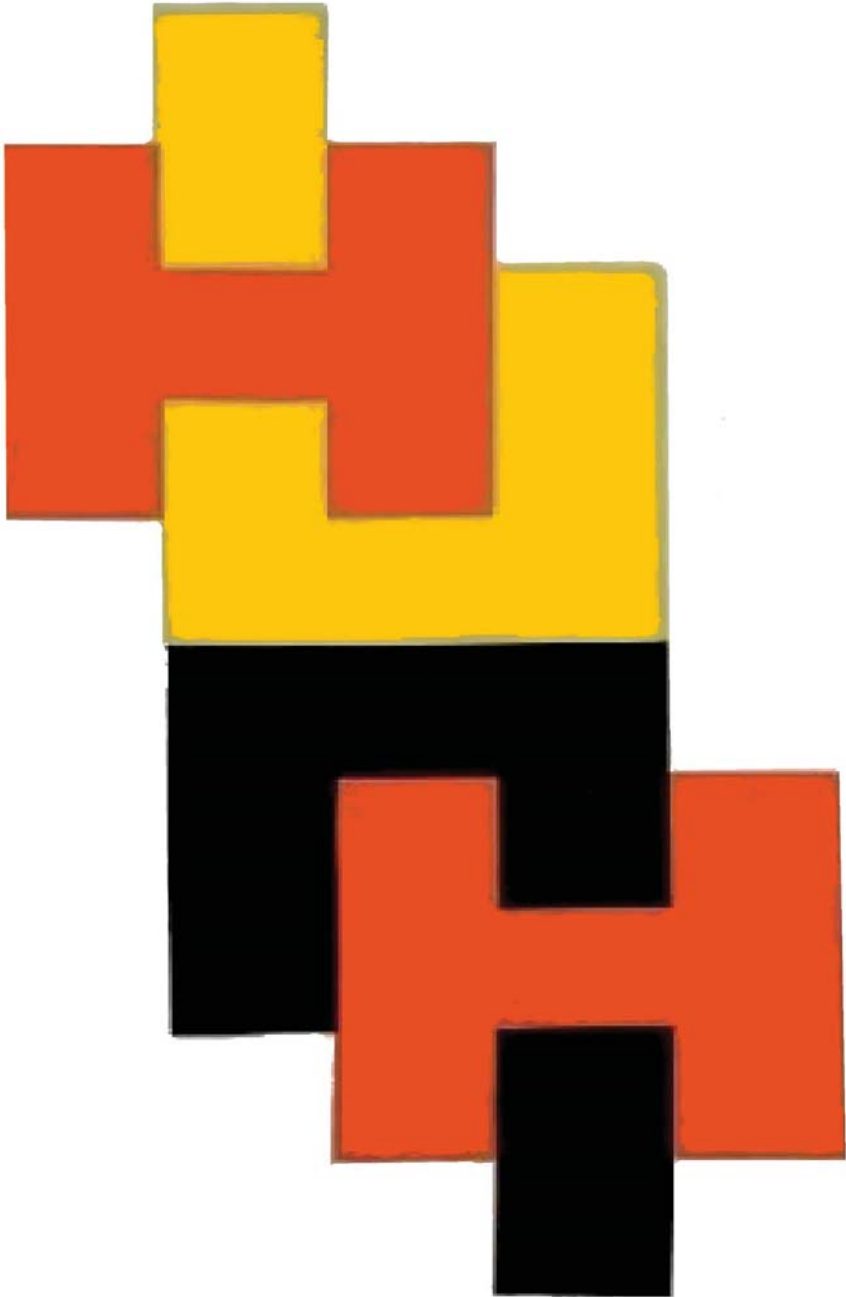


Reasonable Suspicion



Andras Laszlo

BERSERKER

BOOKS



László András

... the individual shall never be enforced against the age: the stream of time, which carries or plunges, is the swimmer, not the leader of the individual.-All those whom chronicles call great, All those who are mighty have understood their century, But have not born new concepts. The cock's voice is not the cock that wakes, But the cock cries, for he wakes. *Madách: The Tragedy of Man*

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JUSTIFIED MODESTY

Years ago, I needed the year of Columbus's birth and death for a notebook I was working on. If the Little Larousse encyclopaedia had not then put a question mark in brackets after the birth year, I would probably never have started with Columbus to deal with. However, I was not satisfied with the seemingly inaccurate information (I did not believe the encyclopaedia that Columbus' birth year was unknown), and started looking in other books. Biggest to my surprise, I found that all or almost all of them had a different year of birth.

After the wordy texts of encyclopaedias came history books, and later biographies, monographs and maps. It took me a long time to get my hands on Salvador de Mada-riaga's biography of Columbus, which was also published in our country in the early 1940s. By then, however, I had become so entangled in the contradictions and mysteries that permeated the life of Columbus I could not stop looking. If someone had asked me what I was looking for, I would not have been able to answer. I was as preoccupied with Columbus as I was with building the Eiffel Tower out of matchsticks in my spare time, or he writes the Bible under a magnifying glass on a sheet the size of a fingernail. For my own amusement. It was a pleasure. It interested me. I was curious. I almost had to smile to myself at all this voluntary and apparently aimless zeal: I was making notes, taking notes, just like a real researcher. Indeed, I was desperate to know the latest thinking on the Columbus question, and I began to obtain more and more material from abroad. I read the original excerpts from his ship's log, some of his letters and his two surviving wills.

I have no intention (nor did I ever) of believing that from a desk in Pest, surrounded by a few history books and a biography of Columbus, I could turn the tables on the secret of Columbus' origins. I realised a long time ago that Columbus scholars (the real ones) sometimes diametrically different positions on this question, and that there are huge gaps and unexplained white spots at the borders of the opposing views.

Slowly, however, I began to formulate a question authors of books that are documented with detailed accuracy, or even those that are fictional and sometimes contain blatant nonsense, pass by with their eyes closed. And I am (and increasingly so) only interested in this one question: how and why it became known in Columbus' lifetime that he was a Genoese - that is one half of the question - and why Columbus himself never confirmed or denied his alleged and, even in his lifetime, so often mentioned Genoese origin?

In reading the works on him and his times, and in pondering this question, the outlines of a carefully constructed and carefully organised secret plan (conspiracy?), or rather a deliberate mystification, began to emerge before me, which, to the best of my knowledge, is not mentioned by historians or biographers.

It is one of the biggest deals in world history to date. (The deal ultimately failed.) There are scattered references to it here and there, but as far as I know one has dealt with this aspect of the Columbus issue specifically.

But my concerns were hard to overcome. I am a firm believer in thorough expertise, and I am not at all fond of amateurism. Especially not in a science as complex and diverse as history.

That is why I tried to keep a firm hand on my fiction writing imagination and tried to rely strictly on what seemed to be historically indisputable data wherever possible: rearranging data that seemed to be historically credible from a different perspective, and grouping them around the question mentioned above. Nothing new
no sensational data or evidence has been found, but the evidence that was available led me to that this might be how the events happened.

