de hazer carta nueva de navegar; en la qual situaré toda la mar e tierras del mar Occéano en sus propios lugares debaxo su viento y más componer un libro y poner todo por el semejante por pintura por latitud del equinocial y longitud del Occidente; y sobre todo cumple mucho que yo olvide el sueño y tiene mucho el navegar porque así cumple, las quales serán gran trabajo. DIARIO.

⁶⁴⁷ TEXTOS, 219.

⁶⁴⁸ Yo dejo todo mi navegar desde edad nueva y las pláticas que yo haya tenido con tanta gente en tantas tierras y de tantas setas, y dejo las tantas artes y escrituras de que yo dije arriba. CARTAS, 330.

⁶⁴⁹ HISTORIE, Cap. IIII, 9.

perpetuum of Abraham Zacuto, the *Medea* of Seneca, the *Jewish Antiquities* of Flavius Josephus, and the *Parallel Lives* of Plutarch, pointing us to a character who not only studied in his youth, but someone who also continued to read and to instruct himself throughout his life.

He was a man who kept in touch with individuals in various kingdoms, such as Gerónimo de Santestevan and John Day, maintaining himself well informed about events related to what was being discovered in other locations. John Day wrote in a letter to the Admiral that he greatly desired to serve him, and we learn that Colón had commissioned from Day the book of *Inventio Fortunata*, by Nicolas de Lynn, compiled circa 1360.⁶⁵⁰

In a letter to the kings from 1503, Don Cristóbal wrote that “Geronimo de Santestevan, Genoese, in the year 1498 sailed from Calicut [in real India] to the east [...] in his letter he writes this to me at length.”⁶⁵¹

It was customary for the Admiral to quote the authors he had read as a basis for some of his statements or clarifications, such as, “Marco Polo said that they [black pearls] are worth more than the white ones, and this may well be there in some parts, like the seashells that are caught in the Canaries and sold at such a high price in Portugal’s Mina.”⁶⁵²

But perhaps the letter that gives us more understanding of his vast education is the one Colón wrote to the *Serenísimos é muy altos é muy poderosos Príncipes Rey é Reina nuestros Señores*, in 1498, where he mentions several authors who wrote about the geography of our planet, such as Aristotle, Ptolemy, Greeks, Latins, and Arabs.⁶⁵³

- The Sacred Scripture testifies that our Lord made the earthly Paradise, and in it he placed the Tree of Life, and from it flows a spring of the four main rivers in this world being: Ganges in India, Tigris and Euphrates which separate in the mountains

⁶⁵⁰ MIGUEL, Nicasio Salvador, *Cristóbal Colón: los libros del Almirante*, Burgos, Fundación Instituto castellano y leonés de la lengua, 2006, 17-48.

⁶⁵¹ Gerónimo de Santestevan, genovés, el año de 98 navegó de Colocuti al oriente 58 jornadas. Llegó al reino de Pego y quisiera pasar adelante adonde nacen los robines. La muerte de su compañero y el achaque del rey de allí, que le robó diciendo que él era mozo del difunto, fue causa que no siguió el viaje. Por su carta, me escribe esto largo y dice que los navíos de V. Al. están en el mejor de las Indias y no hace cuenta de Colocuti, y dice que en todo cabo adonde él fue halló que el oro era tenido en tanta estima como en Italia. Torno a las cincuenta y ocho jornadas que él navegó hacia acá desde Colocuti. Considere quien sabe cuánto pasó de este cabo del río Ganges hacia Veragua, y haga punto en el nuestro. AÑÓN, Valeria and TEGLIA, Vanina M., *Cristóbal Colón, Diario, Cartas y Relaciones*, Antología Esencial, Ediciones Corregidor, 2012, 368-369.

⁶⁵² LAS CASAS, T. II, 315.

⁶⁵³ CARTAS, 293.

making Mesopotamia and end up in Persia, and the Nile that is born in Ethiopia and goes into the sea in Alexandria.

- I always read that the world, land and water **was spherical** and the authorities and experiences that Ptolemy and all the others wrote about this place, gave and showed it by eclipses of the moon and other demonstrations that go from East to West, such as of the elevation of the pole from North to South.
- The Master of Scholastic History regarding Genesis said that the waters are very few [...] and Nicolao de Lira agrees on this.
- Ptolemy and the other wise men who wrote about this world, believed that it was **spherical**, believing that this hemisphere [New World] **was round** like the one over there where they stood [...] in which hemisphere I do not find any discrepancy, except that it is spherical round as they say.
- So that Ptolemy had no knowledge about this half nor the others who wrote about the world, because it was quite unknown. They only took their foundation from the hemisphere where they were, which was round spherical, as I said above.
- Although Aristotle's opinion was that the Antarctic Pole, or the land below it, was the highest part in the world, and closer to the sky, other sages challenged him saying that it is this one under the Arctic, for which reasons it seems they understood that one part of our world should be higher and more noble than the other.
- The said Gulf of the Pearls is further west from Ptolemy's western line almost three thousand and nine hundred miles, which is almost seventy Equatorial degrees.
- Neither have I ever found a Latin or Greek scripture that certifiably says where in the world the terrestrial Paradise is located, nor have I seen it in any map of the world, except by authority of argument. Some put it there at the source of the Nile in Ethiopia.
- Avenrutz confirms this and Cardinal Pedro de Aliaco alleges, sanctioning this one and that of Seneca, which conforms with these, saying that Aristotle may have known many secrets of the world because of Alexander the Great, and Seneca because of César Nero and Pliny because of the Romans, all of whom employed

money and people, and put great diligence in learning the secrets of the world and make it known to the public.

- The said Cardinal gives these greater authority than to Ptolemy or to the Greeks or Arabs [...] by authority of Ptolemy and his followers: to this he brings the authority of Esdras.
- St. Augustine and St. Ambrose in his *Exameron*, where he alleges my son Jesus will come and my son Christ will die, and they say that Ezra was a Prophet, and also Zacharias, father of St. John, and Simon the arm, which authorities also claims Francisco de Mairones.

It will not be necessary to include here all the authors that the First Admiral and Viceroy mentions in his writings, because the amount of works that this man read and studied in his lifetime become evident from these extracts. His writings confirm what his son wrote, namely, that the admiral had spent his childhood years studying, and not toiling at a loom or anywhere else. Those biographers who contradicted Don Hernando on this point have not only failed to show evidence that the Admiral did not spend his youth at school, but have also completely disregarded the existing evidence of his vast studies evident in Colón's writings and accomplishments.

He himself wrote to Friar Gaspar Gorricio about the notes he had collected for the *Book of Prophecies*; and the friar replied on March 23, 1502, that he had received his letter and book of prophecies. Gorricio wrote that, as best as his poor aptitude could, he would work on it as much as possible to fulfill Colón's request.⁶⁵⁴

The first note we know from Colón's quill dates back to 1481, a time when he clearly lived in Portugal; but that note is written in Castilian, saying, "this is the account of the creation of the world according to the Jews. Adam lived 120 years and then he begot Seth [...] until now, (being) the year of the birth of Our Lord **1481**, it is 1413 years."⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵⁴ Había recibido su carta é libro de las profecías y dichos é autoridades tocantes al caso del monte Sión é Hierusalén, y de las gentes de las islas é naciones universas, y que según mi pobre inteligencia por cumplir su mando trabajaría en ello cuanto pudiese. CARTAS, 327.

⁶⁵⁵ Esta es la coenta de la criación del mundo segundo lo judíos. Vivio Adán 120 años y estonçes engendró Aset (sic). Vivio Aset 105 años y estonçes ingendró Enos. Vivio Enos 90 años y estonçes ingendró Cainán. Vivio Cainán 70 años y estonçes ingendró Malalchel. Vivio Malalchel 65 años y estonçes ingendró Jared. Vivio Jared 162 años y estonçes ingendró Enoch. Vivio Enoch 65 años, y estonçes ingendró Mathusalén. Vivio Mathusalén 187 años y estonçes ingendró Lamech. Vivio Lamech 182 años y estonçes ingendró Noé. Vivio Noé 500 años y estonçes ingendró Sen. Y Sen había ciento quando fue el diluvio. Así que de la criación del mundo hasta el dilubio son 1656 años. Vivio Sen dos años despois de los ciento sobredichos, y despois del dilubio estonçes

Why was this note written in Castilian? The answer must be in the trend that existed at the time in the Portuguese court, where elite nobles used Castilian as an *avant-garde* language. “Castilian was for the Portuguese writers of the second half of the XV century an adopted language of culture.”⁶⁵⁶

Therefore, it should not be strange for an upper crust nobleman in Portugal to have knowledge of Castilian in order to use it, as Don Cristóbal Colón did in this note written some two years after marrying Filipa Moniz. But a good observation of his writings, although written in Castilian, verifies that the basis of this Castilian is the Portuguese language.

Consuelo Varela acknowledges that “in his classic study of the language of Colón, Menéndez Pidal has rightly pointed out that the Castilian letters have a clear Portuguese veneer, perceptible especially in the spelling and in the vocalism.”⁶⁵⁷

In fact, the study by Ramón Menéndez Pidal is extraordinary in the way it presents Portuguese as the fundamental language of Don Cristóbal Colón, while trying to deny that Colón spoke Portuguese, because the navigator was allegedly born in Genoa:

- We see dialecticisms from the west of the [Iberian] Peninsula which show that the Admiral's language is not Galician, but decidedly Portuguese.⁶⁵⁸
- To this we reply repeating that Colón's dialect is Portuguese and not Galician.⁶⁵⁹

ingendró Arfaxat. Vivio Arfaxat 35 años y estonçes ingendró Sala. Vivio Sala 30 años y estonçes ingendró Heber. Vivio Heber 34 años y estonçes ingendró Phalech. Vivio Phalech 30 años y estonçes ingendró Reu. Vivio Reu 35 años y estonçes ingendró Saruch. Vivio Saruch 30 años y estonçes ingendró Nacor. Vivio Nacor 29 años y estonçes ingendró Thare. Vivio Thare 70 años y estonçes ingendró Abraam. Y desd'el diluvio hasta que naçio Abraam son 295 años, y segundo los judíos son 292. Vivio Abraam ciento años y estonçes ingendró Isac. (Vi)veo Isac [...] (Des)que naçio Isac hasta que saliron de Egipto 400 años. (Y des)que saliron de Egipto has(t)a que se fabricó la primera Casa 480 años. (Y des)que foi fabricada la primera Casa fasta su destrucción son 410 años. (Y des)que foi destruída la primera Casa fasta la salida del cativerio (de Ba)bilonia a 70 años, y estonçes se començó la segunda Casa. (Y duró) la segunda Casa 400 años. Y desque nacio Abraam fasta que foe destruído la segunda Casa 1088 años. Y desde la destrucción de la 2a Casa [fasta] segundo los judíos, fasta agora, (siendo) el año del naçimento de Nuestro Señor de 1481, son 1413 años. (Y desde el) çomienço fasta esta era de 1481 son 5241 años [...] (mundo) [...] 5244. RUMEU DE ARMAS, *El Portugués...*, 81.

⁶⁵⁶ *Idem*, 48.

⁶⁵⁷ TEXTOS, xlv.

⁶⁵⁸ Veremos que los dialectismos del occidente de la Península [Ibérica] que muestra el habla del Almirante no son gallegos, sino **decididamente portugueses**, y por esta parte observemos que el portugués no es tampoco lengua materna de Colón. MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, Ramón, *La Lengua de Cistóbal Colón*, Espasa-Calpe, S.A., Madrid, 1958, 13.

⁶⁵⁹ *Idem*, 16.

- Some of the Lusisms used in that note the discoverer eliminates later on [...] but most of the Portugueseisms are retained [...] Twenty-one years of residence between Andalusians and Castilians were not powerful enough to uproot the initial Portuguese; indisputable proof that Colón learned Spanish in Portugal [...] It is not the Galician *houvo* with final o, but Portuguese *houve*, that is, whenever there is a distinctive character between Portuguese and Galician, Colón uses the Portuguese character.⁶⁶⁰
- The Admiral had learned Spanish within the linguistic environment that was in the air in Portugal when the Castilian trend initiated by the Prince Don Pedro dominated there.⁶⁶¹
- At every step, Colón writes *um* for *un* [...] the same is done by the Portuguese [...] the same way as the Portuguese who write Spanish, Colón ingests many Lusisms into his language.⁶⁶²
- Many other Portuguese words like this one that Colón drew upon when he could not find the Spanish word closely match his language to that of the Portuguese.⁶⁶³
- The mistake is produced by introducing Portuguese forms and voices, **not Italian**.⁶⁶⁴
- His vocalism inclines to Portuguese, without ever acquiring the clear precision of Spanish vowels; several Portuguese grammatical forms and several Portuguese words are integrated with his Castilian.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶⁰ Algunos lusismos de los empleados en esa nota elimina el descubridor más tarde [...] pero la mayoría de los portuguesismos los conserva [...] veintiún años de residencia entre andaluces y castellanos no fueron poderosos para desarraigar el lusismo inicial; indisputable prueba que Colón aprendió en Portugal el español [...] No es el gallego *houvo* con o final, sino el portugués *houve*, es decir, que siempre que hay algún carácter distintivo entre portugués y gallego, Colón muestra el carácter português. *Idem*, 19.

⁶⁶¹ *Idem*, 20.

⁶⁶² *Idem*, 21.

⁶⁶³ *Idem*, 22.

⁶⁶⁴ *Idem*, 25.

⁶⁶⁵ *Idem*, 26.

Accepting the navigator as Genoese, Pidal irrationally discarded all this Portuguese evidence, proclaiming that “Colón learned spoken Portuguese, but not written.”⁶⁶⁶ In this way, and contrary to lucidity, Pidal seems to allow a person to write Portuguese words into all his Castilian writings, while at the same time claiming that the person did not know how to write in Portuguese!⁶⁶⁷

Consuelo Varela declared that “in his Castilian there are clear Portugueseisms: even a *deter* ‘stop’ in the account of the third voyage.”⁶⁶⁸ In this same publication by Consuelo Varela, we extract the following statements about the influence of the Portuguese language in Colón's writings:

- Definitely, the Admiral employs in a way that is more Portuguese than Italian, (p. xlv).
- In any case, we always suspect that Colón was thinking not of Castilian *como*, but in the Portuguese, (p. xlviii).
- Words of clear Portuguese origin such as *escaramojo*, (p. xxix)
- Uses the word *tablachina* [...] in neighboring Portugal, they continued to call that [...] *tavolachina*. - Footnote: Vasco da Gama's travel diary, p. 20: *taulachenhas* [...] Manuscript by Valentim Fernandes, p. 114 “make from it *taulachimas*,” (p. lvi).
- On December 4th, a perfect *pozo* (haven, anchorage) appears: “There is a large bay that would be a good *pozo* for (winds) East-Northeast and Southeast and South-Southwest.” The phrase doesn't make sense in Castilian, but it does in Portuguese [...] in Vasco da Gama's Diary of the voyage, “He sent Pero d'Alanquer in the boat to find out if he thought it was a good *poso*” (good anchorage), (p. xxxi).

⁶⁶⁶ *Idem*, 25.

⁶⁶⁷ But if the discoverer were illiterate, he would not be the Admiral of the Ocean Sea, author of journals, letters, and writings in several languages. Ramon Menendez Pidal, agrees that the Admiral (whom he takes to be Cristoforo Colombo) was illiterate in Italian, but **rather than admitting that the Admiral was therefore not Genoese**, argues that at the time “Genoese” was an “unwritten dialect”; and this explains the Admiral's not being literate in Italian [...] The above is yet another example of how narrators of the Artifact struggle heroically to make the lesser attainments of the Genoese wool-worker fit those of the Admiral, SARFATY, David E., *Columbus Re-Discovered*, Dorrance Publishing, 2010, 392.

⁶⁶⁸ En su castellano se encuentran portuguesismos claros: hasta un *deter* ‘detener’ en la relación del tercer viaje. TEXTOS, xxiii.

- *Turbonadas* (thunderstorms) from a nautical term that took a long time to integrate into Castilian, and which only begins to be common when the lexicon of Portuguese pilots is imposed on Spanish ships, (p. xxxiv).

To describe the hair of the natives of the Caribbean, Colón said it was *corredio* (straight); Rui de Pina, in his *Crónica Del Rey Don Duarte*, wrote that the king's hair was *corredio*. Duarte Pacheco Pereira also wrote that negros from Upper Ethiopia have hair that is *corredio*. *Corredio* was clearly a Portuguese word.⁶⁶⁹

The list of Portuguese words used by Admiral Colón is extensive. Colón wrote in Portuguese whenever he lacked the terms in Castilian. It is true that some of these words had cognate forms in other languages, but it is also a fact that these words were, at the same time, pure Portuguese.

For example, Colón wrote *Xio* meaning Chios, which is also used in Catalan to name that Greek island. However, Duarte Pacheco Pereira also wrote *Xio* referring to Chios, in his *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*. Colón's language was unequivocally founded on the Portuguese language. There is no other language that matches Colón's non-Castilian vocabulary as well as Portuguese. What does this mean? It means that Portuguese would have to be the Admiral's mother tongue.

In Castile, references to his Portuguese life were made only in passing, “and because Cristóbal Colón and his brother Bartolomé Colón in those days were living in Portugal,” wrote Las Casas, he did so as if the Colón brothers had little or nothing to do with that kingdom.

The few times the facts are not silenced, they are distorted, as Las Casas did with the two Colombos, “illustrious **Genoese** men”, who were French and Greek, but not Genoese.

A hypothetical battle at sea solved the problem of how Colón could be living in Portugal before his marriage by leaving him shipwrecked off the coast of Portugal, but without explaining where he came from. Consensus claimed this shipwreck happened in 1476, although the battle of 1476 was not the battle that his son and Las Casas described.

One of God's determinations was to “bring Cristóbal Colón to Spain, therefore, so that it may be known we will put, from his life, the reasons for it in this chapter,” wrote Las Casas. It seems obvious that Las Casas took this episode from the *Historie* almost word for word.⁶⁷⁰ Don

⁶⁶⁹ ROSA, *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, 430.

⁶⁷⁰ Y una dellas era traer á Cristóbal Colon á España, por ende, para que se sepa pornemos de su vida en el presente capítulo la razón. Como fuese, según es dicho, Cristóbal Colón, tan dedicado á las cosas y ejercicio de la mar, y

Hernando wrote that Don Cristóbal came ashore in Portugal during the battle of 1485, yet the future Admiral was already living in Castile for one year at that time with a Portuguese-born son.⁶⁷¹

Both Las Casas and Hernando described *Colombo the Younger's* battle of 1485 which cannot be utilized as the reason for Don Cristóbal arriving in Portugal. His arrival in Portuguese territory was certainly not in 1485, as Don Hernando and Las Casas say, nor in 1476, as the official version of Colón's history presumed.

Don Cristóbal Colón had Portuguese as his mother tongue and this fact implies that he was born in Portuguese territory, or arrived in Portugal young enough to take on Portuguese as his mother tongue.⁶⁷²

But if Colón was born in Portugal, and if both he and the courts decided to hide this fact from us, how could they explain that the Admiral lived and married in Portugal, a fact that was obvious to the public at the time? How could they conceal decades of his Portuguese life being that he had married in Portugal and was connected to so many Portuguese elites, even having a Portuguese-born heir?

Not wanting to declare that the Admiral was Portuguese, any faked or real ocean battle would serve the purpose of dropping him into the sea where he could have clandestinely swam ashore from parts unknown. We don't believe that a shipwreck during adulthood was the way Colón ended up in Portugal. The shipwreck was a mere distraction employed by the censors to avoid explaining any other details of Colón's Portuguese youth.

en aquel tiempo anduviese por ella un famoso varón, el mayor de los corsarios que en aquellos tiempos habia, de su nombre y linaje que se llamaba Columbo Júnior, á diferencia de otro que habia sido nombrado y señalado antes, y aqueste Júnior trajese grande armada por la mar contra infieles y venecianos y otros enemigos de su nación, Cristóbal Colón determinó ir é andar con él, en cuya compañía estuvo y anduvo mucho tiempo. LAS CASAS, T. I, 51.

⁶⁷¹ En el tiempo de la elección de Maximiliano, hijo de Federico, Emperador, por Rey de Romanos, fué enviado por Embajador de la Señoría de Venecia, Jerónimo Donato, á Portugal para que en nombre de la Señoría hiciese gracias, al Rey porque á los galeotes y remadores de las susodichas cuatro galeazas desbaratadas los habia vestido y dado ayuda de costa para que se volviesen á sus tierras. Así que llegado Cristóbal Colon á tierra á algún lugar cercano de allí, y cobrando algunas fuerzas del tullimiento de las piernas, de la mucha humedad del agua y de los trabajos que habia pasado, y curado también por ventura de algunas heridas que en la batalla habia recibido, fuese á Lisboa. LAS CASAS, T. I, 52.

⁶⁷² A physiologically and mentally normal person has learned the main structure and basic vocabulary of his mother tongue by the end of childhood. Krashen (1973) in his critical period hypothesis maintains that language learning becomes easier and faster at the earlier ages. The period from birth to 11 years. REGMI, Kapil Dev, *Looking Mother Tongue Instruction Through Different Perspectives*, February 10, 2008.

The lack of serious research by Portuguese academics on this and other facets of Colón's life and character has left serious gaps in Colón's origins that are absolutely indispensable to understand.⁶⁷³ This gap was inadequately filled by non-Portuguese researchers, and therefore perhaps less qualified for such work. Convinced that he was a Genoese Colombo, historians, such as William Phillips and Carla Rahn, among others, proclaimed contradictions like these:

*Colón spoke the Genoese dialect from the moment he first uttered a word [...] He used imperfect Castilian for most of his writing, however, and the mistakes he made in spelling and usage seem to come from Portuguese.*⁶⁷⁴

Imposing a Genoese nationality without basis and then disguising the linguistic gap in the accepted theory has been the *modus operandi* of those who have maintained this aberration for centuries. They even argued that there was no specific Genoese written language in the 15th century and point it as the reason for Colón not knowing how to write it:

*The Genoese dialect which he grew up with **was unwritten**.*⁶⁷⁵

*It was a language of common speech that was **never written**.*⁶⁷⁶

*A wool worker from Genoa and Savona until he was twenty-five years old, he spoke the Genoese dialect as his mother tongue, which was not, nor is it today, **a written** language.*⁶⁷⁷

In his work, Alfredo Pinheiro Marques also followed the same idea that “perhaps it is not so strange that an Italian who left his country when he was still a young man was not able to write

⁶⁷³ Considera-se absolutamente indispensável que a Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, a Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, a Sociedade de Geografia e outras instituições científicas congéneres, nomeiem Comissões especiais ou por qualquer forma organizem um processo de estudo imediato no sentido de definir se de facto é Portugal a terra mãe do grande Navegador Cristóvão Colón. DORNELAS, Afonso, *Elementos para o estudo etimológico do apelido Colón*, Centro Tipográfico Colonial, Lisboa, 1926, 19.

⁶⁷⁴ PHILLIPS, William D. and PHILLIPS, Carla Rahn, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 96.

⁶⁷⁵ BRADFORD, Ernle, *Christopher Columbus*. Open Road Integrated Media, 2014, e-book.

⁶⁷⁶ MORISON, Samuel Eliot, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, Time Incorporated, New York, 1962, 13.

⁶⁷⁷ Lanero de Génova y Savona hasta los veinticinco años, habló como lengua materna el dialecto genovés, que no era, ni es hoy, lengua de escritura. MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, Ramón, *La Lengua de Cistóbal Colón*, Espasa-Calpe, S.A., Madrid, 1958, 25.

properly in his native language. Given that **the Genoese dialect had no written form**, it is highly unlikely that he could have learned to write it.”⁶⁷⁸

According to these writers, the Province of Genoa, which was one of the major Powers of the Mediterranean, would have been the only European power of the Middle Ages that was so backward it did not have its own written language!

To further establish that the Genoese did have their own written language, as one would expect, here’s what Maurizio Tagliattini wrote:

*Misinformed writers have suggested that the admiral did not write in Italian since Italian could not be understood on paper. In point of historical fact, there were and still are available more letters written in vulgar Italian or Genoese than one would wish to read.*⁶⁷⁹

As this faulty explanation began to fray and crumble, Genoese proponents tried a different angle. In 1973 Virgil Milani tried to prove that the mistakes in Admiral Colón’s Castilian were not Portuguese at all; that they were, instead, words from the Genoese language (which now was written). But reviewing Milani’s work in the *Hispanic Review* (winter, 1976), the critic Peter Boyd-Bowman explained that although some of the words used by the admiral also had a Genoese form, they were at the same time pure Portuguese. Boyd-Bowman also stated that Milani had based his work on a dictionary that did not include documented words that were “in use.”⁶⁸⁰

Likewise, Professor Ralph J. Penny of the School of Modern Languages (Queen Mary, University of London), in his article *The Language of Christopher Columbus*, demonstrated that Virgil Milani had clearly diminished Colón’s Portuguese vocabulary in order to promote a Genoese influence that was not present in the Admiral’s writings. Ralph J. Penny admits that, in the end, “it is easier to identify interference from Portuguese.”⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁸ MARQUES, Alfredo Pinheiro, *Portugal and the European Discovery of America...*, 22.

⁶⁷⁹ TAGLIATTINI, Maurizio, *A critical study on the origin of Christopher Columbus: chapter 10 from The discovery of North America*, Antillia Pub., 2008.

⁶⁸⁰ BOYD-BOWMAN, Peter, Milani, Virgil I., “*The Written Language of Christopher Columbus*” (Book Review), *Hispanic Review*, 44:1 (1976: Winter) 85-86.

⁶⁸¹ It is easier to identify interference from Portuguese, the language he learned to speak in adulthood before learning to write (and speak) Castilian. PENNY, Ralph J. “*The Language of Christopher Columbus.*” In *Journal of the First Voyage (Diario del primer viaje) 1492*, by Christopher Columbus, edited by B.W. Ife, xxvii-xl. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1990. <http://www.ems.kcl.ac.uk/content/pub/b001.html#d0e429>.

The fact is that one cannot expect Colón to have written perfect Portuguese in his Castilian letters. The incorrect spelling of Portuguese words was a result of a clear attempt to make them sound Castilian when the Castilian words were lacking.

How can one believe that a man who arrived in a foreign country at the age of 25, as reported in the official version of the weaver Colombo, and who lived there for a scant eight years (1476-84), would have managed to assimilate the language of the host kingdom so well that this new language would serve as a basis for his writings throughout the rest of his life? How could his Genoese mother tongue, which the alleged Genoese had used during the first 25 years of his life, have suddenly disappeared without a trace once he reached the Iberian Peninsula?

Impossible as this scenario may seem to be, it has been repeatedly presented as the only explanation for the influence of the Portuguese language found in Colón's writings. A more correct answer would be to say that Don Cristóbal learned Portuguese when he was very young and would have studied it with other children of the nobility at the Court of Portugal, where he would also be taught Latin and Castilian. Only when we learn a language at an early age does it impregnate itself as our mother tongue, to the point of intimating itself in all our foreign speech and writings.

