

**Luis Arranz: “A certain Christopher Columbus, Discoverer”. *The Adventure of History*. Year 8, n° 91, pp. 58-65 (adaptation)**

Christopher Columbus' Italian origin was hardly objected when the theory of a **Galician** Columbus arose from Spain. Between 1892 and 1898, the Galician Celso García de la Riega stands up for Christopher Columbus' Spanishness making him coming from Galicia, specifically from Pontevedra, where a Genoese colony lived, maintaining he hid his origin because of his links with the Jewish world.

The hypothesis of a **Catalan** Columbus arose in 1927, by the hand of the Peruvian Luis de Ulloa y Cisneros. He defends the Catalan origin of the discoverer of America based on the surname Colom native to Catalonia, to differentiate it from the Genoese Columbus, which he had nothing to do with.

In line with Ulloa's theory there is a **Majorcan** Columbus thesis, defended by Llanas de Niubó in the 60s and, nowadays by Gabriel Verd Martorell with unutterable enthusiasm. It is based on a letter from Anglería to Juan de Borromeo, dated in 1494, where it is communicated that the discoverer was native to Majorca and not to Liguria.

Columbus **from Ibiza** has in Nito Verdera its main mentor. He maintains that Christopher Columbus had been born in Ibiza, spoke in Catalan and that Cristoforo Colombo and Christopher Columbus were not the same person.

**Guadalajara's** Columbus turns out to be even more trivial. Its authors have intended to relate the discoverer to the high Castilian nobility, being son of the duchess of Arjona, Aldonza de Mendoza, and the Count of Treviño, Diego Gómez Manrique.

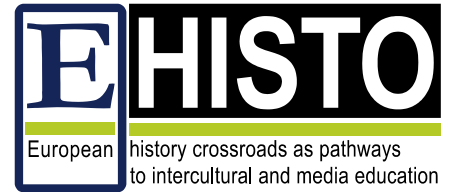
The theory of a **Portuguese** Columbus didn't appear soon, but it couldn't be left out. Despite the fact Portugal was always in the centre of many crucial moments in Columbus' life, it has hardly got off the ground. Rumeu de Armas has defended the version of a Christopher Columbus who was not born in Portugal but a Portuguese naturalized citizen and he supports he was known like that in the Castilian Court. There are some people who see Columbus as an outstanding member of the Portuguese nobility.

In 1940, Salvador de Madariaga, taking up again old proposals which had related the discoverer to the Jewish world, defended with strength and ability the theory of a **Sephardic** Columbus. He maintained that Jewish blood flew through his veins, with Spanish ancestors, who fled after the persecutions in 1391.

Too much adventurous thesis that have hardly been worthy of attention because of their lack of seriousness and consistence, have wanted to turn him into **Extremaduran**, –mixing up the Extremaduran Plasencia with the Italian Piacenza–, **Corsan, English, French, Greek** and even **Swiss**. These theories were born as a result of a strange mixture of legends, traditions and the selfish work of genealogists and even of opportunist forgers, but they could not stand up the passage of time and the shade of History.

**The theory of a Genoese Columbus, which is the most credible for me**, maintains he was born inside a modest family of wool dealers and weavers, settled in the town of Genoa, back around 1451. His parents were Domenico Colombo and Susana Fontanarrosa, from a clear Jewish origin.

From the beginning of the 15th century -not before- we place a Columbus family in the lands near Genoa. Its sudden appearance in those lands made some experts wonder whether they might come escaping from some other place because of religious reasons. It is not to be turned down lightly. It is easily observed that the last name Colombo, Colomb, Colomo or Colom is often found in the triangle



made by Genoa, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands.

The language, which is usually very close to the birthplace and the political homeland, is another point at issue around the discoverer. Columbus was able to speak or at least to stumble through a thousand languages, as he was a seaman.

It is possible we are facing the typical seaman who stumbles through a thousand languages without being fluent in any of them and used some kind of regional Mediterranean sailor slang. After what has been said, the link that anyone wanted to find with Castile will be understood even better.