It never occurred to me that, after the countless biographies of Columbus that exist, I should try to write another one myself. The very nature of the question

also precludes me from discussing the material available to me in the strict chronological order required for this kind of work.

And then, I'm not a historian, I haven't had the opportunity to study the original sources. But what I could, I looked into. And I can even consider myself lucky. I have recently come into possession of the eighth edition of Salvador de Madariaga's biography of Columbus, published in Buenos Aires in 1973, which I have already mentioned and which I will refer to many times later.

This 686-page work, in its present form, differs in several places from the translation published in Hungarian in the early 1940s. Special is, however, that in his almost one hundred pages of notes on the also provides a summary of the current state of the Columbus problem, with data drawn from nearly seventy of the most important source works in the vast literature on Columbus. It reconciles, examines, weighs up, debates, refutes and confirms sometimes contradictory opinions. He publishes in the original many documents, letters, manuscripts and contemporary opinions which, even if they were available to me, would take many years to study.

However, the question that concerns me is one that he touches on only in passing and in passing.

Even so, the data available to me are incomplete. But even these are so stubbornly stubborn to coalesce around the problem that excites me that I have been forced to give in to them.

Time and place

NECESSITY AND CHANCE

"Historians tell us, as the most natural thing in the world," writes the Spanish historian Ignacio Olagüe (*Histoire d'Espagne*, Editions de Paris, 1957), "that Christopher Columbus, as he went hunting, set out one fine day from an Andalusian port on a sea voyage, and a few months later

later brought home a piece of land in his pocket. The distinguished sailor (He was saved from beatification only by the fact that during a brief period of his life he had an extramarital affair with a woman from Cordoba named Beatriz Enríquez with a woman who also gave him an illegitimate son.) The facts proved that this man had neither genius, intelligence nor energy. was not a special person. Over the western Mediterranean basin, a thought floated in the atmosphere. It is to Columbus' credit that he pursued this idea with a visionary passion to make it happen."

I hardly think I would be wrong to call this "thought floating in the air" (less poetically, but perhaps more accurately) a historical necessity. The state of historical necessity arises from a set of independent but interconnected human actions. The currents of ideas are formed which, also in the form of and as a result of human action, change the face of the world. Of course, there are also many unpredictable elements in this powerful and law-like process. These are what is colloquially known as chance. And since chance has always been human face, in the second half of the 15th century this face bears the features of Christopher Columbus.

By then, all the conditions were in place to set sail across the Atlantic, most likely from Spain or Portugal, and attempt to sail westwards to the eastern shores of Asia.

No one on the ground believed it was moving, but it was already known that it was round. The existence of China and Japan was already known to Europeans through Marco Polo's travels, but so little was known about Africa in the first third of the century that in 1434 the Portuguese infante Henry the Navigator had to convince his reluctant and terrified captain Gil Eannes that he would not crash his ship into the bottomless pit of the sea as it sailed south beyond Cape Mogador (in present-day Morocco). Between the west coast of Europe and the east coast of Asia lay the Mar Tenebrosum, the Sea of Twilight, and only a few pieces of land close to Europe and Africa,

Madeira, the Azores, the Canary Islands and Cape Verde were known to him.

But scientists on the Iberian peninsula had already been playing seemingly useless mind games for three hundred years, all of which had led to practical results with incredible speed.

"NAVIGARE NECESSE EST"

If we can justifiably use the term "scientific and technological revolution" in the twentieth century, it is no less unfounded to use the term "scientific and technological revolution" in the New the century or two before the dawn of the new millennium is known as the period of the revolution in shipping. The science of navigation, and with it the navigation of the sea, is no less important than the fire, the wheel or the zero among the inventions of mankind. The latter has already played a decisive role in the development of navigation.

Until the 15th century, sailors almost never ventured far from the coast. In a closed sea, like the Adriatic, or later, when they were already familiar with the possible landmarks the Mediterranean coast, they also ventured into the open waters, because they had learned how to navigate to the stars. In practice, however, until modern times, sailors very rarely lost sight of familiar shores.

Until then, it seemed unthinkable that a ship would venture out into the open ocean. No one knew where it would go, what it would find, or how it would return. Sailing on the high seas marks the beginning of a new civilisation in the history of mankind.

It is now known that the basis of this new civilisation was created by the computer research of the Andalusian culture of the Iberian Peninsula.

Very little is known about the origin of the numbers we now call Arabic and the origin of zero. What we do know is that they originated in the East. The Spanish monk Vigila first wrote down Arabic numerals in 976 in the *Codex*

Vigilanus, but these did not include zero at that time. The new alphabet is said by the author to be of Indian origin.

The first surviving text in which zero appears among the Arabic numerals (and in which its relationship to and use is discussed) is the work of the Toledo philosopher and mathematician Ibn Ezra (1092-1167), entitled *Sefer-ha-Mispar*. A few years later, the Hindu Bhaskara also used zero in his calculations in *Lilavati*.

The decimal numbering system in use today, with the addition of zero, was presumably not invented by them, but these two works are the first surviving descriptions of this new arithmetic technique. Ibn Ezra was the first to lay down the rules of multiplication and the first to describe the uses to which zero, this new digit, could be put.

For what? Pretty much everything. Although the ancient Hipparchus drew a map of the sky with 1,800 stars, Andalusian scientists have perfected the ancient method of calculating the position of the stars. They created a modern form of spherical triangulation, and used it to draw not only celestial but also terrestrial maps, determining the geographical position of cities in terms of latitude and longitude. Latitude and longitude were as non-existent in reality as zero, but the earth, already known to be spherical, was laid out like a round ball in a dense web.

When Ptolemy X or Alfonso the Wise (so wise was he that when scholars explained to him the Ptolemaic worldview system, he sighed: "If God Almighty had asked me before started to create, I would have suggested something simpler") In 1252, in Toledo, he published his *Astronomical Tables*, worked out by the best scientists of the time, which already contained all the results of the new science and, since they were written in the new decimal system, allowed operations to be carried out quickly. Simplified copies of the astronomical tables spread rapidly, especially among sailors, who could easily determine their position in relation to the position of the stars on the high seas.

The island of Majorca has been home to the scientific knowledge needed for the difficult art of navigation since the 13th century, writes Humboldt. A

Catalan and Mallorcan sailors not only made and used the first nautical charts (*cartas de marear*), but they also invented the compass (first described by the Catalan poet and scientist Raymond Lull in his *De Contemplatione*, 1272), when a magnetised steel pin was placed in equilibrium on the wind rose. And with this instrument, they were able to navigate the open sea at times when the celestial bodies were hidden behind clouds. In Aragon, from 1359, a royal decree required all galleys to be equipped with not one but two nautical charts.

seems natural that Catalan and Mallorcan sailors were also at the forefront of shipbuilding. They designed the new type of ship, the ancestor of all modern ships, the *kara-vella*, which was also suitable for long sea voyages, in contrast to the galleys and Viking-type ships that had in use until then, some of which were equipped with sails and oars.