Las Casas makes the following observations about Admiral Colón's language:

*And in this and in other things found in his itineraries, it is apparent he is a natural of another language, because he doesn't penetrate completely the meaning of the Castilian words, nor the way of speaking them.*⁶⁸²

*These are his words, although defective as far as our Castilian language.*⁶⁸³

*All of these are his formal words, although some of them not in perfect Castilian romance, as if it was not his mother tongue.*⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸² Hace mención el Almirante de muchas puntas de tierra é islas, é nombres que les habia puesto, pero no parece cuándo, y en esto y en otras cosas que hay en sus Itinerarios, parece ser natural de otra lengua, porque no penetra del todo la significación de los vocablos de la lengua castellana, ni del modo de hablar della; hace mención aquí de la Punta Seca, de la isla Isabela, de la isla Tramontana, de la Punta Llana, de la Punta Sara, suponiéndolas, empero ninguna cosa ha dicho dellas, ó de alguna dellas. LAS CASAS, T. II, 253.

⁶⁸³ Estas son sus palabras, puesto que defectuosas quanto á nuestro lenguaje castellano, el cual no sabia bien, pero más insensiblemente dichas; y cosa es de maravillar, como algunas veces arriba he dicho, que un hombre, cierto no puedo decir sino bueno de su naturaleza, y de buena intincion, estuviese tan ciego en cosa tan clara. *Idem*, 324.

⁶⁸⁴ Todas estas son palabras formales, aunque algunas dellas no de perfecto romance castellano, como no fuese su lengua materna del Almirante; y puesto que hay aquí en ellas que notar más, dos cosas al presente me parece que debo dellas de tocar; la primera es, como en todas las partes y diversas, que hasta aquí habla descubierto destas

But if the hypothesis of learning Portuguese at a young age is not enough to convince us, how to explain that Colón wrote to his brothers not in Italian, but in Castilian intermixed with Portuguese? Neither he nor his brothers knew Italian, as their letters in Castilian between themselves prove. Not only to his brothers, because when Colón wrote to Italians, he also wrote to them in Castilian. He did not write in Italian or use the Genoese dialect, but in the same Portuguese-speckled Castilian used in all his other letters.

It did not seem strange to researchers in the past that three Genoese weavers had gone to school not to learn Italian nor Genoese or any other language used in Genoa, but to learn Castilian based on Portuguese because of how forcibly the Colombo weaver was grafted into this narrative.

All investigators understood that Don Cristóbal never wrote letters in Italian or Genoese, not even to his closest friends, such as Gaspar Gorricio, a Genoese friar. And, if we accept the letters kept in Genoa addressed to Nicolao Oderigo and to the Genoese bank as genuine, neither did he write Italian to people who resided in Genoa.⁶⁸⁵

Among all his writings, we know of only two notes in Italian. These notes show how the Admiral wrote Italian so clumsily that he could not even say *I* in Italian, because instead of *Io* he wrote *Yo* in Spanish:

Del ambra es cierto nascere in India soto tierra, he yo ne ho fato cavare in molti monti in la isola de Feyti vel de Ofir vel de Cipango, a la quale habio posto nome Spagnola, y ne o trovato pieça grande como el capo, ma no tota chiara, saluo de chiaro y parda, y otra negra.

Translation: Amber, it is true, grows in India in the thicket landscape and I had them dig in many mounds in the island of Haiti or Ophir or Japan to the which I had given the name Española and there found a piece large as a head, but not all clear, instead clear and greyish, and another black.

islas, hallaba y experimentaba las gentes dellas mansísimas y dóciles, y juzgaba ser aptas para recibir nuestra sancta fe, y así de todas lo certificaba; la segunda es, como el Almirante cognoscía ser el fin de sus trabajos y del descubrimiento de aquellas tierras y gentes, la conversión dellas y el aumento y gloria de la religión cristiana. LAS CASAS, T. I, 351-352.

⁶⁸⁵ CARTAS, 357, 410.

The non-Italian words contained in this short piece of writing are as follows: **es cierto, tierra, yo, pieça, como, el, y, pardo, otra, negra**. From this note, one can see that Admiral Colón could not even write a word of such importance as “I” in Italian.⁶⁸⁶ This fact led Consuelo Varela to declare that “when he writes Italian, he makes huge mistakes.”⁶⁸⁷

One would never expect three brothers who would have been born in Genoa and spoke the language of that place with their parents and siblings throughout their childhood and youth, and into adulthood, and who arrived in another kingdom as men in their mid-twenties, would not know how to speak Genoese.⁶⁸⁸ The fact is that those supposed “Italians” of Rui de Pina, and “Genoese” of many others, wrote amongst themselves in Castilian. Don Cristóbal wrote to his brother Don Bartolomé the following painful words:

*God only knows how much anguish I have gone through wanting to know how you were doing there. Although these difficulties, I write them, neatly, with the pen, grave are they in actuality, to the extent that they make me hate life because of the dire situation that I know you would be in; in the which you must count me with you together [...] Much more would have to be said of this cause, but because it is not the first time that you have passed through such adversity nor that I have seen, I will leave it to tell you with more time and in person.*⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁶ ROSA, *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, 430-435.

⁶⁸⁷ TEXTOS, xxiii.

⁶⁸⁸ Es observación curiosa la de que, de cuantos escritos nos quedan de Colón, que son en gran número, **no hay uno solo em lengua italiana**. ASENSIO, José María, *Cristóbal Colón : su vida, sus viajes, sus descubrimientos*, Espasa y Compañía, Barcelona, 1888, T. I, 21.

⁶⁸⁹ Sabe nuestro Señor cuántas angustias por ello he pasado por saber como estaríades; así que, estos inconvenientes, bien que yo los diga, prolijos, con péndola, muchos más fueron un ser, á tanto que me hicieron aborrrir la vida por la gran fatiga que yo sabía en que estaríades; en la cual me debeis contar con vos juntamente, porque, cierto, bien que yo estuviese acá absente, allá tenía y tengo el ánima y presente, sin pensar en otra cosa alguna, de contino, como nuestro Señor dello es testigo, ni creo que vos pongáis ni vuestra ánima duda en ello, porque, allende la sangre y grande amor, el efecto del caso y la calidad del peligro y trabajo, en tan longincuas partes, amonesta y constrinje más el espíritu y sentido á doler cualquier fatiga que allá se pueda imaginar, que no si fuese en otra parte. Aprovecharía mucho á esto si este sufrimiento se sufriese por cosa que redundase al servicio de nuestro Señor, por lo cual debiéramos trabajar con alegre ánimo; ni desayudaría á pensar que ninguna cosa grande se puede llegar á efecto salvo con pena, y así mismo consuela á creer que todo aquello que se alcanza trabajosamente se posee y cuenta con mayor dulzura. Mucho habría que decir en esta causa, mas porque de vos no es la primera que hayáis pasado ni yo visto, dejaré para hablar en ello más despacio y de palabra. CARTAS, 238-239.

Note something very important here, in contrast with that four-line Italian note that we showed above about amber, in which ¼ of the words are not Italian. This seventeen-line letter to his brother contains not a single word specific to the Italian language.

The many historians who have dealt with this subject seem not to have dealt with these details. The problem becomes greater when, instead of trying to penetrate these gaps, they merely accept what others had already accepted. Below we transcribe what Pinheiro Marques wrote on this subject:

*The fact that Colón was born in Genoa has been accepted by most historians around the world who have dealt seriously and deeply with the Colombian issue – such as Harrisse, Vignaud, Morison, Taviani, Ballesteros y Beretta, Manzano y Manzano, Rumeo de Armas, and many other more recent academics. The statements of a number of chroniclers, Portuguese, Spanish and Genoese, must also be taken into account.*⁶⁹⁰

If it is true that contemporary chroniclers declare that the navigator was from somewhere in Italy, it is also true that the disagreement about his place of birth has lasted for five centuries. Doubt and uncertainty are a constant among all authors, as we can see in Klawe's article when she says that "the Portuguese language was the first read and written by Cristóbal Colón," who until the end of his life used a Portuguese-style Castilian.⁶⁹¹ António Rumeu de Armas (and others) made the extraordinary affirmation that "the learning of the pen was not done by Colón, as it seems, except for Portuguese, Spanish and Latin."⁶⁹²

Samuel Eliot Morison asserts that Colón "did not write a Spanish-Hebrew or Spanish-Italic, but a Spanish-Portuguese" until the end of his life, and that he wrote Castilian with Portuguese spellings "especially in the vowels, which proves that he spoke Portuguese before he learned Castilian."⁶⁹³

⁶⁹⁰ MARQUES, Alfredo Pinheiro, *Portugal and the European Discovery of America. Christopher Columbus and the Portuguese*, ED. INCM, 1992, 31.

⁶⁹¹ KLAWE, Janina Z., *Bartolomeu Dias e a viagem de Cristóvão Colón*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época. Actas, Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1989, Vol. II, 263.

⁶⁹² El aprendizaje de la pluma no lo hizo Colón, por visto, sino respecto al portugués, al castellano y al latín. RUMEU DE ARMAS, *El Portugués...* 42.

⁶⁹³ A careful analysis of Colón's writings has recently been made by the most eminent living Spanish philologist, Ramón Menéndez Pidal. The Discoverer did not write Jewish-Spanish, or Italian-Spanish, but Portuguese-

Likewise, Rumeu de Armas asserts that Portuguese would be the first language learned by the navigator, “Portuguese spelling, especially in the use of vowels, which confirms that he learned the latter language first.”⁶⁹⁴ Being called Portuguese by the Castilian court, and having learned Portuguese as his first written language, seems to prove not a Genoese birth, but a Portuguese one, and this evidence was hard for Rumeu de Armas to rationalize. He understood that this did not fit an arrival in Portuguese lands in 1476 as an adult, but much earlier.⁶⁹⁵

It is also important for us to bear in mind that the letter sent to Don Cristóbal by King João II, in 1488 (transcribed in footnote no. 345), was written in Portuguese. Certainly, João II knew that the future Admiral read Portuguese. The researcher Consuelo Varela, in turn, warns us that “when he tried to write in Italian, he was unable to do so, ending up making errors so grotesque that they reveal that this was not a language he was accustomed to using.”⁶⁹⁶

However, we believe that this puzzle of a “Genoese” who did not speak Genoese, but instead Portuguese, and a “foreigner” who is described as “Portuguese” in Pedro de Toledo's documents must have a solution, and this solution must be sought far from Genoa and never among commoners.

In a letter to the monarchs, Don Cristóbal Colón wrote the following words as coming from an old sea wolf:

*At a very **tender age** I entered the sea sailing, and I have continued it until today. The art inclines itself towards those who follow it in a desire to know the secrets of this world. I have been at this for forty years now. Every sea that has been sailed until today, all have I navigated. I have had dealings and conversations with sage persons, ecclesiastical and secular, Latin and Greek, Jews and Moors, and with many others from other sects.*⁶⁹⁷

Spanish. To the end of his life, he wrote Castilian with Portuguese spellings, especially in the vowels, which proves that he spoke Portuguese before he learned Castilian. MORISON, Samuel Eliot, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, Time Incorporated, New York, 1962, 13.

⁶⁹⁴ Sus escritos de un castellano aportuguesado [...] un castellano muy fluido con ortografía portuguesa, especialmente en el uso de las vocales, lo cual confirma que aprendió antes este último idioma. RUMEU DE ARMAS, *El Portugués...* 43-44.

⁶⁹⁵ RUMEU DE ARMAS, *El Portugués...* 43-44.

⁶⁹⁶ TEXTOS, XXIII.

⁶⁹⁷ De **muy pequeña edad** entré en la mar navegando, é lo he continuado fasta hoy. La mesma arte inclina á quien le prosigue á desear de saber los secretos deste mundo. Ya pasan de cuarenta años que yo voy en este uso. Todo lo

For clear proof of his long maritime experience and his expertise in navigation, we need to look no further than the letter written to the Catholic Kings, from Granada on February 6, 1502, where he does not merely explain that “in Flanders in the month of January, all the ships are dispatched to return to their homelands, and in this month, it is rare that there are not some gusts of breeze from the northeast and north-northeast.”⁶⁹⁸

The more amazing part of this letter is reading how Don Cristóbal was so experienced in the science of navigation in many parts of Europe that he managed to guess the arrival of a ship in Castile, without even knowing the date the ship left Flanders:

*Your Highnesses know well what happened last year, when you were in Burgos in such anguish because the weather persisted crudely, and bursts were happening. Exasperated you were going to Soria; and the whole court having departed on Saturday, Your Highnesses remained to leave on Monday morning; and for a certain purpose that night, in a writing of mine that I sent to Your Highnesses, I said: on such a day the wind began to blow; the other day the fleet did not leave, waiting to see if the wind stabilizes; It will leave on Wednesday, and on Thursday or Friday it will be as far along as the island of Wight, and if they don't stop there, **they will be in Laredo next Monday**, or the seafaring logic hasn't got a prayer. This writing of mine, along with the desire to see the Princess, prompted Your Highnesses to change your intention and not go to Soria and test the mariner's opinion: and **on Monday** [just as he predicted] at dawn a ship appeared at Laredo which refused to enter Wight because it had few supplies.*⁶⁹⁹

que fasta hoy se navega, todo lo he andado. Trato y conversación he tenido con gente sabia, eclesiásticos é seglares, latinos y griegos, judíos y moros, y con otros muchos de otras setas. CARTAS, 329.

⁶⁹⁸ En Flandes en el mes de Enero, están todas las naos despachadas para volver á sus tierras, y en este mes, de raro sale que no haya algunos estirones de brysa, ques lesnordeste y nomordeste. *Idem*, 345.

⁶⁹⁹ Saben bien Vuestras Alteças lo que aconteszió el año de nouenta y syete, quando estaban en Burgos en tal congoja por quel tiempo perserveraba crudo y se suçedían los estirones, que de enfadados se yban á Soria; y partida toda la corte, un sábado, quedaron Vuestras Alteças para partir lunes de mañana; y á un çierto proposito en aquella noche, en un escripto mío que envié á Vuestras Alteças, dezia: tal día comenzó á ventar el viento; el otro día no partirá la flota, aguardando sy el viento se afirma; partirá el miércoles, y el jueves ó viernes será tant auant como la isla de Huict, y syno se meten en ella, serán en Laredo el lunes que viene, ó la razón de marinería es toda perdida. Este escripto mío, con el deseo de la venida de la Princesa, movió á Vuestras Alteças á mudar de propósito de no yr á Soria y experirmentar la opinión del marinerio: y el lunes remaneszió sobre Laredo una nao que refusó de entrar en Huit porque tenía pocos bastimentos. *Idem*, 346-347.

Acquiring the knowledge that Colón displayed in the paragraph above would require many years of seafaring, and it is hard to accept that this was the same man who had very little schooling as we read in the passage attributed to Antonio Gallo.⁷⁰⁰

In 1472 that 21-year-old Genoese Colombo weaver was still in Savona, where he declared himself before a notary as “Christoforo de Colombo **weaver** from Genoa.”⁷⁰¹

Understanding that Don Cristóbal started his career as a full-time navigator at the age of 14, and that he declared to have spent “23 years at sea without leaving it for time enough to discount”,⁷⁰² it is impossible to accept that at the age of 21, seven years after starting his seafaring career, that same confessed navigator would declare himself to be a mere **weaver** before a notary.⁷⁰³

We cannot present a better witness than Colón himself, his writings, and the deeds he left us, as well as the trust that the Crown of Castile placed in him, giving him ships and people to command four times in four extensive voyages.

Don Cristóbal Colón was, without a doubt, a highly educated student of classical and modern authors and of the sacred books, and also the most knowledgeable navigator in the lands of Castile. Master Jaime Ferrer confirmed this in his 1495 letter to the Catholic Monarchs:

And I say that, in order to understand the rule and reasoning that I describe here, it will be necessary to be a Cosmographer, Arithmetician and Sailor [...] And whoever these three sciences together does not have it is impossible for him to understand, neither in any other way nor rule if he doesn't have expertise in the said three sciences [...] I will always defer

⁷⁰⁰ MURATORI, Lodovico Antonio, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, Raccolta Degli Storici Italiani dal Cinquecento al Millecinquecento*, T. Ventitreesimo, S. Lapi, 1910, 81-83.

⁷⁰¹ Savona, 20 marzo 1472: **Christoforo** de Columbo lanerio de Ianua et Dominico Vigna sartore, civibus Saone, testibus ad hec vocatis et rogatis ore proprio ipsius testatoris. RACCOLTA, Parte II - Volume I, 120.

⁷⁰² TEXTOS, 89.

⁷⁰³ There is no doubt that this Colombo family traded with wool and had a small wool weaving workshop. In the year 1472 Cristoforo Colombo, as witness in Savona to a testamentary deed, declares himself to be a “woolworker of Genoa” (in the Latin text: “Christoforo de Colombo lanerio de Ianua.”) If we would accept this identification, we would agree with the bishop of Nebbio, Agostino Giustiniani, in his assertion, expressed in his “Psalterium Poliglota”, printed in 1516, that the parents of Colón were only poor commoners. **This identification of the Genovese Colombo family as the family of Colón is false, because it enters in flagrant contradiction with the true facts of the discoverer of America.** Colón asserted that he began his sailing experience very young, at 14 years of age. If so, he would never have identified himself in 1472 as “lanerius” but as “marinerius”, sailor or captain of a ship. ALBARDANER I LLORENS, Francesc, *A Silk Trail to Columbus*, 1-2. The Canadian Nautical Research Society annual conference held at HMCS Bytown, Ottawa, Canada. 11-13 June 2015.

*to the correction of those that know and understand more than I, especially **the Admiral of the Indies** [Cristóbal Colón], who time existing in this matter more than anyone else knows, because he is a great theoretical and admirably practical, as his memorable works manifest.*⁷⁰⁴

In another letter from Master Jaime Ferrer directly to Don Cristóbal Colón written August 5, 1495, the Aragonese scientist wrote “you know more with your eyes closed than I do with my eyes open.”⁷⁰⁵

In January 1495, the Admiral wrote to the Castilian court that the Count of Provence and former King of Naples, René d’Anjou, had sent him on a mission to capture a ship in Tunis, North Africa, showing that his seafaring experience was well trusted, not only by the Kings of Portugal and Castile, but also by this aristocrat from France.⁷⁰⁶

Perhaps we should reconsider everything written after Colón’s death as having less value for the truth than what he himself and the Court wrote. After all, who would know more about the Admiral? Himself, his son, and the courts that he frequented or the various authors in other kingdoms whom we do not even know if they ever made the acquaintance of the navigator?

Colón wrote about his faith, theology, experience, dreams and plans not just for himself, but for Christianity. Like many people in his time, Colón took comfort in his faith and at times he let us see a strong belief in a God who listened to the pleas of the people, “especially Saint John: *in principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deuni, etc.*, with such high words.”⁷⁰⁷

And sometimes reflecting the same cult of the Holy Spirit as Portugal’s Queen Santa Isabel das Rosas, he wrote:

I say that the Holy Spirit works in Christians, Jews, Moors, and in all others of every sect, and not only in the wise, but in the innocent; that in my time I have seen a villager who

⁷⁰⁴ NAVARRETE, T. II, 101.

⁷⁰⁵ *Idem*, 103-105.

⁷⁰⁶ A mí acaeció, que el Rey Reynel, que Dios tiene, me envió á Túnez para prender la galeaza Fernandina, y estando ya sobre la isla de San Pedro, en Cerdeña, me dijo una saetía que estaban com la dicha galeaza dos naos y una carraca; por lo cual se alteró la gente que iba conmigo, y determinaron de no seguir el viaje, salvo de se volver á Marsella por otra nao y más gente. TEXTOS, 166-167.

⁷⁰⁷ En especial San Juan: *in principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deuni, etc.*, palabras tan altas. CARTAS, 331.

*gives an account of the sky and stars and the course of them better than others who spent money studying it.*⁷⁰⁸

Based on his extensive studies and vast experience in navigation, geography and expertise in the practices of trade, when he found something like mastic in the New World, he noted that “until today it has not been found, except in Greece and on the island of Chios, and the Lordship sells it for what it wants.”⁷⁰⁹ And writing about the cultivation of mastic, he gives us proof of his wisdom and experience on how they cultivated it in Chios, “a lot of mastic without curdling, they say that the water should do it, and that in Chios they harvest it in March, and that in January they would reap it in these islands because they are more temperate.”⁷¹⁰

We can also understand the experience he had regarding the different climates and winds in various parts of the known world from his own words, some of which we transcribe here:

- I sailed in the year 1477, in the month of February, beyond Tile, island, a hundred leagues [...] at the time I went there the sea was not frozen.⁷¹¹
- I was in the castle of São Jorge da Mina of the King of Portugal, which is under the Equatorial [Sun], and I am a good witness that it is not uninhabitable, as some say.⁷¹²
- Those who will go from Cádiz to Naples, if it is wintertime, they go within sight of Cape Creus in Catalonia, across the Gulf of Narbonne; then the wind is very strong and sometimes the ships should obey it and run by force to Berueria and through it they go further to Cape Creus, to hold the bowline more and catch the Pomegas of Marseilles or those of Eres.⁷¹³

⁷⁰⁸ Digo que el Espíritu Santo obra en cristianos, judíos, moros, y en todos otros de toda seta, y no solamente en los sabios, mas en los inorantes; que en mi tiempo yo he visto aldeano que da cuenta del cielo y estrellas y del curso dellas mejor que otros que gastaron dineros en ello. *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰⁹ *Idem*, 192.

⁷¹⁰ Mucha almáciga sin cuajarse, dice que las aguas lo deben hacer, y que en Xió lo cogen por Marzo, y que en Enero la cogerían en aquestas tierras por ser tan templadas. *Idem*, 96.

⁷¹¹ TEXTOS, 167.

⁷¹² TEXTOS, 167.

⁷¹³ TEXTOS, 306

- I happened to bring two ships and I left one in Porto Santo on a port of call,⁷¹⁴ which lasted one day, and I arrived in Lisbon eight days before her, because I caught a windstorm from the Southwest, and she caught nothing more than little North-east wind, which is contrary.⁷¹⁵

In this last extract, we can extrapolate something of great importance: although the Admiral hardly speaks of his Portuguese life, he wrote here that he “brought two ships”, that is, he would be the commander of both, which he captained from somewhere on the way to Lisbon. He stopped in Porto Santo, his brother-in-law’s island, where he “left one” ship and went with the other to Lisbon, where he waited eight days for the second ship to arrive.

Colón’s declaration of captaining two ships in Portugal shows us that Don Cristóbal was a trusted captain for the House of Viseu, or for the Crown of Portugal before he moved to Castile in 1484.

⁷¹⁴ Some transcriptions of this passage do not agree on the word for the task used by Colón. Consuelo Varela transcribes it as *poço*, with should be *pouso*, the portuguese word for a *port of call* or anchoring. However, Luis Filipe Thomaz takes this *poço* literally as a water well, saying Colón had left people there to dig one; “alude a um poço que mandou escavar no Porto Santo” (THOMAZ, 2021, 167), which seems unlikely to be Colón’s meaning.

⁷¹⁵ Yo me e hallado traer dos naos y dexar la una en el Puerto Sancto a hazer un *poço* en que se detuvo un día, e yo llegué a Lisboa ocho días antes que ella. TEXTOS, 167.

CHAPTER 7

THE CAREER OF A LIFETIME

More of the Admiral's life in writings and deeds

*Rex Portugalie misit in Guinea, anno dni 1485, magister Jhosepius, fixicus, fixicus eius et astrologus ad compiendum altitudinem solis in tota Guinea, qui omnia adinpleuit et renunciavit dito serenissimo regi, **me presente***, was written by Don Cristóbal Colón recounting his meeting with the King of Portugal and José Vizinho, in 1485 - see Figure 27.

The above note explains that King João II dispatched the scientist José Vizinho to obtain the measurements of the Sun's height at the Equator, an endeavor from which he returned in 1485 to present the results to the king in the **presence** of Don Cristóbal. Although Don Cristóbal and Don Hernando say the Admiral left Portugal for Castile at the end of 1484, it may seem suspicious that Colón was back in Portugal in 1485.

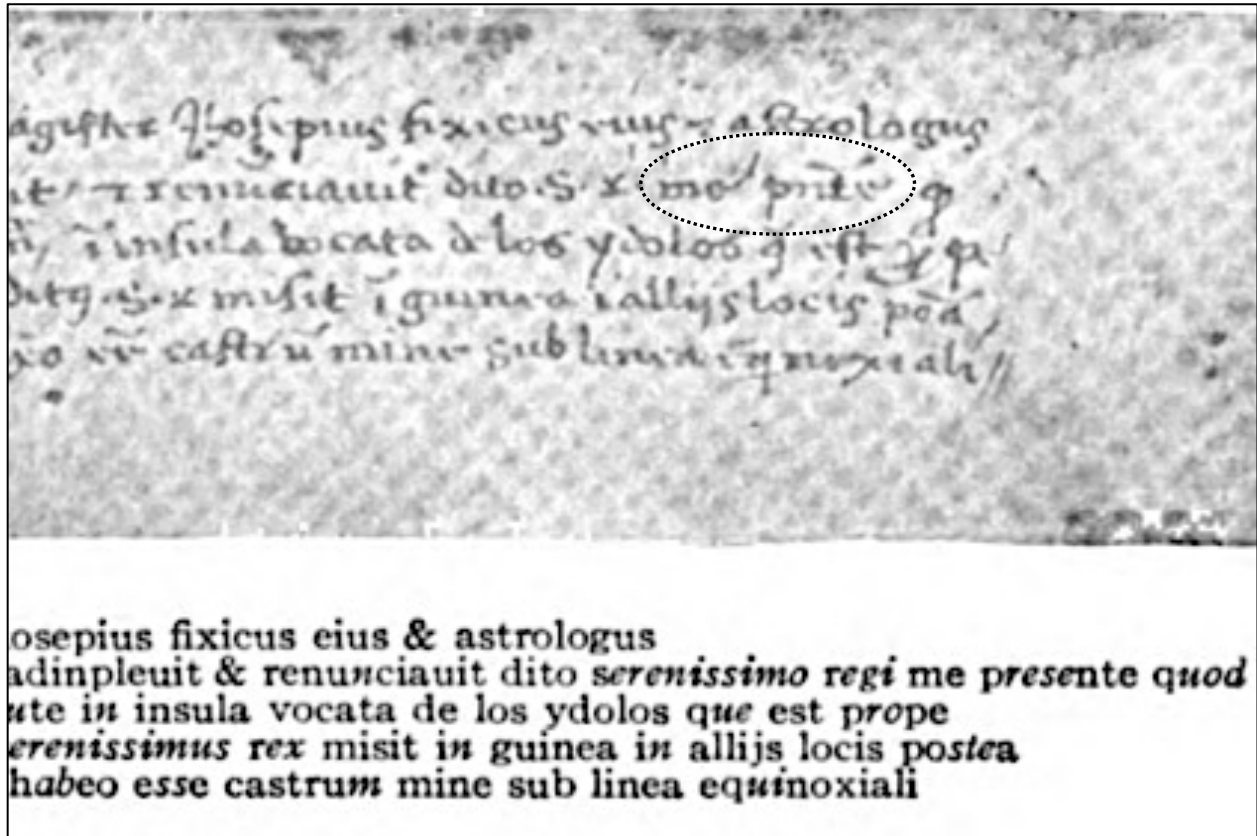
The facts in the note cannot be countered. João II did send Vizinho to the Equator and a *Table of the Height of the Sun* was created in Portugal. However, at the same time, and according to the Duke of Medinaceli's letter, when the Admiral came from Portugal, he lived at Medinaceli's palace for two years.⁷¹⁶ Medinaceli introduced Colón to the Queen, resulting in his first audience on January 20, 1486.⁷¹⁷ Therefore, Don Cristóbal moved to Castille in 1484, exactly when he and his son say that he was.

