

The mysterious origin of Columbus **Columbus' nationality in Spanish textbooks**

In spite of the fact that most historians agree with the Italian origin of Columbus, there is a long list of alternative hypotheses on the discoverer's birthplace. But, what has your teacher told you in class? What does your book say about Columbus' nationality? Would you be able to find information about any of these hypotheses? With these activities you'll be able to approach to the "mystery" of Columbus' origin.



[Genoa]: I'm Genoese. I come from a family of weavers, and since I was young I became a seaman and travelled to many European courts and countries.

[Galicia]: I'm Galician, from Pontevedra. My family had to escape to Genoa because they were Jew, and when I came back to Spain I told I was Genoese...

[Catalonia]: I'm Catalan. In fact, my surname was Colom, and besides my Castilian texts are full of Catalan expressions.

[Mallorca]: I'm Majorcan. My parents were Margarita Colom and The prince of Viana.

[Ibiza]: I'm from Ibiza. I'm mistaken with one Cristoforo Colombo, but that is other one. My mother tongue is Catalan and I give Catalan names to the territories I discover

[Guadalajara]: I'm from Guadalajara. I'm the son of the Duchess of Arjona and The Count of Treviño and I belong to the Castilian aristocracy.

[Portugal]: I'm Portuguese. Some say I have Jewish roots, but others say I belong to the Lusitanian aristocracy.

[Corsica]: I'm Corsican.

[Greece]: I'm Greek.

[Switzerland]: I'm Swiss.

[United Kingdom]: I'm from these islands, Scottish specifically.

[France]: I'm French.

[Sephardi]: Shhh. I cannot tell where I come from because my family has a Sephardi origin and we have to escape back and forth. If they discover my Jewish roots, I will have some problems.

[Extremadura]: I'm Extremaduran. I am said to have been born in Piacenza, but in fact it is Plasencia, they are mistaken...

[Poland]: Well, really I'm Portuguese , but what nobody knows is that I'm the son of one Henrique Aleman, who was living as a hermit in Madeira, hiding his real identity: Ladislav III, king of Poland, who was left for dead at the battle of Varna, but who really escaped and sheltered in that Portuguese island.

Tasks:

1 Have a look at the previous map. Each of the points in it represents one of Christopher Columbus possible birthplaces. Click on each of them and you'll get brief information.

a. Which of them do you think is the Columbus' most probable birthplace? Explain your answer.

b. Which of the possible birthplaces seems the strangest or the most improbable to you? Why?

2 Search your textbook and find if Christopher Columbus' origin is indicated. Next:

a. If this information doesn't appear. What do you think is it due to?

b. If some nationality is indicated, what is it?

c. According to the information in the book, do you think is there any doubt on that subject or, on the contrary, is his origin established with complete certainty?

3 Surf the internet to get information about the possible origins of Columbus. Write a short essay (10-20 lines) and present it to the rest of your classmates in the classroom.

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