FOOD SCIENCE,

ECONOMIC INTEREST, HISTORY

However, this process, which has transformed rapidly evolving scientific knowledge - in a relatively narrow field - into a technique, into everyday practice

still contained only the structural elements of the mechanism of historical necessity. It increased the chances, but was far from being compelling. One only has to look at a map to see that Newfoundland is about the same distance from Ireland as the archipelagos of the Antilles are from the Canary Islands. The advantage in the competition - if there was one (and there was) - is still the Iberian Peninsula is tilted in favour of.

This is mainly because the climate and wind conditions are more favourable in the central and southern Atlantic. The seafarers were able to acquire practical skills in two, not one, marine environments: the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

However, one factor is of crucial importance, and we must look for it in the nutritional conditions of contemporary Europe. In the central and northern zones of the continent, the diet of the majority of the population was monotonous, tasteless, anything but varied, since cereal production monoculture. The climatic conditions of the Iberian Peninsula, but also the results of the irrigated farming introduced by the Arabs, provide the inhabitants with a richer and more varied diet than is usual elsewhere in Europe.

Even in the 16th and 17th centuries, it took nine months to sail from Lisbon to India, bypassing Africa. To Peru, through the Strait of Magellan, even further. On this long journey, ships could not call at any port to restock their supplies, as there were no such ports. And more than storms, reefs and pirate trawlers, sailors feared the dreaded seasickness of scurvy, now known to be caused by a vitamin C deficiency.

In the Andalusian *Huertas*, oranges and especially lemons were abundant. It was a common practice for sailors to mix the juice of oranges and lemons in water that was fast running at sea, and even to squeeze lemon juice on food that was suspected of spoiling. (Philip IV, returning from a trip to Andalusia, introduced the custom of dripping lemon juice on fish dishes.) Spanish and Portuguese seafarers found in practice that fruit and fresh vegetables were refreshing, but these nutritional benefits were enhanced by the use of high alcoholic content, and therefore suitable for sea transport wines, olive oil, calorie-rich almonds and honey, known as an excellent remedy for fatigue.

The ingredients and prerequisites of historical necessity were, as we see, all in place, only the economic-historical need was lacking to provide the impetus to explore America beyond natural human curiosity and adventurism.

It was also created when the Turks conquered Byzantium in 1453. Opportunities for trade with Asia were eliminated. The routes used until then it was no longer possible to reach India. There were two options. One was to get there by bypassing Africa, the other - if the earth was known to be round - was for someone to try to get west again

open up trade routes. To do this, all they had to do was cross the unknown ocean sea between the west coast of Europe and the east coast of Asia.

In the Iberian Peninsula, too, historical development has moved at a rapid pace to match the technical and scientific progress that has apparently developed independently of it.
and catch up with economic requirements.

The turning point in the consolidation of Spanish royal power in 1469, when Queen Isabella of Castile married the Crown Prince Ferdinand of Aragon. Ten years later Ferdinand became King of Aragon, and in 1479 the two largest Pyrenean states were effectively united, Castile and Aragon, creating a united Spain.

The royal couple, with the help of the urban bourgeoisie, reined in the disobedient nobility and the big feudal lords (This process is the main theme of the plot of the Lope de Vega play *The Heroic Village*, which has been performed so often and successfully in Spain.)
set the Inquisition in motion, the Church the most formidable instrument of absolutism. In early 1492, the recapture of Granada ended the Reconquista, the eight-century process of reconquering the Pyrenees, which had been conquered by the Moors.

Spain was, for its time, the best organised country in Europe in terms of state power and administration: it could enter the world arena.

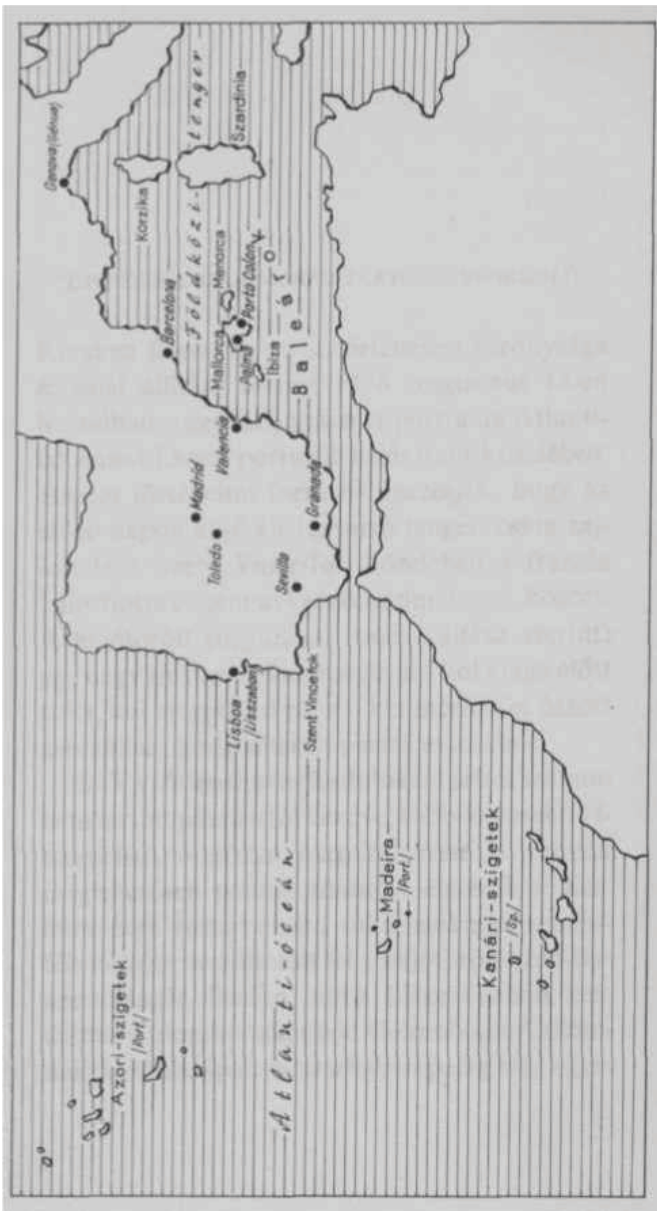
Science and technology created the conditions, economic interest created the need, and historical development created a strong state. Everything was in place for someone to discover America - by chance, but because it was geographically where he was, and therefore by necessity - and open a new era in human history.

The circle of historical necessity is now closed. We have symplified the process a little, but that is enough to understand what happened next. The rest is a matter of detail, in which human chance plays a decisive role.

My curiosity, however, is only interested in a few small details of the particulars.

Who was Columbus?

AN ANNIVERSARY THAT IS NOWHERE TO BE COUNTED



Nearly half a thousand years ago - according to history and his own account, at dawn on 14 August 1476 - a man crawled ashore from the Atlantic Ocean Near the Portuguese fishing village of Lagos. Credible historical sources confirm that a naval battle had taken place late into the night the previous day near the Cape of St. Vincent between the French pirate fleet and Genoa merchant ships. The shipwrecked (also according to his own statement) was a large with the help of a galley oar - sometimes pushing it in front of him, sometimes resting on it - he swam two miles wounded until he managed to get ashore.