⁷¹⁶ Yo tuve en mi casa mocho tiempo á Cristóbal Colón, que se venia de Portugal, y se quería ir al Rey de Francia para que emprendiese de ir á buscar las Indias con su favor y ayuda, é yo lo quisiera probar y enviar desde el Puerto que tenia buen aparejo con tres ó quatro carabelas, que no me demandaba mas; pero como vi que era ésta empresa para la Reina nuestra Señora, lo escribí á su Alteza desde Rota [...] á mi causa y por yo detenerle en mi casa dos años, y haberle enderezado á su servicio, se ha hallado tan grande cosa como esta. NAVARRETE, T. II, 20-21.

⁷¹⁷ RUMEU DE ARMAS, Antonio, *El Portugués...*, 29.

Figure 27

Section of Don Cristóbal's note reporting his encounter with João II and José Vizinho in 1485, *me presente* is circled.



Source: THACHER, Vol. III, 479.

How the Admiral, who had left Portugal secretly at the end of 1484, could be back in Portugal with João II sometime in 1485 is not explained, but a trip from Seville to Lisbon was only a few days by sea. The navigator did write that he was present on his private memo and we are compelled to believe him. After all, he had the details correct about José Vizinho's mission in Guinea.

Since Don Cristóbal lived with Medinaceli and this duke owned a fleet of ships and ports in Andalusia, it would be possible for Colón to continue his seafaring activities while in Castile and sail back and forth between Lisbon and Seville. One may assume that the future Admiral probably made various clandestine trips back to Portugal before 1493.

In his article, *Lá vem Cristóvão Colombo, que tem muito que contar*, Luís de Albuquerque states that "Colón did not write that he was **present** at the interview between the king and Vizinho; from what he says, we can only conclude that somehow he learned of it."⁷¹⁸

We do not know which author this illustrious Portuguese mathematician relied on to deny Admiral Colón's words, but we can only suppose that Albuquerque had never seen the Admiral's note. Instead, he must have relied on some misinformed author. In this case, as in others, the misrepresentation or minimization of the facts left us with yet another inverse version of the actual events.

King João II jealously guarded and protected his discovery and navigational matters through secrecy and deadly enforcement. The king's men severely dealt with mariners who tried to take information to Castile. João II's men were even able to capture traitors inside Castile. In this episode reported by Garcia de Resende, they put "fishhooks through his lips to keep him quiet and they brought him to Evora where he was quickly quartered."⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁸ Colón não escreveu ter estado presente à entrevista entre o rei e Vizinho; do que escreve, apenas se conclui, de qualquer modo, que ele soube. ALBUQUERQUE, Luís Mendonça de, *Dúvidas e certezas na história dos Descobrimentos Portugueses*, Vol. 1, Lisboa, Vega, 1990, 139.

⁷¹⁹ A pilot and two sailors from Mina, ran away to Castile [...] with the intentions of [giving away secrets] in doing disservice to the king, who as soon as the king knew, he had such a way that even being inside Castile he quickly had them within his grasp. And bringing them all [back to Portugal], the [Spanish] militias who patrolled the villages were alerted and came upon them from all directions. The Portuguese who were bringing them sensing those militias and realizing they couldn't bring all three prisoners without great risks to their persons, entangled themselves in a big forest, killed their horses so they would not make noise and cut the heads off of the two sailors, which they brought with them. As for the pilot, after the danger had dissipated they brought him, moving during the nighttime with fishhooks through his lips to keep him quiet and brought him to Evora where he was quickly quartered. Because of this nobody would dare do what he should not, because they had no idea where to go that the king could not reach them. Sometimes by ordering the death of a few we save ourselves the death of many and other losses and dangers that can come to the king when no one has fear or worry. For the more good

João II must have learned the enforcement strategy from his great-uncle, Prince Henrique *the Navigator*, whose men also did everything possible to protect the Portuguese Atlantic monopoly.⁷²⁰

In 1474, João II and his father, Afonso V, implemented detailed plans to safeguard the rights and privileges over those territories, including a rule that those who went to the said lands and seas of “Guinea to trade [without authorization] shall **die** for it.”⁷²¹ Unauthorized foreigners were prohibited from sailing to Mina and other parts south of the Canaries which were all claimed by Portugal.⁷²² The Flemish noble, Eustache de la Fosse, armed a ship in Andalusia and went to trade in the Portuguese-protected territories of Guinea and Mina. Diogo Cão, who patrolled these coasts, arrested him, and brought him to Lisbon.

Even as Prince, João II was a cunning leader who took no prisoners, and in 1480 the infringement penalties were increased. On April 6, of that same year, Afonso V ordered that foreigners caught South of the Canary Islands be thrown overboard to die and not return to their kingdoms to reveal to the rest of the world the Portuguese secrets of navigation and trade.⁷²³ This new policy was implemented because the foreigner arrested by Diogo Cão managed to escape after being incarcerated in the kingdom, due to a large bribe paid to the jailer.⁷²⁴

the good people do by love the more bad the bad people avoid doing by fear. RESENDE, Garcia de, *Vida e Feitos D’El-Rey Dom João Segundo*, Universidade de Coimbra, 2007, 256.

⁷²⁰ The Spanish were always the first to attempt these incursions. The atrocities committed by Prince Henrique’s men were not only meant to stop the perpetrators but also to scare any future ventures. This struggle for the Atlantic Monopoly between Portugal and Spain can be seen in this short extract written in 1454 by the Spanish Alonso de Palencia: The Portuguese kill any Castilians that are caught anywhere beyond the Canaries, some by cruel torments, and to spread amongst all others perpetual terror, mutilate some, cutting off their feet and hands [...] on April 10, 1454, King Juan II of Castile protested to the Portuguese court that “[...] certain subjects and naturals of ours sailing some caravels from the land called Guinea [...] your captain, Álvaro Gonçalves Palenço, took them by force of arms [...] you ordered arrested and kept in prison the said vassals [...] and, the same way by your order were cut off the hands of a Genoese merchant. ROSA, *Columbus the Untold Story*, 42.

⁷²¹ Qualquer pessoa de qualquer previniencia, estado e condiçam que seja, que as dictas partes e terras e mares de Guinea for ou mamdar trautar [...] sem licença e autoridade Nossa, moira porello. BRASIO, Padre Antonio, *Monumenta missionaria africana. Africa ocidental*, Agencia Geral do Ultramar, Lisboa, 1954, Vol. IV, 10.

⁷²² In this year [1480] they, King Afonso and the Prince João II, ordered George Correa commander of Pinheiro, and Mem Palha, good, and valiant knights to go patrol the coasts of Guinea, each one in his own captaincy, the two meeting at the location of Mina destroyed 35 carracks and ships of Castile, of which were captains Pedro de Covides [...] that went there to trade per orders of King Fernando, and of Queen Isabel. RODRIGUES, Graça Almeida, *Crónica do Príncipe D. João de Damião de Góis*, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1977, 214.

⁷²³ Sejam deitados ao mar para que morram logo naturalmente e não sejam trazidos a estes reinos. FONSECA, Luís Adão da, *D. João II*, Temas e Debates, 2007, 152.

⁷²⁴ FOSSE, Eustache de la, *Voyage a La Cote Occidentale D’afrique*, Paris, 1897, 24.

The success of great empires and small kingdoms alike depends on maintaining secrecy over its technology advances and confidential information, as well as the controlled spread of misinformation. Governments control and forbid the revelation of state secrets to their enemies. Apparently, to safeguard his monopoly King João II also propagated disinformation, including falsified values of the terrestrial degree, as his secret agent Pêro da Covilhã later confided.⁷²⁵

In King Dinis's reign we see a careful strategy regarding foreigners at the king's service. The new Admiral, Manuel Pessanha, and his 20 Genoese men of the sea were expected to maintain secrecy over Portuguese navigation matters. This requirement was explicitly written into the new Admiral's contract in 1317.⁷²⁶

In 1443, in the same line of thought, Prince Henrique and the Regent Don Pedro instituted a law of *mare clausum* (closed sea) to aid in Portugal's policy of protecting the Atlantic territories for Portuguese exploration, thus excluding all other kingdoms.⁷²⁷ And it seems that many Atlantic discoveries, especially in the Canaries, attributed to Genoese in the 14th century were Portuguese

⁷²⁵ Sabemos hoje com inteira segurança [...] assim como pelo testemunho de Pêro da Covilhã [...] que D. João II simulou, num caso, um falso valor do grau; noutro, um excesso das suas medições; e ocultou cuidadosamente quer o conhecimento do mais prático caminho para a Índia, quer a situação, em relação à África, dos grandes empórios do Oriente. CORTESÃO, Jaime, *A Política de Sigilo nos Descobrimentos*, 137.

⁷²⁶ [1 de Fevereiro de 1317] Em nome de Deus, Amen. Saibam quantos esta carta virem como eu, Don Dinis, pela graça de Deus Rei de Portugal [...] entendendo por serviço de Deus e meu prol e honra da minha terra, de haver obrigado vós, micer Manuel Peçagno de Génova, e vosso sucessores para ficardes na minha terra por meu Almirante [...] E eu, sobredito micer Manuel, por esta mercê [...] fico logo por vosso vassalo e vos faço menagem e juro vos sirva bem e lealmente nas vossas galés no mar [...] mas que o meu corpo não deva ir para o mar em vosso serviço com menos de três galés [...] vos servir contra todos os homens do mundo, de qualquer estado ou de qualquer condição que sejam [...] e que vos dê bom conselho sempre que me pedirdes, o melhor que eu entender e souber; e que **guarde vossos segredos que me disserdes ou enviardes dizer** [...] Outrossim, eu, micer Manuel, e os meus sucessores que este feudo herdarem devemos ter sempre vinte homens de Génova sabedores do mar, que sejam convenientes para alcaides de galés e para arrais [...] tendes para vós a quinta parte de todas as coisas que ganhades e apanhades no mar nas minhas galés, daquilo que tomardes aos inimigos da nossa fê ou aos inimigos da minha terra. *Carta de doação, feita por D. Dinis a micer Manuel Pessanha*..., Torre do Tombo, Gavetas, Gav. 3, mç. 1, n.º 7.

⁷²⁷ Em 1443, o infante D. Pedro, então regente do Reino, deu o primeiro passo no sentido da definição duma política de *mare clausum*, ao conceder o exclusivo da navegação a Sul do cabo Bojador a seu irmão D. Anrique, a 22 de Outubro desse ano. Por a mesma altura surgiam as primeiras bulas que reconheciam os direitos da Ordem de Cristo sobre os territórios existentes na região. COSTA, João Paulo Oliveira, *D. Afonso V e o Atlântico: a Base do Projecto Expansionista de D. João II*, III Simpósio de História Marítima, Academia da Marinha, Lisboa, 2000, 39.

voyages, promoted and funded by the Kings of Portugal, especially Don Afonso IV,⁷²⁸ of which the mariners employed by Admiral Pessanha did not keep secret as required.⁷²⁹

As the evidence reveals, the Portuguese kings had a long-standing policy of concealment regarding Atlantic discoveries. One would assume that King João II learned from the mistakes of his ancestors to better protect this Portuguese national project. João II was the first Portuguese ruler to implement new techniques to surpass his sailors' Atlantic challenges. Luiz Filipe Thomaz describes this as “the first coherent and integrated overseas expansion policy” in European history.⁷³⁰

Beaujouan summed up João II's shrewd personality when reviewing his *Regimento do Astrolábio*, a nautical manual printed in 1483, a copy of which is preserved today in Munich:

*João II of Portugal had the immense merit of knowing how to put the science of his time at the service of a great national enterprise: it is in this that his organizing genius has a revolutionary modern character.*⁷³¹

⁷²⁸ In the Vatican's Secret archives is the letter from Portugal's King Afonso IV to the Pope complaining about the Vatican's decision to award the conquest to a Spaniard when the Kingdom of Portugal was the first Christian kingdom to sail there and attempt the conquest of those islands [...] But for 150 years, Spain neither conquered the Canaries, nor allowed Portugal to conquer them. Afonso IV's letter, translated here from the Latin, is explicit in that it was Portugal and not Spain who deserved the right of conquest of the Canaries for being the first kingdom to arrive. Only another war with Spain interrupted that planned conquest: “Replying to your letter accordingly, indeed it seemed obvious to us that we respond – properly, with reverence – that the first discoverers of the aforesaid islands were inhabitants of our kingdom [...] Truly we, expecting that aforesaid islands exist for us more than for any [other] prince [...] We sent our people and some ships to that place for the purpose of examining the condition of that land [...] for the purpose of conquering the aforesaid islands, we took care to send our armada along with an abundant multitude of soldiers [...] the war arisen first between us, and the king of Castile [Castile is part of today's Spain], then between us and the Saracen Kings, it hampered our plan.” The reality of history is that, before Cristóbal Colón's historic First Voyage, the Spanish did not sponsor voyages of Atlantic discovery and exploration but instead sponsored voyages of exploitation into Portuguese-discovered locations. this was the structure in place already a century and a half before Colón came along. ROSA, *Columbus the Untold Story*, 24.

⁷²⁹ O Rei Dom Dinis autorizava Manuel Pessanha a desenvolver actividades corsárias contra os Mouros e a manter, sempre, vinte homens de Génova sabedores do mar como capitães da sua frota e que **guardassem os segredos**. As notícias das descobertas levadas para Itália por estes italianos, e que lhes foram atribuídas, foram efectivamente missões secretas promovidas, geridas e financiadas pelos Reis de Portugal, que estes últimos não conseguiram manter em segredo. ROSA and STEELE, *O Mistério Colombo Revelado*, 92-93.

⁷³⁰ THOMAZ, Luís Filipe, *O Projecto Imperial Joanino (Tentativa de interpretação global da política ultramarina de D. João II)*, Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época. Actas, Universidade do Porto, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1989, Vol. I, 81.

⁷³¹ Jean II de Portugal a eu l'immense mérite de savoir mettre la science de son époque au service d'une grande entreprise nationale: c'est en cela que son génie organisateur a un caractère révolutionnairement moderne.

This book, a scientific tool of navigation, resulted from João II's experts, the so-called *Junta of Mathematicians*. This group, which included Martin Behaim, made significant advances in technologies and brought new knowledge by mapping sea currents and prevailing winds, as well as producing improvements in astronomical navigation methods, as Las Casas corroborates:

After this, King João II ordered that much effort be put into the art of navigation, and he put this in charge of two physicists, one was a Christian named Mestre Rodrigo, the other a Jew, Mestre José Vizinho, and another from Bohemia, Martin de Bohemia, who was said to be a disciple of John de Montereio [Johann Müller Regiomontanus], a great astronomer, the aforementioned [experts] discovered this same method of navigation that we use today, by the height of the Sun [...] Thus, it is true that the Portuguese were the first to find this method of Sun navigation and to apply it; and it was from them that the Spaniards took it, we should not take away their merit but instead we should thank them, and because Cristóbal Colón and his brother Bartolomé Colón were living in Portugal in those days, aside from what they knew of theoretical and navigational experience, In Portugal they would have perfected themselves in this skill.⁷³²

José Vizinho presented the measurements of the height of the Sun at the Equator to João II and Colón. But this was not simply information about the height of the Sun. The data collected gave Portugal a considerable advantage over other nations. Pilots could pinpoint their ships' locations during the day instead of waiting for the North Star. Oviedo explained further how the Admiral was the first in Spain to put into practice the art of sailing by the height of the Sun:

Cristóbal Colón was the first in Spain to teach how to navigate the vast ocean by using the height of the Sun [Portuguese science] and North Star for the degrees. And he put it into practice; because before him, although such art was taught in schools, few (or rather no one) dared to try it in the high seas; because it is a science that cannot be implemented

BEAUJOUAN, M. Guy, *Science Livresque et Art Nautique au XV Siècle. Les Aspects Internationaux de la Découverte Océanique*, Actes du Cinquième Colloque International, d'Histoire Maritime 1960, 1966.

⁷³² LAS CASAS, T. I, 213.

*entirely, one must learn it by experience and results, because it is used in very large oceans and very far from land.*⁷³³

Just as foreigners were forbidden to sail to Portugal's Mina, scientific advances such as the mapping of currents, winds, routes, and coasts, certainly were kept secret from foreigners. A common complaint from the Portuguese people at the courts was that all foreigners should be expelled from the kingdom since "Florentines and Genoese never benefited this kingdom, but instead," foreigners hung around Portugal "only to discover our secrets of Guinea."⁷³⁴

Don Cristóbal wrote that he was present with Vizinho to witness this Portuguese exclusive technology.⁷³⁵ By João II sharing the *Table of the Height of the Sun* with Don Cristóbal, it denotes a very close relationship between the King and the Navigator, yet his Portuguese life would later be suppressed by the Portuguese chroniclers. Composing their chronicles under King Manuel I's reign, the famous Admiral of the Indies is not described as a confidant of João II and mentioned only in regard to his 1493 port of call in Lisbon as captain for the Monarchs of Castile.

Teixeira da Mota alerted us in 1993 that Portuguese maritime technology, knowledge, and experience played a major part in Don Cristóbal's life.⁷³⁶ Aside from the *Table of the Height of the Sun*, the Portuguese caravel was an essential part of Portuguese technology and a state secret. Portuguese Caravels were kept in great secrecy and prohibited to be built or sold to foreigners because they were groundbreaking technology.⁷³⁷

⁷³³ Cristóbal Colón fue el primero que en España enseñó á navegar el amplíssimo mar Océano por las alturas de los grados de Sol y Norte. E lo puso por obra; por que hasta él, aunque se leyese en las escuelas tal arte, pocos (ó mejor diciendo ninguno) se atrevían á lo experimentar en las mares; porque es sciencia que no se puede exercitar enteramente, para la saber por experiencia y efecto, sino se usa en golphos muy grandes é muy desviados de la tierra. OVIEDO Y VALDÉS, Gonzalo Fernández de, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias, Islas y Tierra-Firme del Mar Océano*, Publicala la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 1851, Cap. IV, 18.

⁷³⁴ CORTESÃO, Jaime, *A Política de Sigilo nos Descobrimentos*, Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do Quinto Centenário da Morte do Infante D. Henrique, Lisboa, 1960, 28.

⁷³⁵ Written to train pilots [...] João II had also made a secret about [this book] one of his greatest glories. CORTESÃO, Jaime, *A Política de Sigilo nos Descobrimentos*, Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do Quinto Centenário da Morte do Infante Don Henrique, Lisboa, 1960, 54.

⁷³⁶ MOTA, Avelino Teixeira da, *Cristóbal Colón y los portugueses*, Cuadernos Colombinos, 5, Valladolid, 1975, 33.

⁷³⁷ Mandamos e defendemos que qualquer pessoa, de qualquer condição, não venda aos estrangeiros caravelas nem as vá lá fazer ao estrangeiro. - Don Afonso V ordena a 16 de Dezembro 1454, contra Afonso Fernandes criado do Infante Don Henrique, que o dito Afonso Fernandes e seus parceiros devem perder todos seus bens móveis como de raiz porque trocaram ou venderam uma caravela em reinos de Inglaterra. - A 12 de Fevereiro 1471, Don Afonso doou a Diogo Figueira os bens de um tal Cide Roiz, que vendera uma caravela em Aragão. - A favor de Álvaro de Castro e contra o pescador Vicente Anes Rebolim, morador em Lisboa, que havia vendido uma sua caravela fora do reino. - A 10 de Novembro de 1478, o Príncipe Dom João concedia a James Timer, Valenciano,

In the letter that João II sent to *Xpoval* Colón in 1488, calling him “Our special friend in Seville,” the Portuguese king asks Colón to come quickly to Lisbon. The King wrote, “it will make us very happy if you come [...] we beg you and ask that your coming be immediate [...] and we will thank you and have it much in our service.” Furthermore, João II declared that he would compensate the Admiral for all he was owed.

This letter is often referred to as a “safe conduct.” In our opinion, the safe-conduct phrase served the sole purpose of ensuring Colón’s safe arrival, and that the importance of the letter was not in this phrase, but in the king’s plea for Colón to come immediately to Portugal because his “industriousness and good ingenuity are necessary to us.” This letter states, in a clear and undeniable way, that the King of Portugal wanted to hear Colón’s expert opinion. Being that it contradicts the official narrative, which claims Colón was despised and discredited in Portugal, when the letter was first discovered many historians considered it to be a forgery by the Admiral. However, the letter was authenticated in 1908 by D. José Pessanha, archivist at the Torre do Tombo.⁷³⁸

As a result of meeting with the king in 1488, Don Cristóbal left us another note in his books from that same year. He recorded that he was present in yet another meeting of Portuguese maritime secrets. Bartolomeu Dias, Don Cristóbal, and King João II were together reviewing the map of the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope:

Note that in this year [14]88, in the month of December, Bartholomew Dias arrived in Lisbon, captain of three ships, which had been sent by the most serene King of Portugal to Guinea to discover the land. And he gave an account to the Most Serene King of how he had sailed beyond what had already been sailed 600 leagues, that is 450 to the South and 250 to the North, to a cape which he called Cabo da Boa Esperanza [...] The said voyage

mestre de açúcar na ilha da Madeira, ‘que pudesse ter parte com os naturais deste reino em qualquer nau ou navio de gávea e não em caravela’. - E ainda a 10 de Maio 1520, Don Manuel ordena aos juizes da vila de Sines investigar a venda de uma caravela a um castelhano por um Diogo Pires. CORTESÃO, Jaime, *A Política de Sigilo nos Descobrimentos*, 34-39.

⁷³⁸ Assignatura do monarca, perfeitamente idêntica à do seu testamento e às de outros diplomas do Archivo Nacional por elle subscriptos, concludo, sem hesitações, que o documento é autentico. Esta conclusão é reforçada pela analyse dos caracteres intrinsecos: nem a linguagem, nem o formulario, offerecem qualquer particularidade, que possa, levemente sequer, suscitar duvidas a respeito da autenticidade do documento. D. José Pessanha, Primeiro Conservador do R. Archivo da Torre do Tombo e Professor de Diplomatica no Curso de Bibliothecarios-Archivistas. VIGNAUD, Henry, *Histoire critiques de la Grande Enterprise...*, 675-676.

*he drew it and described it league by league on a sea chart, to be presented before the eyes of the Most Serene King. **In all this I took part.***⁷³⁹

Portugal did not publicize Bartolomeu Dias's voyage of discovery, yet King João II himself shared this information with the future Admiral - see Figure 28. Again, this shows that João II trusted Colón enough to disclose to him the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope four years after he had moved to Castile.⁷⁴⁰

Prior to fleeing secretly to Castile in 1484, during the treason of the nobility against King João II, Colón declared he had sailed to western lands⁷⁴¹ and had debated with King João II the proof of the existence of other lands to the West. These discussions involved plant matter that reached the coasts of the Portuguese Atlantic islands:

*He said that the King of Portugal affirmed the same, and **that speaking with him of such things** João II showed them to him.*⁷⁴²

*Pedro Correia, Colón's brother-in-law, had also told him that he had seen another piece of wood on the island of Porto Santo, carried by the same winds, well carved as another one that had arrived earlier.*⁷⁴³

⁷³⁹ TEXTOS, 11-12.

⁷⁴⁰ Por la información que yo avía dado a Vuestras Altezas de las tierras de **Yndia** [...] pensaron de embiarme a mí, Cristóval Colón, a las dichas partidas de **Yndia** para ver los dichos príncipes y los pueblos y las tierras y la disposición dellas [...] mandaron Vuestras Altezas a mí que con armada suficiente me fuese a las dichas partidas de **Yndia** [...] que se llamava en lengua de **yndios** Guanahaní [...] La qual es toda una en todas estas yslas de **Yndia** [...] nuezes grandes de las de **Yndia**, creo que dize, y ratones grandes de los de **Yndia** también. DIARIO.

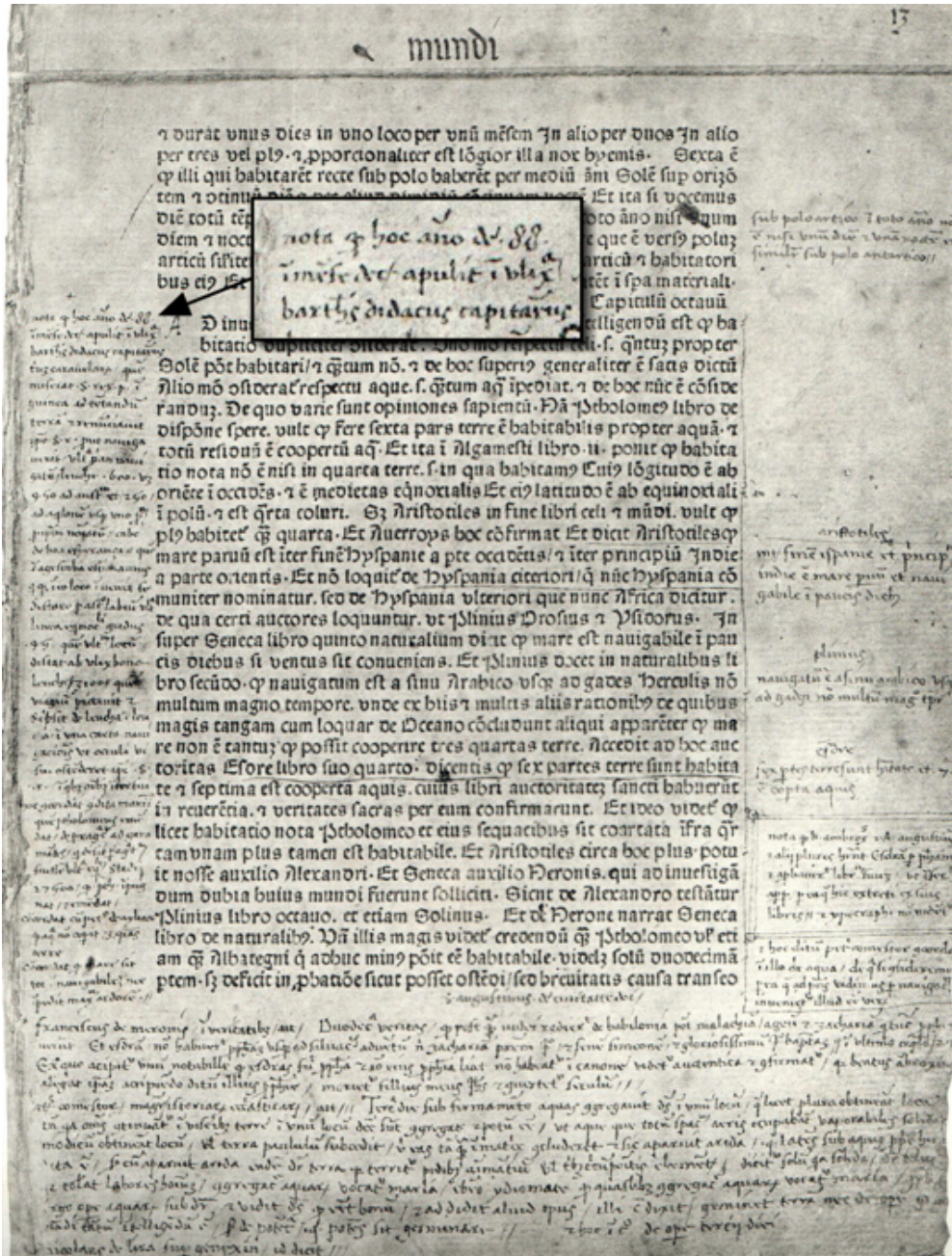
⁷⁴¹ Yo navegué el año de mil cuatrocientos y setenta y siete, en el mes de Hebrero, ultra Tile isla cien leguas, cuya parte austral dista de la equinoçial setenta y tres grados, y no sesenta y tres, como algunos dicen, y no está dentro de la línea que incluye el Occidente, como dice Ptolomeo, sino mucho más occidental. Y a esta isla, que es tan grande como Inglaterra, van los ingleses con mercadería, espeçialmente los de Bristol, y al tiempo que yo a ella fue, no estaba congelado el mar, aunque avía grandísimas mareas, tanto que algunas partes, dos veces al día, subía veinte y cinco braças, y descendía otras tantas en altura. TEXTOS, 167.

⁷⁴² HISTORIE, Cap. IX, 20.

⁷⁴³ Dice, pues, Cristóbal Colon entre otras cosas que puso en sus libros por escrito, que hablando con hombres de la mar, personas diversas que navegaban las mares de Occidente, mayormente á las islas de los Azores y de la Madera, entre otras, le dijo un piloto del rey de Portugal, que se llamaba Martin Vicente, que hallándose una vez 450 leguas al Poniente del Cabo de San Vicente, vido y cogió en el navio, en el mar, un pedazo de madero labrado por artificio, y, á lo que juzgaba, no con hierro; de lo cual y por haber muchos dias ventado vientos Ponientes, imaginaba que aquel palo venia de alguna isla ó islas que hacia el Poniente hobiese. También otro que se nombró Pero Correa, concuño del mismo Cristóbal Colon, casado con la hermana de su mujer, le certificó que en la isla del Puerto Sancto habia visto otro madero venido con los mismos vientos y labrado de la misma

Figure 28

Annotation where Colón claims to be with Bartolomeu Dias and João II in 1488 looking over a map of the Cape of Good Hope.



Source: THACHER, Vol. III, 480.

forma, é que también habia visto cañas muy gruesas, que en un cañuto dellas pudieran caber tres azumbres de agua ó de vino; y esto mismo dice Cristóbal Colon que oyó afirmar al Rey de Portugal, hablando con él en estas materias, y que el Rey se las mandó mostrar. LAS CASAS, T1, 98-97

All this evidence leads us to deduce that the future Admiral would not only have a lot of experience and wisdom, as he told us in his writings, but that King João II esteemed and trusted him so much that he would discuss navigation secrets, Portuguese scientific discoveries, and proof of lands to the West with Colón. To have debated **such things** amongst themselves as the Cape of Good Hope and the Table of the Height of the Sun, Don Cristóbal had to be part of a trusted circle of King João II, and Colón seems to have maintained this information hidden.

There is a presumption among current scholars that King João II did not keep the Portuguese discoveries confidential, because the western coast of Africa, including the Cape of Good Hope, was drawn in the Martellus map circa 1490.⁷⁴⁴ The existence of the Martellus map in no way negates Portuguese secrecy, because having a confidential map constructed by someone you trust is not the same as publicizing your discoveries to the four winds as was done with Colón's Letter of the First Voyage.

We should remember two important facts - first, Martellus was working in Florence; and second, King João II's confidants in the discovery enterprise included at least three Florentines: Bartolomeu Marchioni, Lorenzo Berardi, and his son Juanoto Berardi. These three men were deeply involved in the Portuguese maritime secrets. Bartolomeu Marchioni financed Pero da Covilhã's secret spy mission to India in 1487 and Juanoto Berardi was Colón's agent at the same time that he was the factor of King João II in Seville.⁷⁴⁵ Don Hernando wrote that Toscanelli's letter was given to his father by Lorenzo Berardi. Furthermore, Martellus, in his larger map, seems

⁷⁴⁴ RICHARDSON, William A. R., *South America on Maps before Columbus? Martellus's 'Dragon's Tail' Peninsula*, *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 55, 2003, 25-37.

⁷⁴⁵ Juanoto Berardi ... was the son of the abovementioned Lorenzo Berardi. His presence is documented for the first time in Spain in 1485 in the Registro General del Sello del Archivo General de Simancas [...] as a slave trader with close ties to his father's partner in Lisbon, Bartolomé Marchioni [...] July 16, 1486 Juanoto received a letter of safe-conduct from Queen Isabel, which was renewed on April 6, 1490. When in late 1493 or early 1494, Bartolomé Colón, hurries from the court of France and comes to Spain, where he had been called urgently by his brother, it is with Berardi [whose father is a privileged merchant in Portugal] that Bartolomé Colón enters in contact. Juanoto Berardi wrote on his deathbed in 1495, that he was Colón's servant. "Berardi was involved in the provisioning of all fleets that were sent to the indies as an agent of don Cristóbal [...] on behalf of the Admiral of the said islands because he has a power of attorney to do so." But Juanoto Berardi was also the factor of King João II of Portugal in Seville, in charge of collecting the fifth part from all the ships that, with João II's license, sailed to Guinea. Therefore, Juanoto Berardi, at the same time that he is employed as Colón's servant, he was also employed by King João II. ROSA, *Columbus The Untold Story*, 204.

to use the same elements in the West as those present in Behaim's 1492 globe, and Behaim was another of João II's confidants.⁷⁴⁶

The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope was not publicized at all, contrary to the Discovery of the New World. The fact that Dias's voyage, a more monumental accomplishment than that of Don Cristóbal's voyage, not made public points to a deliberate silence in Portugal.

However, leaving the issue of globes, maps, and possible disinformation aside, we are left with a confirmed confidential relationship between Admiral Colón and King João II that lasted over many years. Don Cristóbal appears to have integrated a group of confidential individuals to whom King João II personally delivered important information on Portugal's Atlantic Discoveries. Colón received information from João II and returned the favor by presenting the account of his First Voyage directly to that king before he presented it to anyone else.

On his return from the First Voyage, Don Cristóbal piloted the *Niña* from Española to Santa Maria in the Azores. From the Azores, he sailed to Lisbon, where he anchored on March 4, 1493. Not finding King João II in the capital, "he wrote **immediately** to the King of Portugal, who was nine leagues from there," reads the *Diario* entry of March 4. The court was at Vale do Paraíso, from where João II sent Don Martinho de Noronha (Perestrelo) to Lisbon to escort the triumphant Admiral and Viceroy to him. As we have shown, this Don Martinho de Noronha was Filipa Moniz's cousin and son of João II's Lord Chamberlain, Don Pedro de Noronha.

Anchored in the Tagus River, Colón sent a letter to the court of Castile where he added:

*After writing this [letter] and being already sailing in the Sea of Castile, there was such a south-southeast wind that made me unload the ships, but today I ran to this port of Lisbon.*⁷⁴⁷

What manipulation of the facts! The stop in Lisbon was intentionally planned and did not happen by a chance storm. The *Diario* shows a route from Santa Maria direct to Lisbon and to

⁷⁴⁶ The Nuremberg Globe of Martin Behaim, made in 1492, was almost identical with the world map of about 1490 by Henricus Martellus, of Florence. DAVIES, Arthur, *Behaim, Martellus and Columbus*, The Geographical Journal, Vol. 143, No. 3 (Nov., 1977), 451.

⁷⁴⁷ OBREGÓN, Mauricio, *The Columbus Papers: The Barcelona Letter of 1493, the Landfall Controversy, and the Indian Guides: a Facsimile Edition of the Unique Copy in the New York Public Library*, Macmillan, 1991, 56.

nowhere else. On Monday, March 4, at sunrise, the land was identified as the *Roca of Sintra*, near Lisbon.⁷⁴⁸

Note that the latitude of Santa Maria Island is the same as Cape St. Vicente; basically 37° N. Navigating straight east from Santa Maria, the *Niña* would pass south of Portugal on a route back to Huelva. The winds could force a change of route, but as soon as possible it would be corrected to the north or south, as necessary. But looking at the route, Colón sailed for seven days east-northeast, clearly avoiding the path east to Castile. On the night of March 3, the *Niña* was at 38° N in front of the Port of Lisbon and not southwards towards Andalusia. Why? The intentional route to Lisbon is obvious.

He realized that they were in front of Portugal on March 4, but instead of turning the bow to the south to round the southern tip of Portugal, he sailed into the Port of Lisbon; and on Tuesday, he anchored safely at Restelo. Colón did not try to hide. Instead, he stopped next to Portugal's biggest warship, the São Cristóvão, where its captain came to celebrate Colón's arrival with a music band. "The captain, whose name was Alvaro Damán, arrived in great formation, came to the caravel with drums, trumpets, and horns, creating a great celebration and speaking to the Admiral," as reported by the Admiral himself.⁷⁴⁹

If there was no longer a "great storm," since the Portuguese were playing music in the streets to welcome him, why did Colón not immediately flee to Castile?

The answer can only be one - because Lisbon was where he had intended to sail to. There Colón sought to meet again with João II, the monarch to whom he immediately wrote with news of his voyage. The lie about the storm that forced him to stop in the enemy kingdom concealed the actual route he had traced from the Azores.

⁷⁴⁸ In Santa Maria on Sunday, February 24 [1493] it was good weather to sail to Castile, he stopped taking on firewood and stone and made them sail eastwards. On Monday, February 25th, he sailed on his route east. On Tuesday, February 26, he sailed on his route 100 miles east, and 32 miles east-northeast. On Wednesday, February 27th, this night and day he sailed off his route due to contrary winds, that is, the winds kept him from sailing east to Lisbon. On Thursday, February 28th, headwinds followed, and he tacked northeast and east-northeast so as not to get too far off his route. Friday, March 1st, sailed tonight to east quarter northeast. The desired destination is northeast. Saturday, March 2, tonight he sailed on his route east quarter northeast. Continues the route to Lisbon. Sunday, March 3, after sunset he sailed on his route east some 60 miles. A storm appeared which (according to him) ripped all the sails [...] and they saw signs of land and they were in front of Lisbon. (Note that on this night with a storm, or without a storm, the *Niña* was near the port of Lisbon.) DIARIO.

⁷⁴⁹ DIARIO, March 5.

The relationship between the king and the navigator was friendly and respectful, not one of antagonism or hatred, as Portuguese chroniclers have written. Instead of believing what others wrote about their attitudes towards each other, let us accept the friendly attitude that João II expressed in his letter of 1488, and what Colón himself wrote concerning their three-day meeting at Vale do Paraíso:

*The King ordered the principal members of his household to receive him with great honor, and the King also welcomed him with great honor, paid him many respects, asked him to sit down and spoke very kindly [...] he seemed to be very pleased that the voyage had been undertaken and had ended successfully [...] the King again told him that if he needed anything, it would immediately be given to him, and he discussed the voyage with the Admiral at great length, always inviting him to be seated, and treated him with great respect [...] his host the Prior of Crato who was the principal person there, from whom the Admiral received many honors and favors [...] Today he took his leave of the King who gave him some messages to be given on his behalf to the Monarchs, always showing him great affection. He left after eating, along with **Don Martín de Noronha** [the Admiral's cousin] who was sent with him, and all those nobles came to accompany him and do him great honor for a good while [...] the Queen was in residence, and he went to pay his respects and kiss her hands because **she had sent a message to him that he should not leave until he had seen her**. The Duke [D. Manuel] and the Marquis [D. Pedro de Menezes, First Marquis of Vila Real] were with her and there the Admiral received great honors.⁷⁵⁰*

Admiral Colón praised the King of Portugal, and both the King and the Queen of Portugal and their respective courts honored the Admiral at arrival, during his stay, and at his departure. João II also wrote to the Kings of Castile that he was delighted to see the Admiral.⁷⁵¹ João II's invitation to Vale do Paraíso gave the two men another opportunity to get together and discuss "such things" of science and navigation.

⁷⁵⁰ DIARIO, 9 to 11 of March.

⁷⁵¹ **Dom christouam vosso almirante que folgamos muyto de veer e mandar tratar bem por ser cousa vossa**, E por vosso Respeito no caso que quisesse hir per terra por que mais cedo fosse a vos lhe mandamos dar cartas e auimento pera despachadamente poder hir per nossos Reynos., E ouuemos muyto prazer de sua nauegaçom e por seu trabalho nom seer sem boom efecto e asy da maneira que teue em comprir vosso mandado [...] El Rey. *Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza*, Villagonzalo, CP. 553, D. 10.º.

On the other hand, the Admiral did not seem to have a good relationship with King Manuel I, if his 1497 *Memorial de la Mejorada* is any indication, King “Don Manuel, having no regard for the said treaty done by King João II, may God have him ... has ordered his ships to sail immense leagues to the East” of the Cape of Good Hope.⁷⁵²

Colón’s expertise in seafaring, at times, passed unnoticed. Before setting off from the Canaries on the First Voyage, he ordered the *Pinta* to be configured with square sails because she was lateen-rigged.”⁷⁵³ This modification of the *Pinta*’s sails must have been based on Colón’s evident experience and not by chance.

On the First Voyage Don Cristóbal intentionally deceived his captains, pilots, and sailors. The deception consisted in keeping a public count of false leagues sailed and a secret count with the actual measurements. As soon as they lost sight of the Old World, the island of Ferro in the Canaries, “he decided to count fewer leagues than he was traveling because, if the trip was long, the crew would not get scared and faint.”⁷⁵⁴

On the return trip, the crew thought they had traveled just 884 leagues instead of the 1200 sailed. The crew was completely disoriented on February 10, 1493, as the Admiral registered in his log:

Viçeynte Yanes and the two pilots Sancho Ruiz (de Gama) and Pero Alonso Niño and [pilot] Roldán, all of them positioned us far beyond the Azores Islands to the east by their charts. And sailing north none of them would have encountered Santa María Island, which is the last of all the Azores. Instead, they placed themselves five leagues beyond Santa Maria and they were closer to the regions of Madeira or Porto Santo. But the Admiral was very far away from their reckoning, way behind them. Because tonight the island of Flores was directly to the north, and to the east he would find Anfa in Africa, and was sailing to the

⁷⁵² Agora el serenísimo Rey de Portugal don Manuel, no aviendo respecto al dicho asiento fecho con el Rey don Juan, que Dios aya, que tanto tempo avía guardado y mandando que no navegasen sus naos adelante del dicho limite cabo de Boa Esperança... ha mandado navegar a sus naos grandíssimo número de leguas al Oriente, atravesando Arabia, Persia e India, fasta llegar casi adonde avían llegado las naos de los sobredichos Rey y Reina... lo cual no ha cumplido así el dicho señor Rey don Manuel... y asimismo se declara cómo el serenísimo Rey don Manuel non guardó el asiento, así como fasía el Rey don Juan...TEXTOS, 170-176.

⁷⁵³ DIARIO, August 9.

⁷⁵⁴ Acordó contar menos de las que andava porque si el viaje fuese luengo no se espantase y desmayase la gente. DIARIO, September 9.

*windward side of Madeira Island (?) leagues to the north. They were 150 leagues closer to Castile than the Admiral was.*⁷⁵⁵

The maneuver worked as planned. Three experienced pilots (Sancho Ruiz, Pero Alonso Niño, and Roldán) and two experienced captains (Martín Alonso Pinzón, Captain of the Pinta and Vicente Yáñez Pinzón, Captain of the Niña) thought they were 150 leagues distant from their actual location. The proof that Colón was correct is that only five days later, on February 15, they arrived at Santa Maria Island, in the Azores.

He tried to control all the information about the New World that reached the Court. For this reason, the Admiral forbade the return to Castile of an Abbot that argued with him that Cuba was an island and not a continent.⁷⁵⁶ To reinforce this lie, under penalty of huge fines and having their tongues cut off, the Admiral mandated the whole crew of the *Niña* to take an oath falsely saying that the island of Cuba was the continent of Asia. We must view this oath from the point of view that it was a false claim. If they genuinely believed Cuba to be the continent of Asia, they would not need to be coerced into signing the oath:

June 12, 1494, on the caravel Niña, which was named Santa Clara: Thursday, 12 of June, year of the nativity of Our Lord 1494, the very magnificent Lord Don Cristóbal Colón, Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy and perpetual Governor of San Salvador island and all other islands and mainland of the Indies [...] all was done in the way that the said Lord Admiral had requested of me and I required it of them and put a penalty of ten thousand maravedís for every time afterwards that each one ever says the contrary of what they now

⁷⁵⁵ En la caravela del Almirante carteavan o echavan punto Viçeynte Yanes y los dos pilotos Sancho Royýz y Pero Alonso Niño y (piloto) Rondán y todos ellos passavan mucho adelante de las yslas de los Açores al leste por sus cartas y navegando al norte ninguno tomara la ysla de Sancta María que es la postrera de todas las de los Açores; antes serían delante con çinco leguas e fueran en la comarca de la ysla de la Madera o en el Puerto Sancto. Pero el Almirante se hallava muy desviado de su camino hallándose mucho más atrás que ellos. Porque esta noche le quedavan la ysla de Flores al norte y al leste yva en demanda a Nafe en Africa y pasava a barlovento de la ysla de la Madera de la parte del norte (?) leguas. Así que ellos estavan más çerca de Castilla que el Almirante con 150 leguas. DIARIO, February 10.

⁷⁵⁶ El señor Almirante no le ha querido dejar venir a España con nosotros, para que, al pedirle su opinión la Majestad del Rey, no cause con su respuesta que el dicho Rey abandone su empresa. GIL, Juan and VARELA, Consuelo, *Cartas de particulares a Colón y Relaciones coetáneas*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1984, 259.

*say, plus they **shall have their tongues cut off**. And for a shipboy, or a person of such rank, he shall get one hundred lashes and his tongue cut off*⁷⁵⁷ - see Appendix, Document II.

He controlled all of the information about the location of the lands he had discovered. Not even the Castilian Court received all this information, as the following letters from the Catholic Monarchs begging him to send the coordinates show:

*BARCELONA – September 5, 1493: The navigational chart that you were to make, if it is finished, send me quickly; and for my service give great haste in your departure [...] And because in order to better understand this book of yours, we need to know the degrees for the islands and lands that you found and the degrees for the route where you sailed, for our service send them to us now; and also the chart we beg you to send to us before your departure, send it quickly and very complete, and write on it the location names.*⁷⁵⁸

The Castilian court had no idea where the discovered lands were located. The Admiral seems to have set off on his Second Voyage on September 25, 1493, without providing the charts or coordinates to the Court. The hazy coordinates left Castile poorly prepared during their negotiations for the Treaty of Tordesillas. Still, we know that he left coordinates in a confidential letter to his brother Bartolomé, who was to sail to meet him at Española as soon as he arrived from France.⁷⁵⁹

During the second voyage, leading a fleet of seventeen ships, the Admiral managed to keep the route secret. He gave each pilot a sealed envelope with orders that it be opened only in case

⁷⁵⁷ *Idem*, 216-223.

⁷⁵⁸ Setembro 5, 1493: La Carta del marear que habiades de faser, si es acabada, me envidad luego; y por servicio mio deis grand priesa en vuestra partida [...] Y porque para bien entenderse mejor este vuestro libro habiamos menester saber los grados en que estan las islas y tierra que fallastes y los grados del camino por donde fuistes, por servicio nuestro que nos los envieis luego; y asimismo la carta que vos rogamos que nos enviásedes antes de vuestra partida, nos envidad luego muy cumplida, y escritos con ella los nombres. NAVARRETE, T. II, 107-110.

⁷⁵⁹ Besando las manos, Bartolomé Colon, al rey de Francia por las buenas nuevas que le plugo dar, el Rey le mandó dar 100 escudos para ayuda á su camino. Oido que su hermano habia descubierto las tierras que buscaban, dióse prisa creyendo de lo alcanzar, pero no pudo, porque el Almirante ya era partido con sus 17 navios, halló empero una instrucción que le dejaba el Almirante para si en algún tiempo Bartolomé Colon pareciera. Vista esta instrucción, partióse de Sevilla para la corte, que estaba en Valladolid, por el principio del año de 1494. LAS CASAS, T2, 79.

they got separated from the rest of the fleet. At the end of the voyage, he collected all the envelopes, confirming that no seals had been broken.⁷⁶⁰

Keeping his sailors lost in order to control the routes was something the Admiral always tried to do and constantly succeeded. This behavior demonstrates and reinforces not only Colón's (indisputable) skill, but the sinuous character of his personality, always interested in perpetrating confusion. On the Fourth Voyage, shipwrecked in Jamaica, he continued controlling the information on the new routes. He was confident nobody onboard his ships knew how to return to Veragua:

*Pilots and great sailors: no one can give a sure route for where I went or returned [...] they went to some lands where there is much gold and can certify it; but to return to it the route is unknown to them.*⁷⁶¹

His fourth and final voyage took place in 1502, two years after being arrested with his brothers in the New World and sent to Castile in shackles. The bewildering expedition was undertaken under strict conditions imposed by the Castilian monarchs, including the prohibition of Colón stopping in Santo Domingo. He was forbidden to set foot again in any part of Española Island, where he had been Governor and Viceroy until his arrest.

The crew included his brother, Don Bartolomé, his loyal secretary Diego Méndez *de Segura*, and his youngest son, Don Hernando, who was 14, perhaps so that the Admiral could teach

⁷⁶⁰ Allí dio á cada piloto su instrucción cerrada y sellada, donde se contenia la derrota y camino que habían de hacer para hasta llegar á la tierra del rey Guacanagarí, donde dejó hecha la fortaleza y los 39 cristianos. Mandó á los pilotos que en ningún caso abriesen la dicha instrucción, sino, en caso que el tiempo les forzase apartarse de su compañía, entonces la abriesen para que supiesen donde habian de ir. LAS CASAS, T. II, 3.

⁷⁶¹ De mi viaje digo: que fueron ciento y cincuenta personas conmigo, en que hay hartos suficientes para pilotos y grandes marineros: ninguno puede dar razón cierta por Donde fuí yo ni virle [...] Ninguno puede dar cuenta verdadera de esto, porque no hay razón que abaste; porque fué ir con corriente sin ver tierra tanto número de días. Seguí la costa de la Tierra firme: ésta se asentó con compás y arte. Ninguno hay que diga debajo cuál parte del cielo ó cuándo yo partí de ella para venir á la Española. Los pilotos creían venir á parar á la isla de Sanct-Joán; y fué en tierra de Mango, cuatrocientas leguas más al Poniente de aDonde decían. Respondan, si saben, aDonde es el sitio de Veragua. Digo que no pueden dar otra razón ni cuenta, salvo que fueron á unas tierras aDonde hay mucho oro, y certificarle; mas para volver á ella el camino tiene ignoto: sería necesario para ir á ella descubrirla como de primero. Uma vuenta hay y razón de astrología, y cierta: quien la entiende esto le abasta. A visión profética se asemeja esto. Las naos de las Indias, si no navegan, salvo á popa, no es por la mala fechara, ni por ser fuertes; las grandes corrientes que allí vienen, juntamente con el viento, hacen que nadie porfíe con bolina, porque en un día perderían lo que hubiesen ganado en siete; ni saco carabera aunque sea latina portuguesa. Esta razón hace que no naveguen, salvo con colla, y por esperarle se detienen á las veces seis y ocho meses en puerto; ni es maravilla, pues que en España muchas veces acaece otro tanto. CARTAS, 374-375.

Hernando everything about the seas, the Earth, and the heavens, as his ancestors had done with him.

Lifting anchor under such dangerous circumstances at court, the Admiral left Castile and went secretly to Arzila in Morocco. He was concerned with the fate of some Portuguese soldiers besieged there, so he rushed to save them.

Many writers ignored this rescue as if it were insignificant. By deciding to take Castilian ships to Morocco, Colón ran the risk of dying there, along with his crew, fighting the Moors in defense of the Portuguese. This action further proves his affinity with Portugal. However, the Portuguese had already succeeded in defending themselves before Colón arrived. Don Hernando described the event in this way:

*We left on Wednesday 11 [1502] and on the second day we went to Arzila to aid the Portuguese [...] captain of Arzila, whom the Moors had wounded in the assault.*⁷⁶²

Admiral Colón's letter to Gaspar Gorricio confirms the same, written as soon as he reached land in the Canaries, after just nine days:

*Gran Canaria, May 20-25, 1502: Reverend and very devout priest; winds from the south-east held me in Cádiz until [...] the Moors surrounded Arzila, and I left to the rescue, and I was the first there. Afterwards, God Our Lord gave me such good weather that I arrived here in four days [...] To the Father Prior and all the devotees I entrust myself. Our people here are fine with the grace of God our Lord.*⁷⁶³

What would make the Admiral go out of his way and risk his life to rescue a handful of Portuguese soldiers unless they were relatives, or at the very least, fellow compatriots?

On the Third Voyage the Admiral left Castile on May 30, 1498, and headed straight for Porto Santo, and then to Madeira, as reported by Las Casas:

⁷⁶² HISTORIE, Cap. LXXXVIII, 195.

⁷⁶³ CARTAS, 360.

*Aligning his route straight to the island of Madeira [...] reaching it the following Sunday, June 10 [...] At the village [Funchal] there was made a great welcoming and lots of festivities for he was there **very well known**, he had been a resident there at some time.*⁷⁶⁴

Don Cristóbal Colón had lived in Madeira, and although he had been living in Castile for 14 years, he was still very well known to everyone and was given a big celebration when he got there. It does not seem likely that having only visited Madeira to buy sugar he could be so well known. In this episode of his visit to Madeira, we can find an important fact - the man known in Castile as Colón was still very well known in Portugal, although he now lived under a pseudonym.

His arrival was very well received and even celebrated by the Captain of Funchal and other residents. The Portuguese captain organized these festivities, even though he knew that Colón was serving the enemy of Portugal.