From this moment, which is nowhere to be counted as a historic anniversary, we have, with more or less interruptions, for almost thirty years, fairly accurate data on his life. For these thirty years, no one has ever had any doubt as to the identity of the shipwrecked man, although in Lisbon he calls himself first Colom-bo, then Colomó, Colom, and later, in Spain, more and more definitely, Cristóbal Colón. In the Spanish is still known as Columbus in English, Colomb in French, Colombo in Italian and Columbus in Hungarian.

Historians don't believe in biological miracles, so they have reason to believe that this man, who washed ashore in Portugal as an adult, was not born of the sea.

For half a thousand years, research has been carried out into its history and origins. Although is now generally believed that he was born in Genoa, this is only one of the many versions of his person, origin, origins and origins that have proved with varying degrees of plausibility, but which have never been proven beyond all doubt. are trying to shed some credible light on the question.

Columbus is still one of the most mysterious figures in world history.

THE FACILITY

The person, origin and origins of Columbus are still the subject of controversy, five hundred years after the anniversary of the date mentioned above, which is nowhere to be found.

Was he a Genoa? Spanish, Catalan or Gallego? Or French or Corsican? According to Magid-ovics (*History of discoveries*, 1961), the 18th and 19th centuries were the period of the *discovery of the Spanish*.

In the 19th century, at least twenty cities vied to be among Columbus' birthplaces. The Athenaeum encyclopaedia of the end of the last century tells us that Calvi in Corsica erected a statue of its 'great son' in 1882. Five years later, in 1887, Génua placed a plaque on the house where 'the great Genoa sailor' was born. He was Jewish, a *converso* (convert) or Catholic? What is his real name among the many similar but different names he used in his life? How old were you when you discovered the New World? How old was he when he died? As for his date of birth, the assumptions - based on some calculations - vary between 1436 and 1456. Was he seventy when he died, as the chronicler Bernaldez, who knew him personally, claims, or only fifty-five, as the 'Genoese theory' maintains?

Historians of his life include many Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, but also English, Russian, American, French, German, Peruvian, Cuban, Swedish, Belgian and, of course, Hungarian.

For the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America, a royal commission set up for the purpose published in Rome - in 15 volumes! - the documents and studies relating to it. This major work, known as the *Raccolta Colombiana*, is considered the bible of Columbus literature. Also published in 1892 was a collection of his surviving manuscripts.

It was in Madrid, in 1932, that the city of Génua issued the documents in its possession and relating to Columbus. Each in his own field, geographers, linguists, hebraists, heraldists, legal and political, maritime and navigation experts were diving on it. There are several studies of his ships; one US naval historian, a ship's officer, replicated Columbus' original voyages in a small three-masted ship.

Dramas, novels, poems, operas, narratives have praised his person, his actions and the consequences of his actions. His figure has broken the boundaries of history in the flesh: he has become a symbol of universal validity and a symbol of a thousand meanings. It inspired Quevedo and Lope de Vega, Chénier, Rousseau. Scarlatti wrote an opera to a libretto from his life. Jacob Wassermann and Rubén Dario, Blasco Ibanez and Kazantzakis wrote about him.

Darius Milhaud composed the music. To name just a few. But the really tasty treat was for the historians. They have examined his life in whole and in detail.

They have collected all the documents, contemporary opinions and records that they can find. From the depths of five hundred years, they have mined notarial deeds, wills, testimonies, contracts, debating whether they are authentic or forgeries. They've scrutinised every sentence, word and letter of Columbus's manuscripts. There were historians who wanted to catch him in a lie at all costs, and others who defended him.

Some (many), letting their imagination run wild, described little Christopher's childhood in a voice so emotional that it was as if they had rocked on their knees, others analysed not what he wrote, what they thought he was trying to say. For decades, there have been property lawsuits and disputes about the estate, documents have been unearthed and hefty bundles of papers have, all of it (heavily) influenced by interest, family pride, nationalism, ignorance, error, misrepresentation, falsification, forgery, lies, obfuscation, typo, typo, based on personal knowledge, that Columbus was seventy - *setenta* - years old at the time of his death, some consider it a typo or a typographical error: Bernaldez meant to write sixty - *sesenta* - years, and if so, it is a theory, represented by the hypothesis-mongers of the typo, is just ten years closer to the reality you have set up.)

There was the historian who started from scratch and personally all the available data, and there was the historian who simply took over and repeating the false and erroneous claims of others; new theories were generated, researchers found correct or false clues, or mixed compare factual data with assumptions.

Columbus himself died in 1506 with the unshakable conviction that he had succeeded in opening the way west to India. That is why the islands of the Lesser and Greater Antilles are still called the West Indies. He had no idea that he had discovered a new, previously unknown continent. But Juan de la Cosa, in 1500, barely eight years after Columbus landed on the shores of an insignificant island, had already plotted with dazzling accuracy for the tools and possibilities of the time on his Map-pamundi

the contours and proportions of the new continent. In an almost unbelievably short period of time, the world has come to recognise the importance of discovery and the person who discovered it.

We know almost everything about the last thirty years of Columbus' life. But who was Columbus?...

THREE HISTORICAL OPINIONS

One of the most recent: "Christopher Columbus, whether some like it or not," writes Charles Verlinden, professor at the University of Ghent (*Christophe Colomb*, Presses Uni-versitaires de France, Paris, 1972), "was born in Genoa in 1451. He is neither Spanish, nor Portuguese, nor French, but Italian. He was not Jewish, as was also claimed, but Catholic. Only in the 19th and 20th centuries invented these fantasies without any documentary basis. All the old sources agree on the origin of the discoverer's Genoese."

Professor Verlinden's voice is categorical and uncontroversial.

Only, Mr Verlinden does not say a word about how is this Italian from Genoa, who, according to his concept, did not leave Genoa for any length of time until he was 22, did not speak Italian and his mother tongue and culture were undoubtedly Spanish.

(One of the greatest Spanish linguists of all time, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, has written a special study on the linguistic problems of the Columbus question. In his investigations he comes to the following conclusion:

1. Columbus always writes in Latin or Spanish, never in Italian or Portuguese.
2. His Latin reflects Spanish influence more than Genoese, and whenever he makes a mistake in Latin, he does it in Spanish.
3. Its Spanish a strong Portuguese influence, but not at all Italian.

4. Consequently, Columbus only learned to write in Spanish and Latin.
5. The extent to which Spanish was the language of choice for Columbus to express his thoughts, especially in writing, is shown by the fact in his marginal notes, written alongside his Italian readings, he also repeats the Italian words of the printed text in Spanish. [With a knowledge of Spanish and Latin, any more or less intelligent person can understand the written Italian text. Even me. And I don't know Italian.]
6. Although he lived among Portuguese people for nine years, he probably only spoken Portuguese, but he did not learn to write Portuguese. [To this remark I should add, by way of explanation, that in Portugal at that time Spanish was understood without any great difficulty.]
7. The first modern language Columbus could write in was Spanish.
8. Fifteen years before he chose Spain to achieve his goals, Columbus had already chosen Spanish as his language, your cultural homeland.