Arrest and Downfall

Don Cristóbal baptized those new ports, capes, and lands often with names he knew from the Old World. Among these are the names of places in Portugal and its overseas conquests, but it is difficult to find names related to Genoa. We are not referring to the religious names of saints, as these existed all over Europe. We are referring to specific names like *Ilha Agulha*, *Cabo Talhado*, *o Galo*, *Monseraz*, *Cabo de Lapa*, *Ilha Bohio*, *Cuba*, *Punta de Caxinas*, *Vale do Paraíso*, *Cabo do Namorado*, *As Formigas*, *Caracol*, *Cabo Boto*, and *Punta de Portugal*. The island of Cuba has a *Cabo Guincho*, while in Madeira there is also an *Ilhéu Guincho*.⁷⁶⁵ Furthermore, he used *Santa Maria de Belém*, the name of the chapel that existed in Restelo at that time, before King Manuel I replaced it with Mosteiro dos Jerónimos.⁷⁶⁶ The list of Portuguese names here is not complete, but these examples are enough to demonstrate the influence that his Portuguese life had on him. Although a few of the names utilized resemble Italian names, “indeed, in Portuguese exact parallels are found,” alerted Consuelo Varela.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁴ LAS CASAS, T. II, 221.

⁷⁶⁵ ROSA and STEELE, *O Mistério Colombo Revelado*, 256-257.

⁷⁶⁶ ROSA, *Portugal e o Segredo de Colombo*, 435.

⁷⁶⁷ En efecto, en portugués se pueden aducir paralelos exactos. TEXTOS, lii.

Many historians, such as Consuelo Varela in the excerpt below, could not explain why a supposed Italian would give Portuguese names to such places. They limited themselves to declaring the fact as just another contradiction of Colón's enigmatic "Genoese" life:

On the Indian toponymy, [Portuguese] Africa names are clearly projected: Cabo do Monte, Cabo Verde, Cabo Roxo, Cabo das Palmas, Rio do Ouro, Porto Santo, etc., among others so Portuguese like Vale do Paraíso.⁷⁶⁸

The First Admiral of the Indies was well aware of the importance of Portugal's discovery achievements. He also understood the greatness of his mission at the service of Castile and the Western World. He wrote that, "certainly, it would be great magnanimity to channel some money from Spain into this enterprise. That nothing greater will Your Highnesses leave as a memory."⁷⁶⁹ These words were like a prophecy fulfilled. Having financed his voyage of discovery to the New World, in our opinion, was the greatest glory that Queen Isabel and King Fernando left as a legacy to human history.

When we look at what the Admiral wrote concerning King João II and the character of this monarch, we are forced to conclude that Colón was still involved in the Portuguese Discoveries project, even though he was already in Castile. In his letters, we can see how he constantly praised and showed great affection for Portugal and how he felt connected to the events in that kingdom. When we read his own accounts, it becomes evident that Colón was not just a disinterested observer, but someone who participated intensely in Portuguese affairs:

- I was at the castle of São Jorge da Mina [Ghana, built in 1481-1482] of the King of Portugal.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁸ Sobre a toponímia indiana projectam-se nomes claramente africanos: Cabo do Monte, Cabo Verde, Cabo Roxo, Cabo das Palmas, Rio do Ouro, Porto Santo, etc., entre outros tão portugueses Vale do Paraíso. *Idem*, xl.

⁷⁶⁹ Que, cierto, si se cuenta la gente del reino de Portugal y las personas de los que son muertos en esta empresa de Guinea, se fallaría que son más de la mitad del reino; y, cierto, fuera grandísima grandeza atajar una renta en España, que se gastase en esta empresa, que ninguna cosa dejen Vuestras Altezas de mayor memoria, y miren en ello; y que ningún Príncipe de Castilla se halla, ó yo no he hallado por escrito ni por palabra que haya ganado jamás tierra alguna fuera de España, y Vuestras Altezas ganaron estas tierras que son **otro mundo**, y adonde habrá la cristiandad tanto placer, y nuestra fé, por tiempo, tanto acrecentamiento. FUENSANTA DEL VALLE, El Marqués de La, *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España*, Vol. 63, Real Academia de la Historia, 1875, 255.

⁷⁷⁰ TEXTOS, 167.

- I saw some mermaids on the Malagueta coast, [in West Africa], although they were not as similar to women as they are painted.⁷⁷¹
- I sailed many times from Lisbon to Guinea.⁷⁷²
- I saw the entire East, and all the West, sailing to the North, that is, in the direction of England, and I sailed to Guinea.⁷⁷³
- I happened to bring two ships and I left one in Porto Santo ... for one day, and I arrived in Lisbon eight days before her.⁷⁷⁴
- To follow the course and example of the Portuguese tradition, who had discovered most of the islands.⁷⁷⁵
- The Admiral knew that most of the islands which the Portuguese held had been discovered because of birds.⁷⁷⁶
- This province is as big as Portugal, and throughout it there are many mines and a lot of gold in the rivers.⁷⁷⁷
- This may well be in some parts, like the seashells caught at the Canaries which are sold at such a price at Portugal's Mina.⁷⁷⁸
- Nor to talk about the present, how the kings of Portugal, who had the heart to sustain Guinea and discover it, and who spent so much gold and so many people that, whoever counted the entirety of the kingdom, would think that half as many died in Guinea, and yet they continued it until we see what is coming from it today; all of which was started a long time ago, and only a short time ago gives them any reward.⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷¹ HISTORIE, Cap. III, 9.

⁷⁷² HISTORIE, Cap. III, 9.

⁷⁷³ TEXTOS, 89.

⁷⁷⁴ TEXTOS, 167.

⁷⁷⁵ Per seguir la ragione, y lo essemplio di ezperienza de' Portoghesi: da' quali la maggior parte delle Isole era stata scoperta per lo indicio, & volo di cotali uccelli. HISTORIE, Cap. XX, 49.

⁷⁷⁶ DIARIO, October 7.

⁷⁷⁷ HISTORIE, Cap. LI, 106.

⁷⁷⁸ LAS CASAS, T. II, 315.

⁷⁷⁹ CARTAS, 271

- The [Kings of Portugal] also dared to conquer in Africa and sustain the enterprise of Ceuta, Tangier, Arzila, and Alcácer, and to wage war on the Moors continually, and all this at great expense, just to do princely things and serve God and grow their dominions.⁷⁸⁰
- I saw them give 16 balls of cotton for three Portuguese *ceitils* which are worth a Castilian *blanca*.⁷⁸¹
- And now that the Portuguese sail it, it looks accurate.⁷⁸²
- I don't even discard the caravel, even if it's a Portuguese lateen one.⁷⁸³
- With these people I bring I would subjugate this entire island, which I believe is bigger than Portugal and twice as many people.⁷⁸⁴
- The kings of Portugal spent and had the heart to spend money and people in Guinea up to four or five years, before they received any profit, and then God showed them profits and gold.⁷⁸⁵
- It is true that if you count the people of the kingdom of Portugal and the people who died in this enterprise of Guinea, you will think that they are more than half of the kingdom.⁷⁸⁶

Through sentences like these, we see not only praise but the knowledge that Don Cristóbal held regarding Portuguese navigation. However, it is hard to find mentions of Genoa or Italy as a place he knew or felt more connected to than anywhere else.

Don Cristóbal never visited Italy, as far as is known, during the time he used this false name. Between 1484 and 1506, however, he visited Portuguese territory at least eight times, as stated in his letters and notes:

⁷⁸⁰ TEXTOS, 205.

⁷⁸¹ Vi dar diez y seis ovillos de algodón por tres ceotis (Ceitil) de Portugal, que es una blanca de Castilla. TEXTOS, 32.

⁷⁸² TEXTOS, 320.

⁷⁸³ TEXTOS, 325.

⁷⁸⁴ TEXTOS, 100.

⁷⁸⁵ TEXTOS, 236.

⁷⁸⁶ TEXTOS, 236.

- In 1485 and 1488, he was at the Portuguese Court with King João II.
- In February 1493, he was on the island of Santa Maria, Azores, for a week.
- In March 1493, he was at Restelo, next to the Chapel of Santa Maria de Belém, belonging to the Order of Christ. Then he traveled 70 km to Vale do Paraíso, to meet with João II. He stayed in Portugal for nine days, then met with Queen Leonor and future King Manuel I at the Queen's request.⁷⁸⁷
- In 1498, during his Third Voyage to the New World, Colón stopped on the island of Porto Santo, then Madeira, from where he sailed to the Portuguese islands of Cape Verde, before setting sail for the southwestern lands.
- And during the fourth and final voyage, Colón stopped at Portuguese Arzila, to rescue the Portuguese garrison besieged by the Moors.

Before his arrest in 1500, to protect the information that reached the Court, the Admiral and Viceroy was as inflexible and ruthless as necessary to guarantee his control over all the data. He went to the extreme of killing his brother-in-law, Miguel Molyart, with his own hands, to prevent him from exposing the truth of what was happening in the New World:

*Miguel Molyart, who was the chief accountant and comrade of Colón, being debilitated [Colón] beat him until he died, because at the request of Friar Juan Francés, Molyart had transcribed a letter into Castilian that the said friar wrote in his French language to Their Highnesses.*⁷⁸⁸

This was not the only time that Don Cristóbal physically attacked someone. During the preparations for the Second Voyage, the Admiral was so irritated with one of the court officials that he gave him a sound beating before lifting anchor:

⁷⁸⁷ **11 de Marzo:** Oy se despidió del Rey e le dixo algunas cosas que dixese de su parte a los Reyes mostrándole siempre mucho amor. Partiósse después de comer, y enbió con él a **Don Martín de Noroña** [Perestrelo], y todos aquellos cavalleros le vinieron a acompañar y hazer honrra buen rato. Después vino a un monasterio de Sant Antonio que es sobre un lugar que se llama Villafranca Donde estava la Reyna y fuele a hazer reverençia y besarle las manos, porque le avía enbiado a dezir que no se fuese hasta que la viesse. Con la qual estava el Duque [Don Manuel I] y el Marqués Donde rescibió el Almirante mucha honrra. Partiósse della el Almirante [de] noche y fue a dormir [a] Allandra. DIARIO.

⁷⁸⁸ VARELA, Consuelo and AGUIRRE, Isabel, *La Caída de Cristóbal Colón, El juicio de Bobadilla*, Edición y transcripción de Isabel Aguirre, Marcial Pons Historia, Madrid, 2006.

*His name was Ximeno, against whom the Admiral must have been feeling seriously angry, and he waited for the day when he set sail, and, either on the ship, where the said official entered by chance, or on land when he went to disembark, the Admiral grabbed him and gave him many kicks and treated him badly.*⁷⁸⁹

During his governorship, Don Cristóbal was often accused of wanting to rebel against the Castilian Crown and to be “shedding Castilian blood as a capital enemy”⁷⁹⁰ to the detriment of the kings, and who sought nothing more than to revolt with the Empire of these Indies.⁷⁹¹

As a foreigner, Colón had to struggle repeatedly with these sort of accusations as he mentioned in his letter to the monarchs, sent from Jamaica on July 7, 1503:

*Who could believe that a poor foreigner would **revolt** against Your Highnesses in such a place and without cause, nor the support of another prince and being alone among your vassals and naturals?*⁷⁹²

Don Cristóbal’s suspected rebellion is also mentioned in this exchange of words between Ervas and Commander Nicolás de Ovando, Bobadilla’s replacement:

In the presence of Ervas and of the chief accountant, Ovando said that the Admiral [Don Cristóbal] intended to revolt with the island and would have done so by now.

Ervas told him that had never happened, nor was it true.

The commander [Ovando] replied: “You, who arrived here yesterday, you want to know more than I?”

Ervas replied: “Well, they sent the son [Don Diogo] to come here.”

*The Commander replied: “Suitably foolish is the son, as how dangerous was the father.”*⁷⁹³

⁷⁸⁹ Se llamaba Ximeno, contra el cual debió el Almirante gravemente sentirse y enojarse, y aguardó el día que se hizo á la vela, y, ó en la nao que entró, por ventura, el dicho oficial, ó en tierra cuando quería desembarcarse, arrebatólo el Almirante, y dále muchas coces ó remesones, por manera que lo trató mal. LAS CASAS, II, 199.

⁷⁹⁰ LAS CASAS, T. II, 380.

⁷⁹¹ *Idem*, 380.

⁷⁹² CARTAS, 380.

⁷⁹³ FALCÓ Y OSORIO, María del Rosario, Duquesa de Berwick y Alba, *Autógrafos de Cristóbal Colón y Papeles de América*, Madrid, 1892, 93.

Long before the First Voyage, during the years that Don Cristóbal and his brother Bartolomé were initially proposing their enterprise, they were already accused of trying to deceive the Castilian court.⁷⁹⁴ The distrust was continuous, and the Admiral complained in a 1499 letter to the court that his enemies were “talking about him worse than a Moor” never ceasing to declare “a thousand false testimonies.”⁷⁹⁵

Francisco de Bobadilla, a member of the Order of Calatrava (of which King Fernando was the Master), was secretly appointed to succeed Don Cristóbal in the government of the New World. The first orders were given to him in early 1499. Initially, Bobadilla would be a mere inquisitor to help Colón pass justice on the insubordinate rebels in the New World.⁷⁹⁶ Then, on May 21, 1499, Bobadilla was promoted, “Don Fernando y Doña Isabel ... our will is that Comendador Francisco de Bobadilla be, in our name, the Governor and Judge.”⁷⁹⁷ However, the court waited over one year before dispatching Bobadilla in June 1500.⁷⁹⁸

Bobadilla arrived in the new colony of Santo Domingo in August 1500. The crown had given him sufficient powers to do whatever Bobadilla thought best to reinforce the Crown’s authority in the face of the Colón brothers, nicknamed *the Pharaohs* by the disgruntled

⁷⁹⁴ Nunca en todo este tiempo se halló piloto ni marinero ni filósofo ni de otra sciencia que todos no dixessen que mi empresa era falsa. TEXTOS, 243.

— Siete años estube yo en su real corte, que a cuantos se fabló d’esta enpresa todos a una dixeron que hera burla. *Idem*, 329.

— Porque este testigo andovo con el dicho almirante don Christoval Colon solicitando con el Rey e la Reyna nuestros señores [...] al tiempo quel dicho almirante lo solicitava hazian burla del dicho almirante e deste testigo diziendo que querian descubrir otro mundo nuevo [...] e firmolo de su nonbre. don Bartolomé Colon. MURO OREJÓN, Antonio, *Pleitos Colombinos*, Vol. 3: Probanzas del Almirante de las Indias (1512-1515), Sevilla: Edición de Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1984, 100.

⁷⁹⁵ Siempre después estaban con congoja para se volver á España, é así les daba yo lugar que fuesen en cada pasaje, y por mi desdicha, bien que de mi hubiesen recibido mucha honra y buen tratamiento, ellos, en llegando allá, decían de mí peor que de un moro, sin dar á ello ninguna razón, y me levantaron mil testimonios falsos, y dura esto hoy en dia. TEXTOS, 257.

⁷⁹⁶ NAVARRETE, T2, 235.

⁷⁹⁷ NAVARRETE, T2, 237.

⁷⁹⁸ Eligieron á un Comendador de la orden de Calatrava, que se llamó Francisco de Bobadilla, y diéronle provisiones y nombre de Pesquisidor, con que al principio en esta isla entrase, y también de Gobernador, que, cuando fuese tiempo, publicase y usase. Comenzáronse los despachos en Madrid, por Mayo del año de 99, luego que llegaron los cinco navios, como algunas veces se ha dicho, pero no lo despacharon hasta el mes de Junio del año siguiente de 1500. LAS CASAS, T2, 473.

Castilians.⁷⁹⁹ According to Don Hernando, Bobadilla had been given many blank letters bearing the royal signature and seal. Bobadilla filled them in as needed, and as Governor, increased the salaries of the colonials, thus depleting the power of the ruling foreigners.

Seeing that the colony rebelled against them, Cristóbal, Bartolomé, and Diego surrendered peacefully. They were arrested, fettered, and sent to Castile but were released by the monarchs upon arrival.⁸⁰⁰

Don Cristóbal Colón never again ruled his New World. He was forbidden to ever again set foot on the soil of his Española; and he never forgot this mistreatment. He refused to have his shackles removed on the voyage because he wanted the monarchs who ordered him arrested to be the ones who freed him.⁸⁰¹ After being released, it is said Don Cristóbal kept the shackles until his death as a reminder of the injustice.⁸⁰²

It is easy to deduce that Don Cristóbal had not only the trust of King João II, but earned the trust of the neighboring monarchs. They gave him command of the 1492 fleet. As Captain-

⁷⁹⁹ En octubre de 1500, fray Juan de Trasierra, uno de los frailes franciscanos que acompañó a Colón al nuevo mundo, envió una carta al Cardenal Cisneros rogándole que impidiera que don Cristóbal y los de su “nación” regresaran a las Indias, donde actuaban en su provecho, como **Faraones**. un texto que ha dado pie e interpretar “nación” en el sentido de “la nación judía”, aunque en este caso más bien parece que fray Juan se refería a los genoveses, pues a los “ginoveses” se refiere el Memorial que acompañaba a las cartas de los seráficos en el que ruegan a Cisneros que “no consienta venir a esta tierra ginoveses, porque la robaran y destruirán.” Por otra parte, Faraones quizá fuera uno de los apodos con los que se conocía en la española a Colón y a su familia. VARELA, *Cristóbal Colón y la Construcción de un mundo nuevo*, 59-60.

⁸⁰⁰ Llegó el Almirante y vále á ver, y el rescibimiento que le hizo fué mandalle poner unos grillos, y metelle en la fortaleza, donde ni él lo vido ni le habló más, ni consintió que hombre jamás le hablase. Cosa pareció esta absurdísima, descomedida, y detestable juntamente, y miseranda y miserable, que una persona en tanta dignidad subida, como era Visorey y Gobernador perpetuo de todo este orbe, y por muy remunerado renombre Almirante del mar Océano, y que, con tantos trabajos, peligros y sudores, aquellos títulos, por singular privilegio de Dios escogido, habia ganado, y con mostrar al mundo este mundo, tantos siglos encubierto al mundo, porque así lo diga y peculiarmente á los Reyes y reinos de Castilla , con vínculo antidotal y por natural razón establecido, á perpetuo agradecimiento habia obligado, que. tan inhumana y descomedidamente, y con tanto deshonor haya sido tratado, cosa, por cierto, indigna de razón recta fué, y más que monstruosa. LAS CASAS, T. II, 496.

⁸⁰¹ Quisieron quitarle los grillos, pero no consintió el Almirante hasta que los Reyes se los mandasen quitar. LAS CASAS, T2, 501.

⁸⁰² Dios es justo, y ha de hacer que se sepa por qué y cómo allí me juzgan, como Gobernador que fué á Cecilia ó ciudad ó villa puesta en regimiento, y á donde las leyes se pueden guardar por entero, sin temor que se pierda todo, y rescibo grande agravio. Yo debo ser juzgado como Capitan, que fué de España á conquistar, fasta las Indias, á gente belicosa, y mucha, y de costumbres y secta muy contraria, donde, por voluntad divina, he puesto so el señorío del Rey y de la Reina, nuestros señores, otro mundo, y por donde la España, que era dicha pobre, es la más rica; yo debo de ser juzgado como Capitán que de tanto tiempo fasta hoy trae las armas á cuestras, sin las dejar una hora, y de caballeros de conquistas, y del uso, y no de letras, salvo si fuesen griegos, ó de romanos, ó de otros modernos, de que hay tantos y tan nobles en España, ó, de otra guisa, rescibo grande agravio, porque en las Indias no hay pueblo ni asiento. LAS CASAS, T2, 508-509.

General, he was tasked with hiring the sailors, obtaining the victuals, preparing the ships, and deciding the route for a voyage to what many believed would be the ends of the world.⁸⁰³ They gave him command of 17 ships and 1500 men for the Second Voyage. He still led two more expeditions.

The present work shows that Don Cristóbal Colón was a man who possessed immense studies and a high level of knowledge for his day, who had a direct line of contact with King João II, from whom he had received Portuguese confidential information.

As a foreigner in Castile, the Admiral was continuously mistrusted. He was at fault for many of the reasons the court had to not trust him due to the many deceptions he implemented in order to keep control over the New World.

Ancient biographers accepted Colón's lies as truth and tried to explain those lies as if Colón was not very educated and was permanently confused about Geography. We propose to take the opposite approach: if we analyze what the lies hid, some light can be shed on the truth.

This paradigm shift, seeing Admiral Colón as a specialist in many scientific matters, an expert navigator, and collaborator of King João II, in addition to giving us a better understanding of what happened during his life in Castile, also provides us with the opportunity to fit the deeds and facts of his life into a deliberate conspiracy. Admiral Colón was the owner of the truth but spread lies to confuse us. Only a person with more education, superior ability, and more knowledge than others could deceive them. It is impossible to deceive a person who knows more details than the person trying to deceive them.

What can be established from this whole story is that there are truths for all tastes, depending on the data that this or that researcher decides to use or discard.⁸⁰⁴ Although the truth can only be one, the fact that there are several proven lies and misrepresentations in the writings

⁸⁰³ Agora por quanto Nos habemos mandado á Cristóbal Colon que vaya con tres carabelas de armada, como nuestro **Capitan** de las dichas tres carabelas [...] ni el dicho Cristóbal Colón, ni otros algunos de los que fueren en las dichas carabelas, no vayan á la Mina, ni el trato de ella que tiene el Serenisimo Rey de Portugal. NAVARRETE, T. II, 12.

⁸⁰⁴ Quanto se há escrito de su vida en familia, de sus inclinaciones de niño, de los caracteres de sus padres, de sus primeros estudios cursados em la Universidad de Pavía, no descansa ni en uno solo dato histórico: nada se encuentra que pueda justificarlo ni en documentos contemporáneos, ni en las mamorias que de Colón se conservan auténticas, y es todo uma novela mejor ó peor imaginada para llenar esse vacío de catorce años. ASENSIO, José María, *Cristóbal Colón: su vida, sus viajes, sus descubrimientos*, Espasa y Compañía, Barcelona, 1888, T. I, 21.

and deeds of the First Admiral of the Indies makes it necessary for everything to be reviewed, compared, and deciphered with due caution.

At the same time, inventions, uncertainties, forgeries, and false information written from contemporary chroniclers to today's biographers make the task of unraveling the truth much more precarious.⁸⁰⁵

In the end, it is much easier to prove that neither the accomplishments nor the documents relating to Don Cristóbal Colón in Iberia fit the life, family, birthdate, and type of work of the weaver Cristoforo Colombo living in Genoa.⁸⁰⁶

⁸⁰⁵ Hay también algo muy importante que requiere tener-se en cuenta, y es reconocer que la historia peca más por omisión que por comisión; quiere decir, que las falsedades que nos dice son un mal menor que las verdades que deja de decirnos. De ahí que la misión del verdadero historiador consiste, no en seguirse únicamente por los datos, —muchas veces viciosos— que la podrían suministrar los interesados contemporáneos del biografiado, ni tampoco por los explicables errores que podría ofrecerle la posteridad [...] No; la misión del verdadero historiador requiere excepcionables condiciones, y consiste principalmente en poder comprender, analizar, comparar, seleccionar, interpretar, asimilar, establecerles sus concordancias y sus discrepancias y, finalmente, en poner en orden psicológico todos los datos obtenibles, pues sin tales requisitos no es posible escribir la historia. BRANDT, Carlos, 8-9.

⁸⁰⁶ Además de la diferencia de edad entre Columbo, lanero, y Colón, marino, hay manifiesta incompatibilidad entre uno y otro desde el punto de vista de la habitual residencia y por la clase social a que pertenecían. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón y Cristóforo Columbo...*, 26.

— Si él hubiera sido el Colombo que se obliga y testifica en Genova y en Savona, no es verosímil que en las correspondientes escrituras, en que se hace constar el oficio de los que otorgan ó comparecen, se omitiese su profesión de **marino** para adjudicarle un oficio [de **lanero**] que no ejercía. *Idem*, 28.

— Yo he perdido en esto mi juventud, y la parte que me pertenece de estas cosas y la honra dello. Colón, pues, el mismo Colón, y de su propio puño y letra, nos deja escrito que había perdido su juventud en los siete años (1493-1500) en que hizo la conquista de las Indias. Esta juventud perdida es la del hombre que vino á servir á los Reyes de España cuando tenía veintiocho años de edad, y los sirvió, conquistando todas aquellas tierras é islas, entre los treinta y siete y los cuarenta y cuatro ó cuarenta y cinco años. Al llegar á esta edad, ya nos dice que había perdido su juventud, ya se consideraba viejo. *Idem*, 32.

— Cristóbal Colón, por último, el hombre que escribió la carta de 7 de Julio de 1503 y las demás que de él se conocen, no puede ser el Cristóforo Columbo, lanero y humilde menestral de Genova. Entre todos los escritos de Colón hay siempre relativa conformidad, aun admitiendo distintas interpretaciones. No la hay de ningún modo, tómense los documentos que se tomen, háganse las interpretaciones que se hagan, entre los escritos de don Cristóbal Colón y las citas y escrituras de Genova y Savona referentes á Cristóforo Columbo. El Colón de los documentos españoles no es el Columbo de los documentos italianos. *Idem*, 35.

Birth and Death

At what age did the great navigator die? Evidence points to 51 years of age, having been born circa 1455.

Unlike many others who defended 1451 as his date of birth, using arguments that deny the navigator's own words, we accept that the navigator did not lie when he made several statements about his age.

Several times Colón wrote that he had moved to Castile when he was 28 years old.⁸⁰⁷ Don Hernando said that the year of his move to Castile was 1484, during the turbulent months of the Portuguese nobles conspiring to kill King João II.

Being 28 years old in 1484, the Admiral would have been born in 1456 or 1455, depending on what month he was born. At the end of 1500, he wrote that "it's been 17 years since I came to serve these princes with the enterprise of the Indies. Eight of them were spent in disputes."⁸⁰⁸ If we subtract 17 years from the end of the year 1500, we get the end of 1483, basically 1484. Adding the 8 years of discussions to 1484, we arrive again at 1492, the year that his proposal was accepted, and the fleet sailed west.

On January 14, 1493, in his *Diario*, we can read, "I came to serve you, which is seven years now, this January 20."⁸⁰⁹ Deducting 7 from 1493, we get 1486, this date refers to the day of his first audience with the Catholic Monarchs in Alcalá de Henares on January 20, 1486,⁸¹⁰ and not the date that he crossed the border into Castile with the intent of proposing his Atlantic adventure.

Shackled inside the ship that took him from Santo Domingo to Andalusia, in a long letter of appeals and outbursts in 1500, he wrote that "seven years were spent in arguments and nine in

⁸⁰⁷ Yo vine á servir de veintiocho años y agora no tengo cabello en mi persona que no sea cano y el cuerpo enfermo. CARTAS, 380-381.

⁸⁰⁸ Señores: Ya son diez y siete años que yo vine servir estos Príncipes con la impresa de las indias: los ocho fuí traído en disputas, y en fin se dió mi aviso por cosa de burla. Yo con amor proseguí en ello, y respondí á Francia y á Inglaterra y á Portugal, que para el Rey y la Reina, mis Señores, eran esas tierras y Señoríos. Las promesas no eran pocas ni vanas. CARTAS, 325.