Menéndez Pidal's scientific reasoning is very interesting and in many ways conclusive against Verlinden's and many other believers in the Genoese theory, but one only has to read Columbus' own texts, which are available to us in great abundance, to be left in no doubt that if he wrote in Spanish, he wrote in his mother tongue. We will come back to this later.)

Verlinden also rejects the suggestion that Columbus might have been of Jewish descent, although this is the only way to reconcile his Genoese birth with his Spanish mother tongue.

This theory was put forward by the Spanish historian Salvador de Madariaga in his famous biography of Columbus, published in 1940 and also published in Hungarian.

Columbus is believed to be the eldest son of a Catalan-Jewish family called Colom, who fled to Italy in the late 14th century to escape the persecution of the Jews in Spain and settled in Genoa. Sephardic Jewish families around the Mediterranean to this , Colom's family would have preserved their native Spanish for domestic and internal communal use.

This would have been the explanation of the Columbus mystery that would have generated a huge response when Madariaga's book was published.

The assumption is appealing, but it is still utterly incomprehensible that Columbus could not have spoken Italian as well as he did not. (He spoke Spanish to Italians, and there is no contemporary record of anyone having heard him speak Italian. He also wrote in Spanish to Nicolo Oderigo, the ambassador of his alleged homeland, Genoa in Castile, and to the Bank of St George in Genoa. Not only did he write in Spanish to one of his most intrepid men, the Italian Padre Gorrici, but he also wrote to him.) and, although he went to sea in his adolescence, he made several visits to his homeland up to 1473 (i.e. until the age of twenty-two, taking the Genoa birth date of 1451 as a realistic date) and, as subsequently discovered Genoa documents prove, he appeared before Genoa authorities.

(These are, among other things, the documents to which Professor Verlinden refers when says that "all the old sources agree on the origin of the discoverer's genoa".)

I am aware that all this sounds very confusing, but in defence, it not only looks confusing, it is confusing.

In addition to Verlinden and Madariaga, the third main group of opinions could be represented by the Spanish historian Ignacio Olagüe, already mentioned:

"From a study of the available documents, it is reasonable to conclude that Columbus was a strange and mysterious person. There is something obscure about his actions. He never claimed to be a Genoese. It has been proved that the will in which he claimed to be a Genoese was a forgery made in the sixteenth century during a sixty-year coup d'état with the Spanish crown by his heirs. His son Fernando, who wrote his father's biography, was also no further forward on the matter.

He is not surprised, "because there is a secret behind it". We know nothing of Columbus's childhood, and the mysterious deeds of his life are littered throughout. The problem is indeed obscure and full of mystery. His own handwritten texts and those of people who knew him personally

it is indisputable that he had an exclusively Spanish culture. He did not speak Italian, and that says it all. From the moment he arrives in Lisbon, he speaks Spanish a Spaniard. When, a few years after his death heritage, no relatives from Italy have come forward."

Madariaga also mentions that the will in question, in which Columbus (on one in his life) would have called himself a Genoese, a fake.

In Fernando's biography of his son's father, he does his best to disguise Columbus's origins. He himself does not say a word about where his father was born, but merely gathers together the opinions of others, and does so in such a way as to make it clear that none of them holds water:

and so some, who wish to obscure its reputation in some way, say it is in Nervi, others in Cugureo, still others in Bugiasco, small villages near Genoa, and lying on the coast. Still others, who wish to claim more, say that he was born in Savona, and some say that he was born in Genoa, and some even farther than that, leap on wind, and him a resident of piacenza, where respectable members of his family live, and the Colombos have a tomb with a coat of arms and inscriptions."

Finally, Fernando Colón states without mincing his words that during his personal search of the site, he found no trace of his father's family in or around Genoa.

THE COLOMBOS OF GENOA

Fernando Colón's comment is odd, to say the least. The Colombo family of Genoa did indeed exist. To be more precise, there is no doubt that there was a Colombo family in Genoa, whose first-born son was named Cristoforo, second son Bartolomeo and third son Giacomo. They had two other brothers, a daughter married a cheese merchant who lived next door, and a son Giovanni, the youngest, who died relatively young.

Historians have researched every possible detail about this Colombo family from Genoa. *Raccolta Colombiana* presents more than two hundred documents about the Colombos of Genoa who lived half a millennium ago. Madariaga quotes the most important twenty-five of them in Latin original.

We know the name of the Colombo grandfather, his trade and where he came from in Genoa; documents show that the grandfather had two sons and a daughter: Domenico, Antonio and Battistina. Antonio had five sons. We know that Cristoforo and his brothers Domenico and Susana. They stem from the marriage of Fontanarossa.

In addition to these documents, which are considered authentic by a large and authoritative part of historians, five documents, also considered authentic, prove that the first-born son of the family, Cristoforo, was personally present at the time of the documents, twice in Genoa and three times in Savona. All five documents date from between 1470 and 1473. One, dated 1470, states that Cristoforo was '19 years old'.

This document is the basis for the hypothesis that Columbus was born between August and October 1451, i.e. in 1506, when he died, he was fifty-five years old.

The last document attesting to the personal presence of Cristoforo Colombo of Genoa in his native town dates from August 1473. It was only three years later, in 1476, after the naval battle of Cape St. Vince, that a man calling himself Colom-bo (Christian name Christopher) appeared in Lisbon, and it is only twenty years later, after 1493, i.e. after the discovery of America, that documentary data begin to identify these two persons with each other. (In this light, Madariaga's statement, reported as fact, that "Colón is not spoken of in Castile or Portugal until he discovers *India*", seems crucial.)

What is more, in 1501, several Genoese citizens affirm by oath, Madariaga writes, and he also publishes the original text of the Latin document in his notes, that Cristoforo, Bartolomeo and Giacomo de Colombo, sons and heirs of the late Domenico, "have been for a long time absent from the city and jurisdiction of Savona, beyond the Pisces and Nice of Pro-Venice, and in Spain

live, as is generally known (et in parti-bus Hispaniae commorantes, ut notorium fuit et est...)"

"AS IS GENERALLY KNOWN"

How is it possible that in Genoa it is generally known that Don Cristóbal Colón, the Admiral, Viceroy and Governor of the Indies, and his equally high ranking brothers are identical with the sons of the deceased Genoa weaver, Domenico Colombo?

Columbus was already - in today's terms - a world-famous man. In August 1492 he set sail with three ships to the west. He landed on the island of Guanahani on the morning of 12 October. He set sail for home on 4 January 1493 and arrived in Lisbon on 4 March. On that day he sent the first report of the discovery to the Spanish ruling couple. This writing is known in historiography as the "Letter to Santangel". The letter is dated April 1493 was printed in Barcelona in mid-March, translated into Latin the same month, and published in Rome in May. It was also published in Basel in 1493 and went through at least 17 editions until 1499. The world learned of the dawning of a new age with a dizzying speed for the times. The "Gutenberg Galaxy", then only a few decades old, was a mass media its news service was already accurate and fast.

However, this does not answer how it became "common knowledge" that the Genoese and Italian Cristoforo Colombo is identical with the indisputably Spanish-cultured and native-speaking Cristóbal Colón, who does not speak Italian. It is not only the *how* of the above question that is puzzling, but also the *why*.

No portrait of Columbus has survived that shows his features in the artist would have painted it after the live model. The *Raccolta Colombiana* publishes extensive studies of all portraits purporting to depict the Admiral. Contemporaries, on the other hand, describe Columbus's appearance in great detail: tall, strong-built, with prematurely greying blond or blondish-red hair, was a slightly freckled, red-faced, blue-eyed man. His portraits depict him without beard and moustache, although Oviedo's description of him tells us that at one point in his life he 'wore a brown friendship suit and grew a beard'.

Most encyclopaedias include a portrait of the explorer alongside the title *Columbus*. In the older ones, it is usually attributed to Ridolfo Ghirlandaio. is a miniature version of a magnificent image. He is wearing a black priestly gown and a priestly biretta, he must be about forty-five or fifty years old, with grey hair hanging from under the biretta, and his eyes are brown in the original picture.

The image in more modern encyclopaedias is a copy of the portrait of Sebastiano del Piombo. It also has a postage stamp-sized The inscription COLUMBUS - LYGUR is clearly visible above the face, indicating that it depicts Columbus of Liguria, i.e. Genoa. The image shows a man in his forties or forties-fifties, with his head uncovered. (This lexicon entry is incorrect, by the way. The portrait of Columbus by Piombo in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is in a hat with brown hair, a white round-cut shirt and depicts the explorer in a brown fur-collared robe, but while in most portraits of him the subjects are even more different from each other also show some similarities with each other, the Piombo picture has nothing in common with them.)

Madariaga, at the beginning of his book, publishes an engraving by J. M. Galván. The man depicted here is younger, perhaps thirty-five or forty years old, and has a decidedly softer character than the other pictures I know, but this one also bears the same text as the one above the portrait erroneously attributed to Piombo in more recent lexicons: COLUMBUS LYGUR NOVI ORBIS REPTOR.

Who could have had an interest in having, at least in these two pictures, the inscription in capital letters that the person depicted was a Ligurian?

Madariaga's data seem to be accurate, reliable and credible (his conclusions not always). Among the records of his Genoese contemporaries, he mentions Antonio Gallo's as the most important. Gallo was the chancellor of the Bank of St. George in Genoa and, from 1477 until his death, the chancellor of Génua.

official chronicler, and the Bank of St George itself was, in Madariaga's words, "the financial backbone of the Genoa Republic". With the fall of Byzantium, trade with Asia across the eastern Mediterranean ceased. Venice, Genoa and France fought a huge battle for the hegemony of the sea routes. Although the small republic of Genoa changed hands several times during the wars between the French and the Spanish, and lost more and more of its political autonomy, its economic

and in maritime affairs, it was still one of the major powers of the Mare Nostrum.

Antonio Gallo's account of Columbus is considered by Madariaga to be particularly important, not only in itself, but also because it served as the basis for two other contemporary chroniclers of Columbus and his adventures. Although the Genoa chancellor's notes were not published in print until 1723, they were already in manuscript form, as the above and the following shows. Madariaga does not give the date of Gallo's note, but it is clear from the text that it was written either in 1493 or in subsequent years:

"Cristoforo and Bartolomeo Colombo, brothers of Ligurian descent, descended from plebeian parents in Genoa, who earned their wages as wool weavers (the father was a weaver and the sons sometimes wool combers), made a name for themselves throughout Europe by their daring deed and their enterprise, which was absolutely new in the history of mankind. Although they learned little in childhood, they grew up, as was the custom of their race, to set their minds to sailing. Eventually, however, Bartolomeo, the younger, settled in Portugal, where, in order to earn his living, he began to paint maps for sailors, depicting in drawings the seas, harbours, coasts, bays and islands in their true proportions. Every year for the last forty years, maritime expeditions have set out from Lisbon, coming and going along the west coast of Africa, and in the last ages discovering unknown lands and peoples. Bartolomeo, however, who had become a student of maps, and was familiar with the narratives of those who, in one way or another, had returned from distant parts of the world, communicated his arguments and thoughts to his brother, who was more expert in maritime matters, and warned him that he who, leaving behind him the southern coast of Africa, would set sail from the right hand, that is, westward, would inevitably find land to find."

With the proper sources, it would certainly be possible to find out where, when and by whom, if not by Gallo, Columbus was first mentioned as a native of Genoa. But the fact is that the rumour is becoming more and more widespread.

is spreading, more and more people are mentioning it. Seranega - Gallo's contemporary and at one time Génua

as his colleague in Milan, also gives a description of Columbus in 1499, in which he adds nothing to what Gallo says, since he is copying his text, except, Madariaga adds, that he is more specific about Cristoforo Colombo of Genoa.

Bishop Giustiniani, in 1516, publishes an extract from Gallo's description of Columbus, writing of him as "patria genuensis", i.e. of Genoese origin.

Pietro Martyr (who first used the term New World in his letters) writes about Colonus Ligur. Trivigniano begins his book in 1504 with these words "Christophoro Colobo, Zeno-uese". He knew Columbus personally. Bishop Las Casas, who presumably also knew him personally, and whose transcription of the now lost ship's log of Columbus's first voyage has survived, also claims that he was "of Genoese descent". Oviedo, one of the first historians of the Indies: 'From what I have been told by his countrymen, he came from the province of Liguria, which is in Italy.'

The assumption that Columbus would not have had is aware that he - and his brothers - are called Genoese in the story. What could have been easier than to declare that he was not of Genoese descent. But he did not. He never claimed to be Genoese, but when it was spread, he did not deny it. To my knowledge, his brothers Bartolomeo and Diego did the same. They neither said yes nor no. They remained silent.

All three have been silent on this issue, consistently and - if possible to say this in silence - unanimously. And - as we have seen - Columbus' son Fernando, who must have had first-hand and authentic information about his father's birthplace, denies, if not outright, that Columbus was born in Genoa, because, as Bishop Giustiniani says of his "errors", he is not surprised "because they are a secret."

A secret?

What secret?

VEGETABLE TIME

Apart from Columbus and his brothers, only the Spanish royal couple and the court authorities were clearly consistent in never mentioning Columbus' nationality, contrary to the custom of the time, in which the origin or nationality of the individual was written after his name as a matter of course (Venetian, Florentine, Catalan, etc.). In the many official letters and documents that have survived, Columbus is never referred to as a Genoese, but only as a foreigner, an *extranjero*. In his many letters to the royal couple, Columbus always refers to himself as a foreigner, a poor stranger (*como extranjero, un pobre extranjero*).

This consistency of the Spanish court is also noted by Madariaga.