⁸⁰⁹ Y han seido causa que la Corona Real de vuestras Altezas no tenga cien cuentos de renta más de la que tiene después que yo vine á les servir, **que son siete anos agora á 20 días de Enero** este mismo mes, y mas lo que acrecentado sería de aquí en adelante. Mas aquel poderoso Dios remediará todo. *Idem*, 152.

⁸¹⁰ RUMEU DE ARMAS, 13.

doing very prominent things and worthy of memory.”⁸¹¹ These 7 years and 9 more add up to 16 years; deducting these 16 years from 1500, the date on which he wrote the letter, we again return to 1484, the year in which he entered Castile at age 28. In the same letter from 1500, he declares to have labored for seven years to put territories bigger than Africa and Europe under the power of the Kings of Castile.⁸¹² In fact, since 1493, when he founded Fort Natividad and until his arrest in 1500, it was only 7 years.

After his arrest in 1500, he still made another voyage under the Castilian flag. Shipwrecked on a beach in Jamaica, with no hope of being helped or rescued, he lamented in July 1503 that “it has been of no benefit to me these **twenty years** of service, that I have served you through so much hardship and danger.”⁸¹³ Deducting these 20 years from 1503, we obtain the year 1483. In July 1503 it would only be 19.5 years since he had gone to serve in Castile, and not 20. In this case, as in others, we must understand that the years are always rounded up, never down, because the Admiral is making a case on how much time and effort he spent at the service of a crown that continuously derided and mistreated him.

He entered Castile at the end of 1484, as understood from Colón’s statements and explained by his son’s declaration of “fine dell’anno MCCCCLXXXIII.”⁸¹⁴

In these letters, Colón makes sure that the pains and costs are emphasized so that the kings feel more pity for him. The toils are doubled, the hurt unbearable, and the years are rounded up. Arrested and stripped of everything but his life, he became more desperate as he would write in

⁸¹¹ **Siete años** se pasaron en la plática y nueve ejecutando cosas muy señaladas y dignas de memoria se pasaron en este tiempo: de todo no se fizo concepto. Llegué yo, y estoy que non ha nadie tan vil que no piense de ultrajarme. CARTAS, 311.

⁸¹² Allá he puesto so su Señorío más tierra que non es Africa y Europa, y más de mil y setecientas islas, allende la Española que boja más que toda España. En ellas se cree que florecerá la Santa Iglesia grandemente. —Del temporal se puede esperar lo que ya diz el vulgo. —**En siete años hice** yo esta conquista por voluntad Divina. Al tiempo que yo pensé de haber mercedes y descanso, de improviso **fuí preso y traído cargado de fierros**, con mucho deshonor mío poco servicio de SS. AA. —La causa fué formada en malicia. *Idem*, 324-325.

⁸¹³ Poco me han aprovechado **veinte años** de servicio que yo he servido con tantos trabajos y peligros, que hoy día no tengo en Castilla una teja; si quiero comer ó dormir no tengo, salvo el mesón ó taberna, y las más de las veces falta para pagar. *Idem*, 365.

⁸¹⁴ Tornerò all’Ammiraglio, il qual nel fine dell’anno MCCCCLXXXIII col suo figliuolino Don Diego si parti segretamente di Portogallo per paura d’essere impedito dal Re: perciocche, conoscendo, quanto gli mancarono quelli, che egli haueua com la Carauella mandati, voleua ridurre alla sua gratia lo Ammiraglio, & desideraua, ch’egli tornasse alle pratiche dell’impresa. HISTORIE, Cap. XII, 32.

1501, “most High Kings: From a **very tender age** I entered the sea sailing, and I have continued it until today [...] it has been over 40 years that I have been at this.”⁸¹⁵

These “40 years that I have been at this” has caused a lot of confusion among researchers. In this 1501 letter he claims to have sailed for **40 years**, starting from a “very **tender age**,” and in 1492 he declared “**23 years** I have been at sea without leaving it,” but the math does not add up. If we deduct 40 years from 1501, we obtain 1461. While subtracting 23 from 1492, we reach 1469. How can two different dates be explained so that the two sentences do not contradict each other?

Don Hernando Colón said that his father started his sailing career at the age of 14.⁸¹⁶ If in 1492 Colón had sailed for 23 years, as he stated, it means that he started his career in 1469. Likewise, if he started his career at the age of 14 in 1469, he would have been born in 1455, and this makes him 28 years old in 1484, precisely as he wrote.

However, if in 1501 he had sailed for **40 years**, he would need to have started sailing some eight years earlier in 1461, and not 1469.

Born in 1455, as it seems to us the correct year of his birth, he would have been only about six years old in 1461. It is here that we must understand what he meant by “from a **very tender age** I entered the sea.” The explanation is evident: although he began his professional career as a navigator in 1469, his first experience at sea was not at the age of 14; he had already been spending a lot of time at sea before 1469. Only in this way can we justify both statements as correct, and not contradictory.

Throughout history, parents have put young children working alongside them and their older siblings. Farmers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, carpenters, and so on, began teaching their trade to their children at a young age. Why wouldn’t the same happen with fishermen and sailors? During the First Voyage, some of the *grumetes* (shipboys) were only 12 years old.⁸¹⁷ These 12-year-old kids took part in a voyage to the ends of the world and earned 666 maravedís per month.

⁸¹⁵ Muy altos Reyes: De muy pequeña edad entré en la mar navegando, é lo he continuado fasta hoy. La mesma arte inclina á quien le prosigue á desear de saber los secretos deste mundo. Ya pasan de cuarenta años que yo voy en este uso. Todo lo que fasta hoy se navega, todo lo he andado. Trato y conversación he tenido con gente sabia, eclesiásticos é seglares, latinos y griegos, judíos y moros, y con otros muchos de otras setas. CARTAS, 329.

⁸¹⁶ Ol suo traffico e dei suoi maggiori fu sempre per mare. HISTORIE, Cap. II, 4.

— Che cominciò a navigar di quattordici anni, e che sempre seguì il mare. HISTORIE, Cap. IIII, 10.

⁸¹⁷ COPELAND, Peter F., *The Sailors of Palos*, American History Illustrated, Vol XXVII, Number 1, March/April 93.

Reading Las Casas and Don Hernando, we can understand why the future navigator would have entered the sea at the **very tender age** of six or seven. In the *Historie*, we can read that “the Admiral himself wrote in a letter that his way of life and the way of life of his elders involved trade by sea.”⁸¹⁸ And in the *Historia* of Las Casas, we read that the vocation of Colón’s father, “or way of life, must have been by sea trade, according to what he says in one of his letters.”⁸¹⁹

Don Hernando’s paternal grandfather was not a wool weaver but a noble with connections to ocean fleets, and this explains how Don Cristóbal would be aboard his father’s ships from a **very tender age**. We should remember that many great Lords, like Medina Sidonia and Medinaceli in Castile, as well as Prince Henrique *the Navigator*, and Don Fernando, his successor in the dukedom of Viseu, had fleets of ships with respective crews that plowed the seas. Their ships were involved in trade, discovery, and corsair missions, with the fleets’ profits benefiting their noble houses as well as the crown.

If Don Cristóbal’s father was involved in shipping goods, as Hernando and Las Casas assert, then his children, Cristóbal, Bartolomé, and Diego, would have many opportunities to sail the sea in their father’s fleets.

In 1501, to emphasize his total experience at sea, Don Cristóbal added 8 “tender years” of experience before the age of 14 to the 32 years of his professional seagoing career to round it up to 40. In all of his writings, what stands out are examples of a man who spent his entire life at sea and who, even before dedicating himself to a career as a full-time navigator, had already spent a lot of time aboard ships.

One should not assume that Colón was saying that he was already a sailor or pilot at that *very tender age*. That is not what he meant. He was merely explaining that he had 40 years of experience with the sea, starting from a small child. And we can only accept this scenario as correct, because the two numbers he gave us were 23 years at sea in 1492 and 40 years at sea in 1501. One understands that Colón is exaggerating his maritime experience in 1501 by including eight tender years he sailed with his father.

⁸¹⁸ Lo stesso Ammiraglio in una lettera dica che il suo traffico e dei suoi maggiori fu sempre per mare. HISTORIE, Cap. II, 4.

⁸¹⁹ **Sus padres fueron personas notables**, en algún tiempo ricos, cuyo trato ó manera de vivir debió ser por **mercaderías por la mar**, según él mismo da á entender en una carta suya; otro tiempo debieron ser pobres por las guerras y parcialidades que siempre hubo y nunca faltan [...] El linaje de suyo dicen que fué generoso y muy antiguo. LAS CASAS, T. I, 42.

Don Hernando's statement that his father started his career at the age of 14,⁸²⁰ and that the Admiral "has always pursued the sea," shows that Don Cristóbal had fully given himself over to nautical matters at the age of 14. Since he had to be born in 1455 to be 28 years old in 1484, having started his maritime career at age 14, he would have started it in 1469. This date is confirmed in 1492 when Don Cristóbal wrote that he had spent 23 years at sea, because 1469 plus 23 is 1492. To ensure that the dates are correct, we considered the several times that the Admiral mentioned being 28 years old when he moved to Castile in 1484. The math proves that:

- Born in 1455 + 14 years at the start of his career = 1469 + 23 years at sea = 1492
- Born in 1455 + 28 years of age, when he moved to Castile = 1484
- Born in 1455 + 6 (tender age) = 1461 + 40 years at sea = 1501

Taking Don Cristóbal's statements as facts, we must accept that the tireless navigator died when he was 51 years old, on May 20, 1506.

Some authors have manipulated these dates to achieve different results supporting one theory or another, which seems to be an incorrect posture. For example, Jesús Varela Marcos places the start of the Admiral's maritime career in 1469, according to Colón's statement of sailing for 23 years.⁸²¹ However, Varela Marcos also sets his date of birth in 1451 by accepting the Genoese documents. Doing so, Varela Marcos ignores Don Hernando's statement that the Admiral's career began when he was 14.

Although the Admiral wrote that he had spent 23 years at sea "**without leaving it any amount of time worth discounting**," many ignored these words and discounted the years between 1484 and 1492. Instead of posturing that the navigator had gone eight years without navigating, contrary to what he wrote, it may make more sense to accept that he continued navigating after entering Castile.

Although he spent a lot of time between 1484 and 1492 pressuring the court to sponsor the voyage, he did not have spent all his time at the court. There are only three documented audiences

⁸²⁰ Che cominciò a navigar di **quattordici anni**, e che sempre seguì il mare. HISTORIE, Cap. IIII, 10.

⁸²¹ VARELA MARCOS, Jesús and LEÓN GUERRERO, María Montserrat, *El itinerario de Cristóbal Colón (1451-1506)*, Valladolid, 2003, 80.

during this period: January 1486; October 1487; and in late 1491, having received the court's agreement of support in early 1492.

It would be unrealistic to accept that eight years would be solely dedicated to imagining and planning a voyage to the West. It is more realistic to assume that Don Cristóbal continued to navigate as much as time and personal affairs allowed or demanded. The Duke of Medinaceli, his host in Castile, owned many ships and seaports where Colón could have easy access to navigation, a more natural thing for a man who was more at home at sea than on land.

Figure 29 shows a table with a chronology of the navigator's life to better demonstrate the above-mentioned figures.

In 1512, Don Bartolomé Colón declared to be “50 years old or more.”⁸²² This would make 1462 Don Bartolomé's latest year of birth. However, Don Diego's year of birth was around 1459, as we will see below, thus Don Bartolomé would need to be born before 1459 in order to be older than his younger brother Diego. Adding a reasonable margin of 5 years to Bartolomé's 1512 statement, a rational deduction of his declared age should not take us over 55, making his year of birth circa 1457.

In the Genoese documents, the weaver Giacomo Colombo, brother of the weaver Cristoforo Colombo, was 16 years old in 1484. They presented this Giacomo Colombo as being Don Diego Colón, brother of Admiral Don Cristóbal.

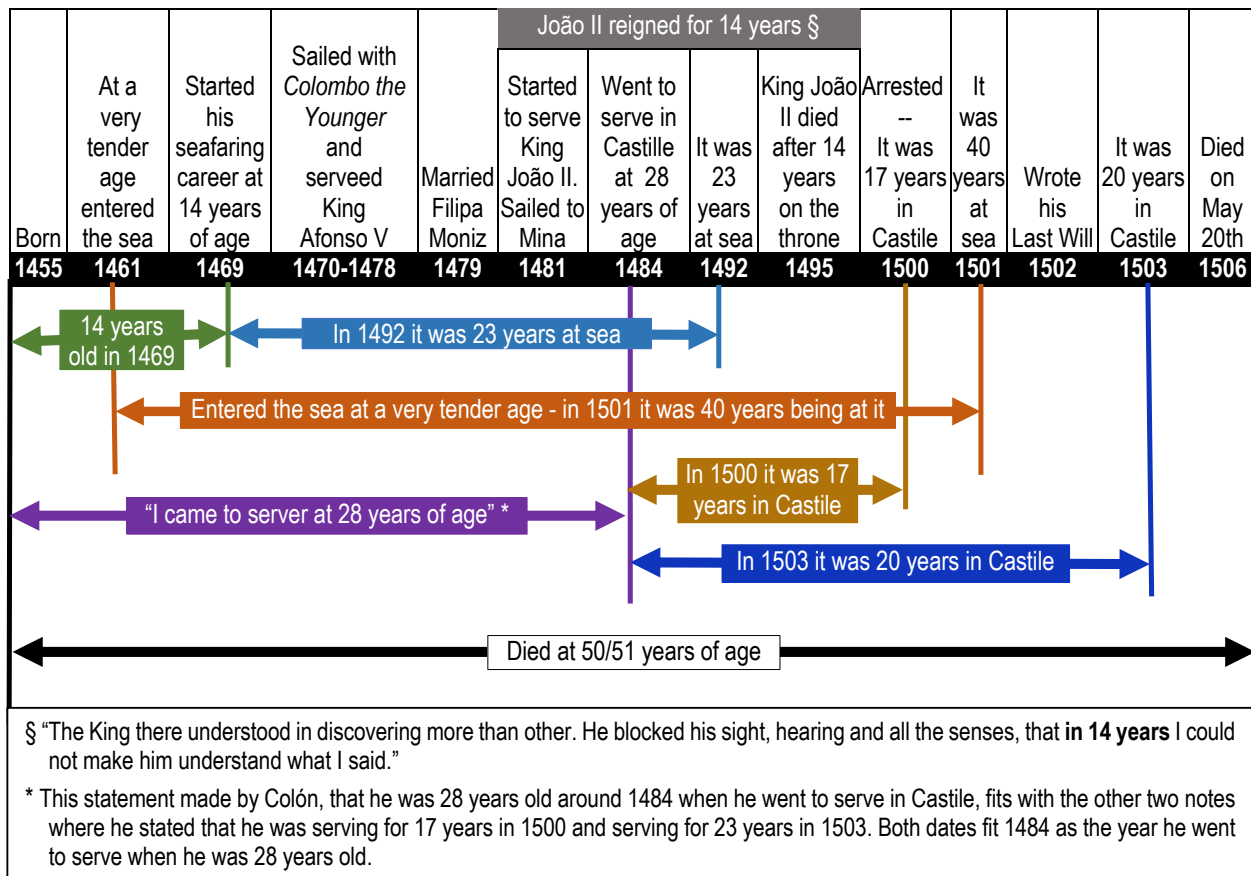
⁸²² Al declarar en 1512, con motivo del Pleito citado, que él (Bartolomé) “podía aver cinquenta años ò más”. Claro que este más tiene su límite. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón ¿Genovés?, Estudio Crítico*, Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica, 1925, 280.

— Don Bartolomé Colon testigo [...] que conoçe a las personas en ella contenidas al dicho almirante Don Diogo Colon desde que nasçio [...] puede aver çinquenta años e mas e ques tio del dicho señor almirante hermano de su padre [...] el año de mill quatroçientos e noventa e ocho este testigo estava en esta ysla por governador. MUÑOZ OREJÓN, Antonio, *Pleitos Colombinos*, Vol. 3: Probanzas del Almirante de las Indias (1512-1515), Sevilla: Edición de Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1984, 98-99.

Figure 29

According to statements made by Don Cristóbal Colón and Don Hernando, it can be deduced that the navigator was born in 1455, entered the sea at a very young age (because his father's life was trafficking goods by sea), began his career in 1469 at the age of 14, moved to Castile at the age of 28 in 1484, had sailed for 23 years from 1469 to 1492, and died at approximately age 51 in 1506.

Chronology of the Life of Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón



Don Diego Colón, brother of the First Admiral, died in 1515 and was born around 1459, according to forensic studies at the University of Granada in 2004:

Forensic anthropologist Miguel Botella already has the first important finding. He identified how old Diego, Cristóbal's brother, was when he died. The documents from the city of Genoa prove that Giacomo [Colombo] would have died at the age of 48, or younger, [he was 16 years old in 1484]. According to Professor Botella's exams,⁸²³ Diego was more senior than these documents show. [Botella said], "In the case of Diego, since we have enough bones, we can say that his age would be around 56 years old when he died. But being conservative, we can estimate the age of death between 52 and 58 years old."⁸²⁴

Dying at the age of 56, Don Diego would have been born in 1459. Being "conservative," as Botella declared, dying at the age of at least 52 would imply that the latest he had been born was 1463. In other words, Don Diego Colón could not have been born in 1468, the year in which, according to documents in the archives of Genoa, the weaver Giacomo Colombo was born.⁸²⁵

⁸²³ Miguel C. Botella is Professor of Physical Anthropology, Laboratory of Anthropology, Faculty of Medicine. University of Granada, Spain.

⁸²⁴ ENIGMA COLÓN, Documentário, Discovery Channel, 2004 — Enigma Colón, aventuran los responsables del documental que hoy (21.00) estrena Discovery Channel (dial 62 de Digital +). A partir de 150 gramos de huesos que reposan en la catedral de Sevilla, y que fueron exhumados en junio de 2003, un equipo de científicos intenta arrojar luz sobre algunos de los misterios que envuelven la figura de Cristóbal Colón. Para empezar, ¿son suyos esos restos? "No se descarta", es lo más que puede decir José Antonio Lorente, médico forense y director del laboratorio de Identificación Genética de la Universidad de Granada. Con nuevas técnicas desarrolladas en Estados Unidos para reconocer a las víctimas del 11-S y la colaboración de cinco equipos, se sometió el esqueleto — "degradado, contaminado, fragmentado", se lamenta Lorente— a una comparación con el de Diego Colón, su hermano, por si compartieran el ADN mitocondrial, y de momento los resultados son "parciales y preliminares" y apuntan a un origen común. Por otra parte, Miguel Botella, director del laboratorio de Antropología de la Facultad de Medicina de Granada, ha pasado por un escáner de láser en 3D los fragmentos de huesos exhumados en la catedral hispalense, y espera poder hacer lo propio con los que descansan en la República Dominicana y que también se atribuyen a Colón [...] Enigma Colón combina imágenes de laboratorio con dramatizaciones, en un relato confiado a la narración del actor Imanol Arias. La investigación "no está concluida ni lo estará en mucho tiempo", reconoce Guillermo Sierra, de Discovery Channel, canal de documentales que llega a 450 millones de hogares. BARAGANO, Techu, *Discovery estrena el documental 'Enigma Colón'*, El País, Madrid, 11 OCT 2004.

— *Columbus: Secrets from the Grave* (2004 TV Movie), Atlantic Productions, United kingdom, 31 August 2004.

⁸²⁵ Savona, 10 settembre 1484, Giacomo di Domenico Colombo si accorda per garzone e discopolo con Luchino Cadamartori tessitore di panni. [Iulius Salinerius, *Annotationes ad Cornelium Tacitum*, Genuae, apud Iosephum Pavonem, 1602, p. 356.] MCCCCLXXXIII. die décimo septembris. Jacobus de Columbo Dominici, civis Ianue, sponte &c. dedit et locavit se pro famulo et discipulo cum Luchino Cadamartori, presenti &c. per menses viginti duos, ad addiscendam artem textorum pannorum, promittens non recedere, ac servire et furtum non committere. versa vice dictus Luchinus pascet et non expellet, et quando terminus erit finitus, [promisit] eidem dare diploidem unam fustanei, par unum caligarum, cum **, gavardinum unum panni blavi, et pitochum unum panni, cum suis

Born in 1468, the weaver Giacomo would only have been about 47 years old if he died in 1515. The two, Giacomo Colombo and Diego Colón, could not be the same person. Forensic science proves the opposite of what the biographies insisted.

Diego, Cristóbal's brother, would be at least five years older than Giacomo, Cristoforo's brother.

While Italian documents prove that at the age of 16, in 1484, the brother Giacomo Colombo was a poor and modest apprentice weaver (not in his own father's workshop but in another weaver's workshop), the Castilian documents mention Don Diego Colón, brother of the First Admiral, as a nobleman with the right to the nobility title of **Don**. This Don Diego was educated, possessed sufficient resources to support himself in life, and was also able to write in Castilian, as his letter to King Fernando demonstrates:

*Although your Highness has little knowledge of me, nor I have written until now [...] your Highness ordered to populate this island, and I've been here for seven years at my expense.*⁸²⁶

Far from having spent half of their lives working on a loom, weaving and carding wool, as the traditional biographies say, the Colón brothers spent their youth at school studying and on boats sailing. Don Cristóbal Colón wrote in his *Diario*, on December 21, 1492, that he had spent 23 years at sea. The documents from Genoa show us that the weaver Colombo is documented there as a *lanero* (weaver), along with his father in the 1470s, and "in 1472 father and son are in Savona. On March 20, 1472, Cristoforo de Colombo, *weaver* from Genoa, is a witness in a will made in that city [...] August 26, 1472, Dominico, *weaver*, and his son Cristoforo are recognized debtors."⁸²⁷

camixiis et vestibus ab eius dolso laneis et lineis, pace &c. Que omnia &c. sub &c. renunciants &c. Insuper dictus Iacobus, maior annis **sexdecim**, iuravit &c. De quibus &c. RACCOLTA, Parte 2, Vol. I, 149.

⁸²⁶ Aunque vuestra altesa tenga de my poco conoscimyento, ni yo le haya scrito hasta agora, por no se aber ofrescido cosa que uviese de scriver a vuestra altesa, yo he servido acá en todo lo que se ha afrescido. Año de nonventa y tres vine con el almyrante, mi hermano, quando vuestra altesa mandó poblar esta ysla, y stuve em ella siete años a my costa... FALCÓ Y OSORIO, María del Rosario, Duquesa de Berwick y Alba, *Nuevos Autógrafos de Cristobal Colón Relaciones de Ultramar*, Madrid, 1902, 20.

⁸²⁷ En 1472 están en Savona el padre y el hijo. El 20 de Marzo (1472) Cristóforo de Collombo, lanero de Génova, es testigo en un testamento otorgado en aquella ciudad [...] 26 de Agosto de 1472 Dominico, lanero, y su hijo Cristóforo se reconocen deudores. BELTRÁN Y RÓZPIDE, Ricardo, *Cristóbal Colón y Cristóforo Columbo...*, 8.

The weaver Colombo was born in 1451. If he had started a career as a sailor in 1469 and spent 23 years at sea, “without leaving the sea for any time that must be discounted,” how can we accept that he would continue to describe himself as a *lanero* as the Genoese documents show? Most importantly, the Genoese dates just do not add up to the Admiral’s statements. The navigator began his career at the age of 14 in 1469, in his own words (1492-23=1969); but the weaver was already 18 years old in 1469, not 14:

- Don Cristóbal Colón was born in 1455 and the weaver Cristoforo Colombo in 1451.
- Don Bartolomé Colón was born circa 1457 and the weaver Bartolomeo Colombo has no documented year of birth.
- Don Diego Colón was born circa 1459 and the weaver Giacomo Colombo was born in 1468.

The facts demonstrate that Don Diego Colón was some nine years older than the weaver Giacomo Colombo, and that Don Cristóbal Colón was five years younger than the weaver Cristoforo Colombo.

The year of birth is another of the many disparities that make it impossible for the weaver and the navigator to have been the same person.

All the evidence supports the conclusion that the man who became Don Cristóbal Colón was born in 1455 and died in 1506 in Valladolid at about 51 years of age.

The Admiral and Viceroy was born in the same year as King João II, 1455. They shared the same language, and each had an incredible career beginning in childhood, studying letters, sciences, and “the things” of Atlantic discovery.

The Admiral sailed all hitherto known seas and many unknown ones. His endeavors served the future united kingdom of Spain very well. Still, for him it was more sadness than joy, more work than profit, as he himself declared with, “I say that the power of the curses from the disconcerted has done me more harm than my services have earned me profits: it is a bad example for the present as well as for the future.”⁸²⁸

It is common to read that Don Cristóbal Colón died destitute and having received no benefits from his long and arduous work. However, part of this perception does not seem to be

828 Digo que la fuerza del maldecir de desconcertados me ha hecho mas daño que mis servicios fecho provecho: mal ejemplo es por lo presente y por lo futuro. CARTAS, 317.

correct. The Colón brothers were nobles with higher means in Castile than many Castilians. In their Last Wills we can see that they had a decent amount of money to leave to those people who they wished to reward. Noteworthy is *Item 22* of Don Diogo Colón's 1523 Testament declaring, "I say that between Don Hernando Colón, my brother, and I there were certain quarrels because of a certain mandate that the Admiral, my Lord, had given him, having to do with the houses that by his [Don Cristóbal's] Testament specified belonged to Don Hernando, regarding which we agreed in such a way, that I give him 200,000 maravedís every year."⁸²⁹

If Don Cristóbal left several coveted houses to Don Hernando, he would surely have left even more valuable properties to the eldest son. This reveals that Don Cristóbal had properties of considerable value in Castile for the eldest son to offer to pay 200,000 maravedís each year for them until Don Hernando died.

Don Cristóbal did not die poor in gold, real estate and other earthly possessions, but poor in titles, ranks, positions and honor.⁸³⁰ Arrested and rejected by King Fernando, Colón died

829 Digo que entre Don Hernando Colón, mi hermano e mi obo ciertas diferencias sobre razon de cierta manda quel Almirante mi señor le abia fecho sobre razon de las casas que por su testamento dezia pertenesca, sobre lo qual nos concertamos em tal manera, que yo le diese em cada año doscientos mil maravedis. HARRISSE, Henry, *Christophe Colomb: son origine, sa vie...*, T. II, 497.

⁸³⁰ Mandáronle dar Sus Altezas una carta para el Comendador Nicolás de Ovando, mandándole que hiciese volver al Almirante todo el oro y plata y joyas y otros bienes muebles y raices y bastimentos de pan y vino y libros y escrituras que el Comendador Francisco de Bobadilla le había tomado á él y á sus hermanos, y le hizo merced que pudiese traer de la isla Española cada un año ciento y once quintales de brasil, por razón de la décima parte que había de haber de los mil quintales de brasil que se habían de sacar cada año para el arrendamiento que tenían hecho con ciertos mercaderes; mandaron asimesmo al gobernador que hiciese añadir á las personas que el Almirante pusiese en la dicha isla, con los derechos de Almirantazgo, por razón de su oficio..., FERNÁNDEZ DURO, Cesáreo, *Colón y la Historia Postuma*, Madrid, 1885, 235.