"We have strong evidence that the royal couple *did not intend*

To refer to the origin of Columbus' *genoa*. Ruy González Puebla, Ferdinand and Isabella's envoy in London, wrote a letter to the royal couple on 23 June 1498, in which he remembers John Cabot as

Colón". In the King and Queen's reply it says: "... who, like Colón, proposed to the King of England an enterprise like the *Indian enterprise...*" The word *Genoa* has disappeared. It has been omitted. Nor was it applied to the brothers of Columbus never."

But Madariaga also takes this excellent and splendidly documented observation as proof of his concept. According to him, Columbus was a Jew who had converted to Catholicism, or came from such a family: this is not mentioned in the royal letters and documents, which never mention his Genoese origins.

But Madariaga's conclusion is wrong. He himself provides a long list of examples of how high court figures were converts of Jewish origin ("both the king and the queen literally lived surrounded by converts"), and also of how many people of Genoese origin were in close contact with the court.

Columbus besieged the Spanish kings for seven years on his voyage of discovery west

"impossible" plan. "I have lived in Your Majesties' court for seven years and for some

I've told people about my business, one by one they've all mocked me. And now even the tailors are just clamouring to go and discover," he writes to the ruling couple from Jamaica in 1503.

On several occasions, he appeared in person at court and spoke to the King and Queen themselves. It is safe to say that he was (today's parlance) thoroughly pissed off. Whatever the reason never mentioning his origin or nationality in the documents, it could not have been due to his being a *converso*, or to his Genoese origin alone or a combination of the two.

But even the phrase "foreigner", "poor foreigner", did not necessarily mean that Columbus was not Spanish, only that he was not Castilian. Madariaga also provides evidence of this. When the pope appointed Don Rodrigo de Borja, a Spanish-born Spaniard from Valencia (Aragon), later Pope Alexander VI, to the vacant bishopric of Seville in 1485, the king and queen wrote to the pope that 'it was not right that this bishopric should be filled *by a foreigner*, but that it should have been filled by a Castilian'.

CHARACTER AND STYLE

To facilitate the retrieval of names, dates, places, etc., Madariaga provides a rich and accurate general index at the end of his book. But he does not stop there. He compiles separate indexes of everything relating to Columbus himself. In the latter, under the heading of character, he lists ninety-seven traits of Columbus. The evidence for all these can be traced in certain pages of his book.

This character sketch in alphabetical headings makes amusing reading. It reveals, for example, that the great explorer was both patient and impatient. Anxiety, inhibition and persecution mania are well combined with its power madness, its aristocratic tendency, its grandeur, its pride, its arrogance, its intellectual and material ambition. On the one hand, he was credulous, but on the other hand, he was cautiously prudent. His propensity procrastination was combined with a capacity for swift action; a ruthlessness,

ruthlessness, ruthlessness and selfishness, as well as selflessness, self-sacrifice and generosity. He was firm and strong-willed, but sometimes indecisive. He was eloquent and silent, insecure and confident. He was known to be quick to anger, fierce and passionate, but also shrewd, cunning, cunning and cunning. He was shy and brave, realistic and dreamy. He was stingy, greedy and generous.

Greedy and generous at the same time. Well, yes.

On Thursday, 11 October 1492, all the signs were that the three ships Santa María, Nina and Pinta were close to land. Columbus made a fine speech to the crew and added that, in addition to the annuity of 10,000 Maravedes offered by the royal couple as a reward, he would give a silk sleeve to the first person to see land.

Two hours before midnight, Colón thought he saw a light... Is this the earth? He dared not say it was. He sent for Pero Gutiérrez, the king's caterer, and told him that he seemed to see a light, and that he should look for it. Pero did so, and saw it, but Rodrigo Sánchez de Segovia, sent by the king and queen with the fleet as 'observer', 'saw nothing, for he was not standing in a place from which he could see'.

"The light was like the flame of a candle being raised and lowered, and few people considered it a sign of the earth." At two hours after midnight, a sailor, named Rodrigo de Triana in the ship's log, was a real but his name was presumably Juan Rodriguez Bermejo, he saw land from the nose of the Pinta and shouted, "Tierra, tierra!" Columbus himself was only awake from his musings to hear cannon fire and see the flag being hoisted on the Pinta. It was the agreed signal in case anyone saw land.

It is also clear from the description that when he saw what he thought was a candle flame, he himself did not believe that he had seen land, nor did those he questioned. He did, however, keep the annuity of 10,000 maars for himself. Or rather, not for himself; for Beatriz Enríquez, illegitimate son of Beatriz Enríquez, Fernando's mother, who had the income from a slaughterhouse in Córdoba

provided a livelihood. What happened to the silkworm Columbus promised is not mentioned in the chronicles. Juan Rodriguez Bermejo, another Rodrigo de Triana, had no idea that his name would go down in world history. But he probably didn't care. Truly and unjustly deprived of the 10,000 Maravedi annuities he thought he was entitled to, he went to Morocco in disappointment and renounced the faith of Christ.

In short, Columbus was the kind of man who today would be described as "emotionally unstable to the extreme". But they are in such abundance we do not need to turn to Madariaga's headlines or to the characterisations of contemporaries who knew Columbus personally to determine this.

This man who calls himself a "poor foreigner" in Spain writes in Spanish. Spanish is undoubtedly his mother tongue. You don't need to be a linguist to know that. His vocabulary, his phrasing, his turns of phrase are so naturally rooted in Spanish, so naturally emerging from under his pen, that reading his original texts there is no reason to suspect that it might not be his mother tongue. It is not only the thought and the way of thinking expressed in his writings, but also the ideology and the frame of reference behind them that is clearly Spanish.

(I had the opportunity to study the final lines of a handwritten letter from Columbus, based on an excellent colour photocopy. A man of great imagination, fired by strong impulses and, by the general cultural standards of the time, a man of great imagination.

writing of high intellect, the slant in the middle zone is constant and balanced, the lines are straight, the rhythm is generally even, although the sudden and marked rhythm disturbances that are sometimes clearly visible indicate serious musculoskeletal disorders. The upper stems of the high letters are full of vigour, the crossing of a t with the light grace of a fencer's guard arching over the word ready to attack, and the same ready-to-jump aggressiveness evident in the end-of-word jerks and the impetuous upward winding of the lower stem of the q letters. The accents are strong and firm. Even without a magnifying glass, the pressure of the pen on the paper is clearly visible: the point of the pen is

pressure causes it to split, and the ink that has already been stared at sometimes skips. Barely a year before his death - the letter is dated February 1505 - the will to live

almost breaks up the writing. The lower stems are mostly closed in a gulf, the letters o -itself the most important vowel of its name- are gorgeous, graceful little circles, while the rounded parts of the letters a and e are distrustfully and secretively narrow, tight, saturated with ink, sometimes pointed. The whole typeface

yet its character seems rounded, erased and unanimous, a sign of a man - for whom writing is a daily necessity: he has important things to say and urgently needs to communicate them to others.
you want to let us know.

Only his signature, the famously mysterious typeface, which he describes in his will and obliges his heir to use, only mysterious seven letters, the

.S.

.S. A .S.

X M Y

Xpo FERENS

is written with an almost schoolboyishly naive and childishly careful calligraphy.