— Primeramente, que en lo que toca á la contribucion de la ochava parte de las mercaderías que Nos agora mandamos enviar á las dichas islas é tierra-firme, é las que irán de aquí adelante, que el dicho Almirante poniendo la ochava parte de las mercaderías, é dando la estimacion dellas, sacadas primero las costas é gastos que en ello se hicieren, **haya para sí la ochava parte del provecho** que de las dichas mercaderías se hobieren, conforme la capitulacion que con él está fecha [...] el Comendador Bobadilla **tomó en sí cierto oro é joyas, é otros bienes muebles é raices, é semovientes** que el dicho Almirante tenia en la isla Española, porque aquello es **fruto é renta de las dichas Indias**, mandamos que ante de todas costas se paguen de las dichas cosas que le fueron tomadas las costas é gastos é sueldos que fueren debidos, ó se hobieren, fecho desde que el dicho Almirante postrimera vez fué á las Indias el año de noventa é ocho, desde fué llegado en la Isla Española, porque aunque aquello por la capitulacion es á cargo del dicho Almirante, pero entiéndese para que lo haya de pagar de lo que de las dichas Indias se adquiriese; é de lo que restare, pagado lo susodicho, se haga una suma, é fechas diez partes, las nueve sean para Nos **é la decena parte para el dicho Almirante** [...] mandamos que el dicho Almirante pueda traer de aquí adelante cada año de la Isla Española **ciento é once quintales de brasil** [...] el dicho Comendador Bobadilla tomó á los hermanos del dicho Almirante **cierta cantidad de oro é joyas** [...] acodir el dicho Almiranté con **la parte del diezmo é ochavo** que ha de haber. NAVARRETE, T. II, 275-279.

fighting this king for restitution.⁸³¹ The struggle was continued by his two sons and afterwards by his grandson.

After he died, his remains traveled almost as much as he did in life, eventually having at least three verified tombs; in Valladolid, Las Cuevas and Santo Domingo (and possibly Havana and Seville).⁸³² In death, as in life, his secrets and his mysteries continue, and we still don't know the true identity of the man who exclaimed, "I have cried for others, may Heaven have mercy and let the Earth cry for me now."⁸³³

All the evidence presented in this study makes it apparent that Cristoforo Colombo, the weaver from Genoa, was not Don Cristóbal Colón, the navigator from Iberia, whose following words rationalize a big part of his life: "I must be judged as a captain who has been carrying arms from so long ago until today without leaving them for an hour, and as knights of conquest and their norms, and not of letters unless they were of Greeks or Romans, or other moderns of whom there are so many and so noble in Spain [...] I am not the first Admiral in my family. Give me then whatever name you want. [...] Some things I wished you knew, but not by letter nor by third parties, and thus hidden they will remain," and have thus remained until today.

⁸³¹ Maravedís que hobiere de haber el Almirante Don Cristóbal Colón de **su decena parte de las rentas** é provechos de la isla Española, lo inviéis en secreto á los mis oficiales de la Casa de Contratación de las Indias, que residen en Sevilla, para que de allí se paguen algunas debdas é cosas quel dicho Almirante es á cargo á algunas personas é navios; lo cual faced complir cada é quando el dicho Almirante hobiere de haber algo de lo susodicho, fasta que veáis mi mandamiento en contrario. Fecha em la cibdad de Toro á 15 de Abril de 1505 años. — Yo elRey. *Colección de documentos inéditos de Indias*, T. XXXI, pág.290. FERNÁNDEZ DURO, Cesáreo, *Colon y la Historia Postuma*, Madrid, 1885, 246.

⁸³² Results of DNA tests led by José Lorente at the University of Granada and Published May 19, 2006 in (*Live Science*, <https://www.livescience.com/10452-spain-lays-claim-columbus-remains.html>) claimed that the bones located in the Sevillian Cathedral were those of Don Cristóbal because their mitochondrial DNA matched that of brother Don Diego who is buried at Las Cuevas. This means they shared the same mother. However, we cannot be 100% certain of this conclusion since it is possible that the bones in Seville are Don Bartolomé's bones. Even if the three brothers all had the same mother, we can't be certain which bones are whose until tests are done with the bones in Santo Domingo housed at the Faro de Colón and the Cathedral.

⁸³³ CARTAS, 381.

APPENDIX

Appearance, Portrayals, and Conclusion

Oviedo wrote that Colón was “of good stature and appearance, taller than average, with strong limbs. The eyes bright and the other parts of the face of good proportions. Very red hair. And the face and neck a bit sunburned.”⁸³⁴

Friar Las Casas reports something similar, “an aquiline nose; bluish eyes; his skin color white that turned to fiery red [from the sun]; the beard and hair, when he was younger, blond.”⁸³⁵

In turn, Don Hernando wrote that the father “had an aquiline nose, light eyes, bright white [skin] lit in a vivid color [from the Sun]. In his youth, he had blond hair, although, by the age of thirty, it had all turned to white.”⁸³⁶

The First Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies was a tall man of good proportions with reddish-blond hair, blue eyes, and very white skin quickly burned by the Sun. It is difficult for us

⁸³⁴ De buena estatura é aspecto, mas alto que mediano, é de reços miembros. Los ojos vivos é las otras partes del rostro de buena proporcion. El cabello muy bermejo. Y la cara algo ençendida é pescoso. Bien hablado, cauto é de gran ingenio, é gentil latino, é doctissimo cosmógrapho. OVIEDO Y VALDÉS, Gonzalo Fernández de, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias, Islas y Tierra-Firme del Mar Océano*, Publicala la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 1851, 12.

⁸³⁵ Lo que pertenecía á su exterior persona y corporal disposición, fué de alto cuerpo, más que mediano; el rostro luengo y autorizado; la nariz aguileña; los ojos garzos; la color blanca, que tiraba á rojo encendido; la barba y cabellos, cuando era mozo, rubios, puesto que muy presto com los trabajos se le tornaron canos; era gracioso y alegre bien hablando, y, según dice la susodicha Historia portuguesa, elocuente y glorioso en sus negocios; era grave en moderación, con los extraños afable, con los de su casa suave y placentero, con moderada gravedad y discreta conversación, y así podía provocar los que le viesan fácilmente á su amor. Finalmente, representaba en su persona y aspecto venerable, persona de gran estado y autoridad y digna de toda reverencia; era sobrio y moderado en el comer, beber, vestir y calzar; solia comunmente decir, que hablase cou alegría en familiar locución, ó indignado, cuando reprendía ó se enojaba de alguno: Do vos á Dios ¿no os parece esto y esto? ó ¿por qué hiciste esto y esto? En las cosas de la religión cristiana, sin duda era católico y de mucha devoción; cuasi en cada cosa que hacia y decia, ó queria comenzar á hacer, siempre anteponia: En el nombre de la Santa Trinidad haré esto ó verná esto, ó espero que será esto; en qualquiera carta ó otra cosa que escribía, ponía en la cabeza: Jesús cum Maria sit nobis in via; y destos escritos suyos y de su propia mano tengo yo en mi poder al presente hartos. Su juramento era algunas veces: “juro á San Fernando.” LAS CASAS, T. I, 43-44.

⁸³⁶ L’ammiraglio fu huomo di ben formata, & piu che mediocre statura, di volto lungo, & di guancie un poco alte, senza che declinasse a grasso, o macilento. Haveva il naso aquilino, & gli occhi bianchi, bianco, & acceso di vivo colore. Nella sua gioventù hebbe i capelli biondi, benché, giunto che fu á trenta anni, tutti gli divennero bianchi. HISTORIE, Cap. III, 7.

to imagine a Genoese being born with these characteristics. Typically, Mediterranean people tend towards tanned skin and dark hair and eyes.

It had been accepted that there was no portrait of the Admiral painted during his lifetime. Since Don Cristóbal Colón was such a relevant person to Castile and so famous throughout Europe, it would be surprising if there were no portraits of him painted by any contemporary artists.

The iconic painting that the world came to accept as Don Cristóbal Colón, a work done by the Italian Sebastiano Luciani (*del Piombo*) in 1519 and currently at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, was not a real painting of the famous Admiral. Today the Metropolitan Museum describes it as a “painting of a man said to be Cristóbal Colón.”

Just like the Italian weaver was not the Iberian navigator, that Italian portrait was not the Iberian navigator as well.

It turns out that there may be two portraits of the Admiral from when he was alive. In 1991, a painting of the First Admiral of the Indies was found and attributed to Pedro Berruguete (1450-1504). The painting’s characteristics fit the description of those who knew Don Cristóbal. Berruguete’s painting was unknown for centuries until it came up for sale at a gallery in Chicago, USA, but its whereabouts is currently unknown.⁸³⁷

Looking at Berruguete’s painting, we can see the aquiline nose, the light eyes, the white skin, the white hair with a blondish tint to it, and we can imagine that we are staring right into the eyes of the great Admiral as he stares back at us.

Another portrait of the Admiral can be seen in the Hall of the Admirals inside the Alcazar of Seville, the former seat of the *Casa de la Contración de Indias*, initially governed by Don Álvaro de Portugal. The altarpiece known as *Virgen de los Navegantes*, painted by Alejo Fernández (1475?-1545), represents on the left side, under the Virgin’s right hand, the person considered to be the First Admiral of the Indies - see Figure 30.

⁸³⁷ The Berruguete work has never been part of a public exhibition, Marini said. It was held in a private collection until it was sold to the American art dealer Francesco Ribaudo of Chicago. Marini is a specialist on Baroque and medieval Italian art, who has written several books on the artist Caravaggio and has taught at the University of Rome. https://www.deseret.com/1991/11/26/18953760/15th-century-portrait-may-reveal-real-countenance-of-columbus?fbclid=IwAR1hVTnzdZ1ZILjhjx_0tjdHczNMjSNbQ2b_69ZQdcTqZKcv4mV4a6acXCU.

Figure 30

Two portraits of Don Cristóbal Colón painted in Castile by contemporary painters. Pedro Berruguete painted the one on top, Alejo Fernández painted the one on the bottom.



Source: <https://columbus.vanderkrogt.net/texts/portraits/berruguete.html>



Source: Details from Virgen de los Navegantes altarpiece, Alcazar of Seville. Author photo 2002.

Comparing Fernández's and Berruguete's paintings, they are very similar; both have white hair with a bit of blonde, aquiline nose, light eyes, and white skin. It is difficult for us to believe that Berruguete would not have painted the Admiral in person, as he was a painter at the Court of Castile at that time and died just two years before Colón died.

Alejo Fernández should have met the Admiral at the Court because he was the court painter from the beginning of 1505, and if Alejo did not start this painting when the Admiral was still alive (it is said to be from 1531-1536), he certainly knew the Admiral's features.

We have to assume they met because Fernández's painting represents Don Cristóbal with the same characteristics as Berruguete's painting and the same characteristics as the written descriptions of the Admiral made by Oviedo, Las Casas, and Don Hernando.

CONCLUSION

An organized disorder and a history in need of revision

"Arriving there in Castile, they talked of me worse than of a Moor without giving any reason for it, and they claimed a thousand false testimonies against me, and this lasts until today," wrote the Admiral to the court in 1499, surprisingly predicting the state of mystification that would embroil his life until our times.

In 1888, Henry Harrisse, a great protagonist of the weaver Cristoforo Colombo from Genoa, wrote that the great navigator was born in the city of Genoa and that according to the 1470 document, showing the weaver to have been over 19 years in 1470, the navigator would have a birth date between 1446 and 1451. This posture is maintained until today by the proponents of a Don Cristóbal Colón with theoretical roots in Genoa, a theory now demonstrated to be incorrect.

As shown in this study, the closer one looks at the whole situation, the clearer it becomes that finding the certainties Harrisse and others proclaimed to have found is not feasible; instead, one may find confusion, controversy, contradictions, uncertainties, manipulations, fabrications, and even fraud. The official history was based on dubious and even falsified documents which, after critical review, must be discarded as having no weight in the true biography of the First Admiral of the Indies.

The essential point to be comprehended today is that we do not know who the noble Don Cristóbal was; but we do know he was not a common weaver. The weaver Colombo was born in 1451 and spent his life working with his father and brothers in the weaving craft in Genoa. He was

not the same man who took on the name Don Cristóbal Colón for himself and who wrote several times that he was 28 years old in 1484, having instead been born around 1455. Don Cristóbal spent his life, from a very tender age, immersed in “the things of the sea and sciences” as pointed out by his son and Las Casas.

In 1487 Pedro de Toledo called Don Cristóbal *Portuguese*, while concealing his name. Having described him by only one nationality, **Portuguese**, in 1487 the court opted to call him merely foreigner after that. This action is evidence of court censorship of the nationality. The same document where the name was left blank shows that five principal persons from the Castilian court knew who the **Portuguese** was: Pedro de Toledo, who wrote the receipt; the Queen, who ordered the payment in person; Doctor Rodrigo Maldonado Talavera, who was present; Alonso de Quintanilla, who paid the Portuguese; and Friar Hernando de Talavera, who oversaw the payments.

In 1504 Queen Isabel naturalized the brother Diego. However, his naturalization letter omitted his nationality, contrary to the crown of Castile’s own naturalization laws. This happened not because the Court did not know Diego’s true nationality, but because the court deliberately censored his nationality. It goes against logic that a person applying for naturalization to a court could deny disclosing his birthplace to that same court. It is even more illogical to accept that a court, faced with such a refusal, would go ahead and give him naturalization papers anyway.

In the face of these facts, there is only one option for us to accept: the Court of Castile knew for certain who Don Diego Colón was, who his ancestors were, and what kingdom he came from, but decided to follow the necessary protocol of secrecy regarding the identity, lineage, and nationality of the three brothers, because the court of Castile understood the fundamental political reason behind the secrecy.

This point implies a grave conclusion, that is, the three Colón brothers could not be mere insignificant persons but very high nobles. If they had been of insignificant birth, they would have not received such consideration from a court in consenting to hide their lineage from the public. Even the fact that the Court of Castile gave the title of *Don*, not only to the discoverer but also to his two brothers and sons, should be enough proof of their high nobility - whether Portuguese, Genoese, or from another territory.

Furthermore, the posts and titles of Admiral and Viceroy were reserved for noblemen and would not be awarded to commoners, and the courts would not make non-nobles pages at the court as they did with Diogo Colón on May 8, 1492.

But we must also accept that there were many people in Castile who knew the true identities of the three brothers. Only by knowing their true lineage would a duke host the navigator in his palace for two years and another duke would try to marry his daughter into that family of foreigners. And if these Castilians knew the Colóns' true origins after they assumed their pseudonyms, certainly their Portuguese relatives living in Castile would know them as well. Therefore, it is logical to accept that many people in Castile knew who Cristóbal, Bartolomé,⁸³⁸ and Diego Colón were when they lived in Portugal.

In the kingdom of Portugal, where the navigator studied, sailed, married, and dealt personally with King João II and his court, nothing was narrated. It seemed that no one in Portugal had known that the navigator was related to so many high nobles in that kingdom, and that he had resided and married in Portugal and captained ships for the Kings of Portugal. The Portuguese pretended not to know the navigator after 1504, calling him Italian and degrading him as a fantasist dog barking his delusions in Castile. Rui de Pina's silence and deflection to Italy was followed by Garcia de Resende and the other chroniclers. They hindered the truth further by claiming the navigator was a despised and disrespectful fantasist "who barked at the court," as Barros declared.

Don Cristóbal Colón's nobility is clearly proven by the marriage of the navigator with a noble Dame in Portugal. After all, this is the first irrefutable fact of his pre-Colón life. This marriage was undervalued by many biographers, which helped to propagate Colón's life as the fairy tale of an insignificant weaver who married a noble lady in a time when such marriages were virtually impossible.

The navigator married Filipa Moniz around January 1479, a privileged Dona Comendadora in the Commandery of Todos-os-Santos of the Order of Santiago, where the navigator attended mass regularly. The Governor of the Order of Santiago was Prince João, heir to the throne and future King João II, and Santiago was a restricted organization that did not allow just anyone into its ranks. It required those joining not to be manual laborers, not only the candidates but the parents

⁸³⁸ En estos viajes y descubrimientos, ó en alguno dellos, se halló el almirante D. Cristóbal Colon y su hermano D. Bartolomé Colon, según lo que yo puedo colegir de cartas y cosas escritas que tengo de sus manos [...] Y porque Cristóbal Colon y su hermano Bartolomé Colon en aquellos tiempos vivían en Portugal, allende de lo que ellos se sabían de teórica y experiencia de navegación, en Portugal se debieran en esta facultad de perfeccionar. Anduvieron ambos muchas ó algunas veces, como arriba dije, ocupados y en compañía de los portugueses en estos descubrimientos. LAS CASAS, T1, 211, 213.

and grandparents. They had to be children of nobles without the blood of Jews, Moors, or Gentiles. To marry, Filipa Moniz required authorization from the governor of the Santiago order.

By marriage, the navigator became cousin not only to counts and marquises, but also nephew to the *Magro* brothers, Knights of the King's household, highly trusted and favored by King João II. Rui Gil, an uncle of the navigator, was Captain of the Crossbowmen of the King's chamber. Colón's cousin was Lord Chamberlain of King João II. Another cousin was Count of Abrantes and Captain of the Royal Guard of João II. Don Cristóbal was also the brother-in-law of Pedro Correia, Captain of Graciosa and one of João II's royal guards and brother-in-law of the Third Captain of Porto Santo, Bartolomeu Perestrelo II. Don Cristóbal was also uncle of the Fourth Captain Bartolomeu Perestrelo III. Among his relatives was the Count of Penamacor, a high nobleman and an important official of the court of King Afonso V, being his Chamberlain and Captain of the Royal Guard. At the same social level was the Marquis of Montemor, Don João de Bragança, the Constable of the Kingdom, and the Moniz uncles who married into royalty and had royal children, who in turn married the elitist nobles in the kingdom, such as Francisca da Silva (Moniz), Countess of Odemira.

From both the father's and the mother's side, Filipa's family was entrenched in the court, in the House of Viseu, and held posts and titles of great importance in the reign. According to the customs of the time, his marriage with Filipa Moniz would have never occurred if the navigator were not of noble lineage.

Several of Colón's relatives, because they belonged to a group of traitors to King João II in 1483-84, ended up living in Seville in close contact with the navigator and his brothers, his children, and his grandchildren. His son married a cousin of King Fernando of Castile at the insistence of that king, and his granddaughter married the Count of Gelves, who was a Bragança. The son's marriage was a matter of political struggle between the King of Castile and one of the most powerful dukes of that kingdom, Medina Sidonia.

Apparently, and in line with what Don Hernando and Las Casas explained, the pseudonym *Cristóbal Colón* was not his baptismal name. Both authors told us the **name** and the **surname** were invented by the Admiral as his motto, to describe the remarkable feat he planned to accomplish by sailing across the Atlantic, while also giving a hint of his ancient noble lineage. But the invention of a pseudonym was not just to create a motto. There had to be a colossal secret behind the origins

of the Colón brothers, and the pseudonym would have been invented to hide their origins, a conclusion already emphasized by Beltrán y Rózpide 100 years ago.

In order to hide his origins and homeland, he needed to change his name, thus we believe that a new persona was invented. Contrary to what thousands of books on the history of this argonaut say, his son never confirmed that he had truncated the name Colombo into Colón. Don Hernando did not confirm that his father was born in Genoa. From everything Don Hernando wrote, we can extract that there was intentional secrecy surrounding his father's true origins, identity, and birthplace. We understand that this mystery was meant to last forever because "...the more he wanted that his homeland and origins be less certain and less known," as conveyed in the *Historie*.

It is generally accepted that the pseudonym was invented while in Castile and was not a name he utilized in Portugal. If he was already called Cristóbal Colón in Portugal, it would have been difficult to hide this Portuguese past in Castile. If Cristóbal Colón were already his name in Portugal, this would mean that his identity had already been successfully hidden and the court of Castile did not need to implement so many machinations to help the brothers to hide their nationality and origins. One thing is certain, the pseudonym successfully obscured the true identity of the parents.

While the surname *Colombo* of the Genoese Cristoforo means *pigeon*, the surname *Colón*, used by Don Cristóbal, comes from the Greek *kōlon*, as we presented in Chapter 3. Explaining his father's pseudonym, Don Hernando wrote that the **name** and **surname** were full of intentional mystery. His Roman ancestor's surname of Colón came to him fittingly, which he renewed because in Greek it means member, that is, a member of Christ, as Don Hernando specified. Las Casas wrote that, this illustrious man, setting aside the customary surname, wanted to call himself Colón, taking on the old meaning.

Those who insist on the theory that the navigator's original surname was Colombo do so against all documentation because no documents prove such allegations. We cannot prove his real name, but we must accept that it was neither Cristoforo nor Colombo, as anyone taking on a pseudonym intending to conceal his actual identity would choose a name far removed from his real name. Thus, if the navigator had Cristoforo Colombo as his baptismal name, he would never have selected Cristoforo Colón as a pseudonym. Logic tells us that his real name would be one very different from *Cristóbal Colón*. The Admiral invented a cryptic puzzle for his signature to

better confuse us, putting a triangle of letters on top of a camouflaged *Cristo-Vam Kōlon*. This cryptogram still lacks a reliable decryption today.

The correct pseudonym was *Cristóbal Colón*. Which his son insisted was *Christophorus Colonus* in Latin. Any other name utilized to call him is not accurate. He was not Colombo, Columbus, Colomb, Kolumb, and so on. Colón has been the name for him and his descendants in Spain and all Spanish-speaking nations for 530 years.

Those who called the navigator by the surname Colombo were people outside of Castile, living far from the events and alien to the truth. Seeing that his chosen name was misrepresented and unable to use his actual name, the Admiral resigned himself to accepting a situation already out of his control, which is evident when he says, “I am not the first admiral in my family; so, **give me then whatever name you want.**” The propaganda was growing out of control, and he no longer had any choice over it.

For many decades, historians theorized that the navigator used his pseudonym to maintain his plebeian identity a secret from the Court of Castile. It has now been demonstrated that this concept goes against reason. Common sense does not allow us to accept that the Kings of Castile would not know the true identities of the three Colón brothers. The court would not make the preadolescence Don Diogo a page at the court in May of 1492, unless they were certain of who his noble ancestors were.

When the Count of Penamacor ran away to Castile, he changed his name from Lopo de Albuquerque to the pseudonym of *Pedro Nunes*. Yet, being in Flanders and England under this false identity, King João II was able to track him down and have him arrested and put into the Tower of London, as Garcia de Resende elaborated. Logically, monarchs would know who the nobles frequenting their courts were; especially if a court was protecting them, paying them, and helping to hide them in their own kingdom.

Occam leaves us only one option - the court of Castile knew without a doubt who the Colón brothers were, where they were born, who their parents were, and what were their real names.

As would be expected of a person who assumed a pseudonym, and who was left with neither past nor kingdom, there are no sources that can be traced back prior to 1484. Apart from his marriage and his writings divulging his past feats, but always careful not to reveal more than necessary, the navigator does not exist in Portuguese history.

The documents of the weaver Colombo and noble Colón intersected, intermingled, and were eventually assumed as being all connected to the same person; and this person was accepted as the weaver from Genoa.

The documents in Castile were contrary to the documents in Genoa. Historians chose to accept the Genoese documents and claimed that none of what Don Cristóbal Colón and his son wrote about themselves was true. Everything in Don Cristóbal's and Don Hernando's writings had to be dismissed as lies, boasting, or aggrandizement on the part of father and son; and this was not a rational attitude. This choice was made despite there always being something inexplicable and out of place with the accepted story of the weaver.

It was all a vast web of deceit built in the clouds that left us more confused at the end than we were at the beginning. This Colón labyrinth resulted from a well-planned objective of plunging into complete darkness the true origins of the three Colón brothers, as evidence by their genealogy shown in Figure 25, which gives them no parents. Judging by the results, the plan has been quite successful. The navigator's origins remain lost in the shadows of the past.

Because many had written that the navigator was Genoese and these rumors were taken seriously, during the lawsuit for the Succession to the Dukedom of Veragua, a Colón family dispute that lasted 30 years, the Government of Genoa searched for relatives throughout Liguria in an attempt to steal Colón's inheritance in Spain.

A mere 80 years had passed since the navigator died, but no Colombo in Genoa knew who Admiral Colón was nor what family he belonged to. The government of Genoa supported instead a Colombo from Cogoleto, with a falsified genealogy. The other litigant, a Colombo of Cuccaro, also presented himself with forged documents and false witnesses. In the end, no matter how hard the Italian Colombos tried, they were not able to prove that the navigator was from Liguria nor related to them.

Unlike what Balthazar Colombo claimed, the name Colombo and Colón are not the same thing. Over time, those forged documents from the Genoese pretenders came to be accepted as trustworthy and accepted as the much-desired proof of whom the man behind the pseudonym Cristóbal Colón truly was; but the documents were not reliable. They were mere fabricated manipulations utilized in a ruse of inheritance robbery that failed. They don't prove anything today, and they certainly do not prove that the Admiral was a weaver born in Genoa.

The huge disagreement that manifests itself between the documents from Genoa and the documents from Castile leaves no way to harmonize them. It was decided to discard and minimize what the Admiral and his son wrote, compelling the world to accept as truth everything that could connect Colón to Genoa, even if those connections were unfounded.

Historians were forced to make excuses for accepting a tale that went against documents and social norms and discounted all others who, over the last 100 years, contested this very same tale.

The navigator was considered a native of several Italian places, resulting in a duel between each place to see which one gained the glory of being the birthplace of the world's most famous discoverer and hero. The only Iberian document that proclaimed a nationality was the *Mayorazgo* of 1498, a fraudulent manuscript utilized in an attempt to steal the Admiral's inheritance.

Because the 1498 *Mayorazgo* reads, "I was born in Genoa," it was accepted as authentic and there was only one solution: the noble Cristóbal Colón had to be the weaver Cristoforo Colombo, and had been born in Genoa into a plebeian family in 1451. Once it was erroneously accepted that Colón wrote the *Mayorazgo* of 1498, everything else that the navigator wrote about himself could only be discarded as lies.

The *Mayorazgo* of 1498 is a falsification. It was created with the date of 1598 having a 4 been written over the 5 to appear like 1498. Over four hundred years ago this document was dismissed by the Spanish Tribunal of the Indies as not authentic; a worthless piece of paper. Thus, all and any information contained in it, such as being born in Genoa, is scientifically inadmissible.

On the contrary, the necessity of having to forge documents in Genoa can be seen as proof that the navigator was not from Liguria. All of the letters kept in Genoa said to be from the Admiral are not trustworthy and very likely to be forgeries.

There is no conclusive evidence in any document about who the navigator was, nor where he was born.

The Genoese Colombo is proven to be a plebeian weaver and he would not be able to marry a noblewoman in Portugal. To fill this hole in the story, it was invented that the weaver was not a weaver after all, but a merchant employed by the Centurione and Di Negro trading houses in Genoa. This was accepted, although there is not a single document in Portugal, nor in Genoa, that proves Don Cristóbal Colón was a merchant in Portugal. The *Assereto Document*, besides being

suspicious, is about a man whose actual birth name was Colombo, while the navigator's name was not his birth name, but a pseudonym.

The Colombo from the *Assereto*, at the age of 27 in 1479, was a mere passenger on a ship to Madeira, while the navigator Colón, in 1479, was a tried and tested sea wolf with a decade of seafaring experience behind him.

It is true that Don Hernando wrote in his Testament that when they went out to buy books for his library, they should claim that the books were for the library of the son of that famous Genoese, the First Admiral who discovered the Indies. It is also true that Pietro Martire wrote that Colón was *Ligurian*. However, these statements are contrary to everything that the life of the Admiral reflects, as we have shown, and the explanation must be simple.

In Martire's case, calling Colón Ligurian could be as simple as having heard Castilians call him Genoese, meaning foreigner, or a simple misdirection to help in preserving the identity secret.

In the case of Don Hernando, if the father insisted that his birthplace must not be disclosed, then declaring him to be Genoese served two important purposes: first, it helped with the original plan of secrecy by deflecting; and second, it benefited the expansion of his library by getting Genoese merchants to accept that they were helping a fellow national. However, when he was in Liguria Don Hernando did not search for relatives in Genoa, but instead he did so in Cogoleto, showing that he knew his father was not from Genoa.

Evidently, as we came to know during the inheritance lawsuit, calling someone **Genoese** in Castile in some cases meant the same as calling someone **foreigner**, and not necessarily a person born in Genoa, or from Liguria.

While many contemporaries of the First Admiral of the Indies wrote that the navigator was from Genoa, and some wrote that he was a common weaver, other authors did not agree. Oviedo wrote that, according to what he heard from the people of his nation, Colón was from Cogureo, and not Genoa. In turn, Bernáldez wrote that Colón was Milanese. Furthermore, Giovan Battista Strozzi, a Florentine in Cádiz, called him Savonese as did Galíndez de Carbajal, while Waldseemüller wrote that Colón was a "captain of Portugal". It is not surprising that mistaken nationalities were attributed to famous people of the time.

The same happened to Colombo the Elder who some declared was from Savona and Las Casas said was a Genoese. Yet, the Colombo pirate presented by the chroniclers as a relative of

the navigator was neither a Colombo nor a Genoese, but a Prince George Bissipat from Constantinople and Vice-Admiral of France.

The navigator, as far as is known, never declared his birthplace. Only in a letter written to the Catholic Monarchs on March 4, 1493, from Lisbon, did he hint at Portugal as his place of birth, where he wrote that he had left his **homeland** to serve them. Since the navigator left Portugal to serve at the court of Castile, the homeland he left was obviously Portugal. If he was born in Portugal, then the words of Pedro de Toledo in 1487 declaring that Colón was Portuguese would be the truth. And it is hard to accept that this was not the truth, seeing that it was declared in a court document where the Queen herself was involved. Being born in Portugal would explain the Admiral having the Portuguese language as his mother tongue.

In any case, whether or not he was Portuguese by birth, Colón already had the status of a nobleman in Portugal. He would already have a coat of arms in Portugal, as Queen Isabel wrote, and significant ties to the nobility and to the Portuguese court. In Portugal, he already had all the experience of sailing, captaining ships, dealing with kings, and deceiving sailors before appearing in Castile at the age of 28 with an obstinate plan to carry the flag of Castile and plant it in the New World.

He had extensive studies of sciences and arts, as well as languages, with the Portuguese language as the foundation of all his written communications. At the same time, he did not know how to write one full sentence in Italian.

However, it is not just the fact he did not know Italian and instead had Portuguese as his base or mother tongue that calls into question the whole of the official story. No; neither is the fact that he was a nobleman in order to marry Filipa Moniz that denies the possibility of the navigator having been the weaver Colombo. No; nor is it that he had a coat of arms before he became famous, thus denying, from all angles, the story of a commoner; nor is it the fact that the name Colón was invented and that it is not his real birth name; nor the fact that others had corrupted his name from Colón to Colombo, which denies the navigator having been the weaver Colombo; it is not even the fact that his deeds and writings prove that he spent his childhood studying, and his youth sailing, which denies a youth spent as a simple laboring weaver sweating with his family behind a loom during the first two decades of his life. No, it is not.

Although any one of the above facts is sufficient proof to dismantle the entire official story and accept that the noble mariner Don Cristóbal Colón was never the weaver Cristoforo Colombo, his own words furthermore sink this accepted tale.

When he wrote, “I came to serve you at **28 years of age**, and now I do not have a hair on my person that is not white, and my body sick, and I spent what was left to me by grandparents, and all was taken from me and sold, and from my brothers even our clothes, without a hearing nor given an audience, with great dishonor to me,” he set himself completely apart in age from the weaver. There is no way to deny this fact.

In that same 1503 letter, the explorer complained about the ill-treatment and poor rewards received from the Court of Castile, writing that “20 years of service in which I served you with so many hardships and through so many dangers has been of little benefit to me.”

The fact that Admiral Colón declared he was 28 years old in 1484, when he went to serve in Castile, and that he had served for 20 years in 1503 is sufficient proof that he was not the Colombo presented by all the Genoese documents. He was 28 in 1484 and had served 20 years in 1503, which makes him 48 years old in 1503, thus born in 1455.

The weaver Colombo was born in 1451 and declared to be 19 years old in a document from 1470.

Moreover, forensic analysis at the University of Granada in 2003-04 revealed that the bones of Don Diego Colón, who died in 1515, belonged to a man who was about 56 years old at the time of his death. However, the weaver Giacomo Colombo would have been only 47 years old if he had died in 1515. The math shows that Giacomo and Diego’s ages do not match, just as Cristoforo’s and Cristóbal’s also do not.

We must ponder what might have been written 100 years ago if historians had decided to follow Beltrán y Rózpide’s warnings, instead of accepting a dubious *Raccolta* as their Holy Grail. Beltrán y Rózpide understood that they needed to look more discreetly at the available facts because, “in addition to the difference of age between the weaver Colombo and the sailor Colón, there is a manifest incompatibility between one and the other from the point of view of their habitual residences and the social classes in which they associated with [...] he came to the Kings of Castile when he was 28 years old.”

Finally, Beltrán y Rózpide insisted that “Don Cristóbal, the man who wrote that letter of July 7, 1503, along with so many others known to be from him, cannot be Cristoforo Colombo, a

humble craftsman weaver from Genoa. Among Don Cristóbal's writings, there is always relative conformity, even admitting different interpretations. No matter what documents one reviews, there are no connections between the writings of Don Cristóbal Colón and the writings from Genoa and Savona referring to Cristoforo Columbo. The Colón from the Spanish documents is not the Colombo from the Italian documents."

After examining all the accounts and all the known documents, only one option remains, and that is the same as the one that Beltrán y Rózpide accepted 100 years ago: the Colón from Iberia was not that Colombo from Genoa; not only because their lives, deeds, and documents do not fit, but more importantly, because the math does not add up. A man cannot have two dates of birth or two different ages.

In the end, there is not a shred of evidence in favor of the Colombo weaver theory. It becomes evident with every new detail that Colombo and Colón were not the same person: one was a nobleman and the other a commoner; one was an educated seafarer and the other a weaver; one had Portuguese as his mother tongue and the other Genoese; one was rubbing elbows with kings, and the other was mingling with shoemakers and carpenters; one sailed to the ends of the world, and the other moved from Genoa to Savona; one died with gold, real estate, and other earthly possessions, and the other spent his life in debt; one married a noble Lady, and the other could never have done so in that society; one had spent his youth studying letters and sciences, and the other probably could not write his own name; one was 27 years old in 1479, and the other was 28 years old in 1484; one left us letters, logbooks, notes and even compiled a *Book of Prophecies*, and the other probably never read a single word and left us only notary entries written by others, and where he did not even sign his own name. They were two different people.

Occam forces us to discard the age, the name, the family and the life of the Colombo, and at the same time, discard everything connected to the weaver. It was a clear case of mistaken identity. It is time to accept this subject as closed and correct the misinformation still spread nowadays by the world's educators.

Logic forces us to discard thousands of books, chronicles, and articles professing to have uncovered evidence of the famous navigator's true origins and identity. What remains is the mystery that the Admiral insisted on maintaining, since the truth continues safely hidden inside the cocoon that was constructed five centuries ago.

What is clear is that many people at the time collaborated to maintain this mystery. The courts of Portugal and Castile and the contemporary chroniclers all helped to propagate the fog that shrouds him. All the subsequent authors who published works about the Colombo of Genoa have done nothing more than propagating unfounded rumors, spreading additional fog into the air and helping to obfuscate the truth even more.

It is unjust and contrary to the facts to continue calling Colón by the wrong name of *Columbus*, as it is to keep insisting that he began life as a plebeian weaver who lied about his identity to protect the secret of his low birth; when in fact, it was the courts who were hiding his noble lineage from us.

As the old saying goes, the first step in finding a solution is to know what the problem is. Realizing that we had the wrong man, our hope now is to find the right one, either through yet unknown documents or DNA analyzes.

The University of Granada is undertaking a massive project of DNA analysis with results that were due to be released in 2022. When those results are finally released, no doubt there will be more facts to lead us on the road to the truth. We eagerly wait DNA evidence that could bring a confirmation of the true family of the famous First Admiral, Viceroy and Governor of the Indies and Knight of the Golden Spur known as Don Cristóbal Colón, whom the world shunned, imposing on us a simple weaver Cristoforo Colombo.

Although the secret identity of the noble Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón remains safely hidden, we hope that someday this long-standing puzzle can be satisfactorily solved, and his parents revealed to the world so that the reasons behind the complex mystery can finally be understood. Until then all we can do is continue to follow the documents and the evidence wherever they may lead us.

DOCUMENT I – Power of Attorney Perestrelo and Barahona

Poder Otorgado En Sevilla El 28 De Agosto De 1508 Por Bartolomé Perestrello Y Juan Barahona A Favor Del Mercader Gerónimo Bonerense Para Que Les Gestione La Concesión Por La Santa Sede De Avitos De Cristo E De Santiago.

Del dicho día lunes a veynte e ocho días del mes de agosto año del Señor de mill e quinientos e ocho años.

Sepan quantos esta carta vieren como yo bartolomé perestelo cauallero portugués capitán de la ysla de porto santo que es en la ysla de la madera e vesino que soy de la dicha ysla de la madera e yo el jurado iohan barahona su cuñado vesyno que soy desta muy noble e muy leal cibdat de seuilla en la collación de santa maría Nos anbos a doss de manera común e a voz de uno e cada vno de nos por el todo renunciando la avténtica de duobus reys (rebus) debendi e el beneficio de la diuisión otorgamos e conoscemos a vos girónimo bonesene mercader senes estante que soys en esta dicha cibdad de seuilla que estades presente que por rasón que vos el dicho girónimo aveys de traer a mí el dicho bartolomé perestelo vn rescrito de roma de nuestro muy santo padre en que se contenga que yo el dicho bartolomé perestelo capitán suso dicho pueda traer el ávito e crus de cristus a vso de portugal o la crus del ávito de santiago para lo dar a mí el dicho capitán e a mí el dicho jurado o a qualquier de nos de oy día que esta carta es fecha dende fasta en fin del mes de henero primero que verná del año del señor de mill e quinientos e nueve años segund que más largamente se contiene en dos ynformaciones capituladas e fechas por mano de garcía farnándes notario apostólico en que queda la vna ynformación e capitulación a mí el dicho bartolomé perestelo capitán suso dicho e la otra en poder de vos el dicho girónimo bonesene las quales están firmadas de nuestros nombres por ende nosotros de manera común como dicho es nos obligamos que sy vos el dicho girónimo bonesene truxeredes lo suso dicho segund didho es e en las dichas preformaciones e capitulaciones suso dichas se contiene de vos dar e pagar por rasón del trabajo que aveys de tomar e pagar las costas que se han de faser en traer lo suso dicho segund [] todos los maravedís e ducados e otras cosas que vos el dicho girónimo bonesene dixeredes que aveys gastado fasta lo traer aquí en seuilla en paz e en saluo syn pleito e syn contienda alguna luego el día que entregáredes lo suso dicho a nos o a qualquier de nos segund que en la manera que dicha es so pena del doblo por pena convencional e por el espreso pacto que con vos fasemos e ponemos e que también seamos temidos e obligados e nos obligamos de vos dar e pagar la dicha pena del doblo sy en ella cayéremos como el principal en la dicha pena pagada o no pagada que todavía vos paguemos el dicho principal. E demás desto sy lo asy no touieremos e guardaremos e cumpliéremos como sobredicho es por esta carta damos e otorgamos libre e lleno e cumplido poder a cualquier alcalde o juez o alguazil o ballestero o portero asy de la corte de la reyna nuestra señora como desta dicha cibdad de seuilla o de otra cibdad o villa a lugar qualquiera que sea ante quien esta carta fuere mostrada que syn nos ni otro por nos ser llamados a juicio ni oydos ni vencidos sobre esta rasón nos puedan prender e prendan e fagan e manden faser entregar e exsecución en nos e en cada uno de nos e en todos nuestros bienes rayzes e muebles do quier que los fallaren e los nos e cada uno de nos ayamos e los vendan e rematen luego syn ninguna plaso que sea de alongamiento porque de los maravedises que valieren ves entreguen e fagan luego pago de lo que

dicho es de la diesha paga del doblo sy en ella cayéremos e de tocias las cosas e mysiones e daños e menoscabos que vos o [] vos fisyeredes e recibieredes e se vos remedie? [] esta rasón bien asy e a tan cumplidamente [] sy todo esto que sobre dicho es fuese cosa justa [] pasada en pleyto por demandar e por res [] e fuese sobre ello dada sentencia definitiua [] fuese consentida de las partes en uno (?) E renunciarnos que nos no podamos anparar ni defender sobre esta rasón por cartas ni por priuilegios de rey ni de reyna ni de otro señor ni señora ganados ni por ganar ni por alguna otra rasón ni exsebción ni defensyon que por nos pongamos o aleguemos E porque todas las cosas e cada vna de ellas que nos e cada vno de nos en esta carta fazemos e otorgamos e en esta carta son contenidas renunciarnos e partimos e quitamos de nos e de nuestro ayuda e fauor todas e qualesquier leyes e fueros e derechos e preuilegios que tengamos por ser caualleros fijosdalgo y otras qualesquier que en nuestro fauor sean lo qual queremos que nos no valan en esta rasón e seruicio (?) ni fuero (?) del en tiempo alguno ni por alguna manera e para lo asy tener e guardar e cunplir e pagar e aver por firme como sobredicho es obligamos a nos e a cada vno de nos e a todos nuestros bienes muebles e rayzes abidos e por aver e yo el dicho bartolomé perestelo capitán suso dicho me obligo de vos responder e cunplir de derecho sobre esta dicha rasón ante los alcaldes e juezes desta cibdad de seuilla e ante cada vno e qualquier dellos so cuya jurisdicción someto a mí e a todos mis bienes e renuncio sobre ello mi propio tuero e domicilio, fecha la carta en seuilla estando en las casas de la morada del dicho girónimo bonesene que son en esta dicha cibdad en la collación de santa maria en la calle de francos lunes veynte e ocho días del mes de agosto año del nacimiento de nuestro saluador ihu xpo de mill e quinientos e ocho años e lo firmaron de sus nombres testigos que fueron presentes diego martilles de medina e alonso de caças (casas?) escriuanos de seuilla va escrito entre renglones o drs e pagar vala testigos que lo conocieron al dicho capitán el dicho jurado e yvan texeyra de mendoça cauallero portugués vecino de la dicha vsia de la madera.

BARTOLOMÉ PERESTELLO. (Rúbrica.)

JUAN BARAHONA. (Rúbrica.)

DIEGO MARTÍNES DE MEDINA. Escriuano (Rúbrica.)

ALONSO DE CAÇAS. escriuano de seuilla. (Rúbrica).⁸³⁹

⁸³⁹ ALTOLAGUIRRE, Ángel de, *Algunos Documentos Inéditos relativos a Don Cristóbal Colon y Su Familia*, Madrid, Imprenta de Archivos, Olózaga, I, 1928, 14-17.

DOCUMENT II – Compulsory Sworn Oath That Cuba Was Asia

Informe y juramento de como cuba era tierra firme, que el almirante hizo tomar a los mariñeros que le acompañaron (july 12, 1494)

En la caravela Niña, que a por nombre Santa Clara, jueves doze días del mes de junio, año del nascimiento de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo de mil e cuatrocientos e noventa e cuatro años, el muy magnifico señor don Cristóval Colón, Almirante Mayor del Mar Océano, Visorrey e Governador perpetuo de la isla de Sant Salvador e de todas las otras islas e tierra firme de las Indias descubiertas e por descubrir del Rey e de la Reina, Nuestros Señores, e su Capitán General de la Mar, requirió a mi, Fernán Péres de Luna escrivano público del número de la cibdad Isabela, por parte de Sus Altezas, que por quanto él avia partido de la dicha cibdad Isabela con tres caravelas para venir a descubrir la tierra firme de las Indias, puesto que ya tenía descubierto parte d'ella el otro viaje que acá primero avía hecho el año pasado del Señor de mil e cuatrocientos e noventa e tres años y non avia podido saber lo cierto d'ello, porque puesto que andoviese mucho por ella non avía fallado personas en la costa de la mar que le supiese dar cierta relación d'ello, porque heran todos gente desnuda que no tiene bienes propios, ni tratan, ni van fuera de sus casas, ni otros vienen a ellos, segund d'ellos mesmos supo, y por esto no declaró afirmativo que fuese la tierra firme, salvo que lo pronunció dubitatibo y la avia puesto nombre la Juana a memoria del principe don Juan, Nuestro Señor, y agora partió de la dicha cibdad Isabela a veinte e cuatro días del mes de abril, e vino a demandar la tierra de la dicha Juana más propinca de la isla Isabela, la cual es fecha como un girón que va de Oriente a Osidente, y la punta está de la parte del Oriente propinca a la Isabela veinte e dos leguas, y siguió la costa d'ella al Osidente de la parte del abstro para ir a una isla muy grande a que los indios llaman Jamaica, la cual falló después de aver andado mucho camino y le puso nombre la isla de Santiago, y andubo la costa toda d'ella de Oriente a Osidente y después bolvió a la tierra firme a que llaman la Juana, al lugar que él a vía dexado y siguió la costa d'ella al Poniente muchos días, atanto que dixo que por su navegación pasava de trezientas e treinta e cinco leguas desde que comenzó entrar en ella fasta agora, en el cual camino conoçí muchas veses y lo pronunció que ésta hera tierra firme, por la fechura e la noticia que d'ella tenia, y el nombre de la gente de las provincias en especialla provincial de Mango y agora, después de aver descubierto infinitísimas islas que nadie a podido contar del todo, y llegado aquí a una población tomó unos indios, los cuales le dixerón que esta tierra andava la costa d'ella al Poniente más de veinte jornadas, ni ...sabia fasta dónde llegava. Determinó de andar más adelante algo, para que todas las persona que vienen en estos navíos, entre los cuales ay maestros de cartas de marear y muy buenos pilotos, los más famosos qu'él supo escoger en la armada grande qu'él traxo de Castilla, y porque ellos viesén cómo esta tierra es grandisima y que de aquí adelante va la costa della al mediodía, así como les desía, anduvo cuatro jornadas más adelante porque todos fuesen muy ciertos que hera tierra firme, porque en todas esas islas e tierra non puebla a la mar salvo gente desnuda, que se bibe de pescado y nunca van en la tierra adentro, ni saben qué sea el mundo ni d'él cuatro leguas lexos de sus casas, y creen que no ay en el mundo salvo islas, y son gente que no tienen ley ni seta alguna, ni saben qué sea salvo nacer y ..., ni tienen ninguna polecía porque puedan saber del mundo. y porque después del Viaje acabado que nadie no tenga causa con malicias o por mal desir y apocar las cosas que meresen ...mucho loor, requirió a mí, el dicho escrivano, el dicho señor Almirante como de suso lo resa, de parte de Sus Altezas, que yo personalmente con buenos testigos fuese a cada una de las dichas tres caravelas e requiriese al maestre e compañía e toda otra gente que en ellas son públicamente que dixesen si tenían dubda alguna que esta tierra no fuese la tierra firme al comienso de las Indias y fin a quien en estas partes quisiere venir d'España por tierra; e que si alguna dubda o sabiduría d'ello toviesen que les rogava que lo dixesen, porque luego les quitaría la dubda y les faría ver que esto es cierto y qu'es la tierra firme.

E yo así lo cumplí e requerí públicamente aquí en esta caravela Niña al maestre e compañía, que son las personas que debaxo nombraré a cada uno por su nombre y de dónde es vesino e asimismo en las otras dos caravelas susodichas requerí a los maestros e compañía y así les declare por ante los testigos en baxo nombrados, todo así como el dicho señor Almirante a mi avia requerido y requerí a ellos y les puse pena de dies mil maravedies por cada vez que lo que dixere cada uno que después en ningún tiempo el contrario dixese de lo que agora diría, e cortada la lengua; e si fuere grumete o persona de tal suerte que le daría ciento açotes y le cortaría la lengua. Y todos así requeridos en todas las dichas tres caravelas, cada uno por si con mucha diligencia. Miraron los pilotos e maestros e marineros en sus cartas de marear y pensaron y dixeron lo siguiente:

Francisco Niño, vesino de Moguer, piloto de la caravela Niña, dixo que para el juramento que avia hecho que no oyó ni vido isla que pudiese tener tresientas e treinta e cinco leguas en una costa de Poniente a Levante y aun no acabada de andar; y que veía agora que la tierra tornava al Sur Suduest y al Suduest y Oest y que ciertamente no tenía dubda alguna que fuese la tierra firme, antes lo afirma y defendería qu'es la tierra firme y no isla, y que antes de muchas leguas navegando por la dicha costa, se fallaría tierra donde tratan gente política de saber y que saben el mundo etc.

Item, Alonso Medel, vesino de Palos, maestre de la caravela Niña, dixo que para el juramento que avia hecho que nunca oyó ni vido isla que pudiese tener tresientas e treinta e cinco leguas en una costa de Poniente a Levante y aún no acabada de andar, y que veía agora que la tierra torna va al Sur Suduest y al Suduest y Oest y que ciertamente no tenía dubda alguna que fuese la tierra firme, antes lo afirmava y defendería que es la tierra firme y no isla, y que antes de muchas leguas, navegando por la dicha costa se fallaría tierra, adonde tratan gente política de saber y que saben el mundo etc.

Item, Johan de la Cosa, vesino del Puerto de Santa María, maestro de haser cartas, marinero de la dicha caravela Niña dixo que para el juramento que avia hecho que nunca oyó ni vido isla que pudiese tener tresientas e treinta y cinco leguas en una costa de Poniente a Levante y aún no acabada de andar y que veía agora que la tierra firme tornava al Sur Suduest y al Suduest y Oest y _ que ciertamente no tenía dubda alguna que fuese la tierra firme, antes lo afirmava y defendería qu'es la tierra firme y no isla, y que antes de muchas leguas navegando por la dicha costa, se fallaría tierra adonde trata gente política de saber y que saben el mundo etc.

Item, todos los marineros e grumetes e otras personas que en la dicha caravela Niña estavan que algo se les entendía de la mar dixeron a una bos todos públicamente e cada uno por si, que para el juramento que avían hecho que aquella hera la tierra firme, porque nunca avian visto isla de tresientas e treinta y cinco leguas en una costa y aún no acabada de andar, y que ciertamente no tenían dubda d'ello ser aquella la tierra firme e antes lo afirmavan ser así los cuales dichos marineros e grumetes son los siguientes: e nombrados en la manera que se sigue: Johan del Varco, vesino de Palos, marinero; Morón, vesino de Moguer; Francisco de Lepe, vesino de Moguer; Diego Beltran, vesino de Moguer; Domingo, ginovés; Estéfano, veneciano; Juan de España, viscaíno; Gómes calafate, vesino de Palos; Ramiro Péres, vesino de Lepe; Mateo de Morales, vesino de Sant Juan del Puerto; Gonçalo Viscaino, grumete; Alonso de Huelva, vesino dende, grumete; Francisco Ginoves, vesino de Córdoba; Rodrigo Molinero, vesino de Moguer; Rodrigo calafate, vesino de Cartaya; Alonso Niño, vesino de Moguer;

Item, Bartolomé Péres, vesino de Rota, piloto de la caravela de Sant Juan dixo que para el juramento que avia hecho que nunca oyó ni vido...

Item, Cristóbal Péres Niño, vesino de Palos, maestre de la caravela Cardera dixo que para el juramento que avia hecho, que nunca oyó ni vido...

Testigos que fueron presentes a ver jurar a todos e a cada uno por sí de los susodichos, segund y en la manera que de suso se contiene, Pedro de Terreros, maestresala del dicho señor Almirante, e Iñigo López de Çúñiga, trinchante, criados del dicho señor Almirante; e Diego Tristán, vesino de Sevilla e Francisco Morales, vesino de Sevilla, etc.

En la dicha cibdad Isabela, miércoles catorze días de enero, año del nascimiento de nuestro Salvador Jesucristo de mil quatrocientos j noventa y cinco años, el dicho señor Almirante mandó a mí Diego de Peñalosa, escrivano de Cámara del Rey e de la Reina, nuestros Señores, e su notario público en la su Corte e en todos los sus reinos y señoríos, que catase los registros e protocolos de Fernán Péres de Luna, escrivano público del número de la dicha cibdad, defunto, que Dios aya, que en mí, poder avían quedado por virtud de un mandamiento por el dicho Señor Almirante a mí el dicho Diego de Peñalosa dado, firmado de su nombre. para que yo pudiese sacar de los dichos registros e protocolos cualesquier escritura que a mí fuese demandada abtorizadamente; por el qual dicho mandamiento yo fui requerido por parte del dicho Señor Almirante mirase los dichos registros e protocolos del dicho Fernán Péres de Luna, en los cuales fallaria el dicho requerimiento que aquí en esta dicha escriptura va declarado, e gelo diese firmado e signado con mi signo en pública forma en manera que faga fe por quanto se entiende aprovechar d'él en algund tiempo que le convenga. E yo, Diego de Peñalosa, escrivano susodicho, por virtud del dicho mandamiento que del dicho señor Almirante tengo para sacar cualesquier escrituras en limpio abtorizadamente, que ayan pasado ante el susodicho Fernán Péres de Luna, escrivano defunto que Dios aya, que en mi poder están, lo hize escrevir e saqué en limpio e conforme e signé de mi signo a tal. En testimonio de verdad.⁸⁴⁰

Diego de Peñalosa

⁸⁴⁰ VARELA, Consuelo, *Colón y los florentinos*, Alianza, Madrid, 1988, 216-223.

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