Almost every Columbus scholar has tried to decipher these seven letters. Xpo FERENS, the Greek-Latin transliteration of *Christopher*, meaning Christ-bearer, was not a problem, although there were those who tried to combine it with the seven letters. Some of those who spearhead Columbus' Jewish ancestry [not

Madariaga is the only one], usually interpreted as an excerpt from the Hebrew funeral prayer, the Kaddis. Madariaga, on the other hand, takes the shape of the seven letters as a cabalistic sign, and sees in it two triangles, the so-called star Dá-vid, which are interlaced in opposite directions to their tips. The American Morison - who, like Ver-linden, considers Columbus to be clearly and indisputably Catholic and rejects the possibility that he was of Jewish origin - ignores the shape of the letters and gives this interpretation,

that is, I am the servant of the Most High Saviour, Christ, the Son of Mary.)

Columbus' letter from Jamaica is often quoted (sometimes in its entirety) as a literary work. His language is, in places, truly evocative and perceptive, worthy of good prose writers:

"Eye has never seen a sea so high, so ugly, so full of cheese. We could not go forward because of the wind, but we could not run in any other direction. So I stopped there, on that bloody sea, boiling like a cauldron on a great fire. I never saw a more terrible sky, burning like a furnace for a day and a night, and with the lightning it was so blazing that I wondered if it had not already carried away the masts and sails. The lightning came with such terrible fury that we all thought it would sink the ships. The rain that poured down from the sky

During all this time, the water has not for a moment, for cannot be said that it has rained, but rather that the second deluge has come. The people were so mad, they almost wished they were dead, to get out of all this martyrdom."

This is just a fragment of one storm, but in the same letter he mentions several more, and all in different ways: each of the storms he describes has a unique character.

In other letters, when he, for example, the needs for supplies, how many and on what ship the ruling couple should send for them, he is precise, detailed, meticulous, careful, like a comptroller. His text is usually clear, lucid, transparent when he describes the material details of concrete reality, tells stories, anecdotes or speaks about the seafaring profession.

When it comes to his own person, however much he tries to appear objective, he is unable to conceal his narcissism: he either overpraises or feels sorry for himself. He is immodest. He exaggerates his own merits, but when he complains or feels sorry for himself, he almost laments. And although it evokes in the reader (at least in today's world) more revulsion than pity, it somehow somehow strangely convince you of the truth of what you are saying.

When writing for the ruling couple, he is flattering and sycophantic. (Only at the end of his life, when he has nothing to lose but to gain, does he dare to be simply respectful and be polite, express your feelings and opinions honestly).

Even by the standards of the time, he is religious in an overzealous, harshly strict, almost mystical way (Madariaga explains this by the fact that he also tries to compensate for his Jewish origin by being religious).

The most striking change in style, however, occurs when he tries to use his literacy, his reading, his "scientific" knowledge, as evidence to support his message. In such cases, he is confused, his sentences are jumbled together, he can hardly finish his sentences, his thoughts are unclear and confused, and he is clearly trying to present himself as more learned and educated than he really is.

The American S. E. Morison, himself a sailor, who repeated the voyages of Columbus in a three-masted sailing vessel, pays the highest tribute to the Admiral's seamanship, his admirable maritime instincts and his skill in practical navigation. But when he checks the data recorded in Columbus's logbooks, he is surprised to find that the great explorer, this brilliant navigator, could almost never calculate his position at sea without making gross errors. But that did not prevent him from getting there exactly, even in the vast and unknown ocean, where he wanted to go.

He was an accurate and good observer (he was the first to describe the phenomenon of the deflection of the compass), but the "scientific" conclusions he draws from his observations are nonsense. (For example, when he calculates that the Earth is moving too fast from the present coast of Panama to the Antilles, concludes that the - contrary to what scientists claim - is not spherical, but pear-shaped, and the speed his ship achieved was due to the fact that he was gliding down the slope from the top of the pear towards the spherical part of the earth. To show how 'unscientific' this claim must have been, even in his day, it is enough to quote Pedro Martyr, who comments on this ambiguously worded part of Columbus' letter: 'A word

I don't understand any of it, and I must confess that I don't like the Admiral's reasoning one bit.")

There is nothing to be wondered at, then, that to the more sober minds Columbus's scientific reasoning seemed like the half-education of a charlatan. For this reason alone, it is understandable why the skilled Portuguese and Spanish scientists of the day considered it a 'bad joke' when he told them of his 'enterprise'.

Because they thought so.

The circumstances of the discovery

SCIENCE AND FINANCE



Kolumbusz első útja

"The King and Queen have examined his promises and offers, and have found them impossible and futile, and worthy only to be

"It would do no service to their royal authority to champion a cause so weakly founded as to appear precarious and impossible, not only to the skilled scientist, but even to the less educated individual.

If they did so, they would not only be their money, but they would also be risking their royal prestige, without gaining the slightest advantage by their action."

Columbus faced similar rejection from the Portuguese, English and French royal courts.

Quite rightly. The semi-literate, self-educated Columbus based his plan for the western route on strikingly flawed calculations: he believed the land to be a quarter smaller than it was - by then well known - in reality. It was as if he was trying to prove to the competent mathematicians that two times two is three. Of course they laughed at him. No one, not even himself. that an unknown continent lay between the western coast of Europe and the eastern coast of Asia.

The 'junta de matemáticos', according to Las Casas, was made up of Castile's most respected philosophers, astrologers, cosmographers and nautical experts. Many of them were high clergymen, and although their knowledge of the science of the time cannot be doubted, their rejection of the subject was supported by theological arguments.

"Most of the bishops of the kingdom were obviously heretics. Columbus's plan is described with a somewhat naive simplicity by Geraldini, an Italian participant in the meeting, "since Nicola de Lyra had already said that on the Insulae Fortunatae [today's Canary Islands] there is no inhabited land below as far as the eastern coast [i.e. Asia]. And St. Augustine had already said that there is no human life at the ends of the world."

Such reasoning on the part of the scientists was merely an old-fashioned packaging of scientific opinion, but Columbus, like semi-literate people in general, blindly believed in the written and printed letters of books. He sought to prove much of his scientific arguments not so much with verifiable data as with citations from equally religious authorities. And he was firmly convinced of their scientific truth. But the scientists knew he was wrong.

There is, however, a phrase in the Spanish royal letter of late 1490 or early 1491 quoted above which is worth pausing over:

"would not only be wasting their money".

Columbus' "promises and offers" did not include covering the cost of the voyage himself. Nor would he have had any. In Spain he was supported by high-ranking lords, or - while his case was being discussed by the scientific commission - he received a meagre allowance from the royal court.



Columbus' second, third and fourth voyages

The rejection of the Portuguese king's offer was also not only due to the fact that the "qualified committee of scholars" considered it ridiculous Columbus' plans. It also played a part in the fact that John Columbus II

has offered to cover the costs of the expedition. Evidence of this is that, after Columbus's plans were rejected, the Portuguese monarch granted royal privilege for a voyage with the same intention to the Flemish navigator Ferdinand van Olmen (known as Hernan de Olmos in the Las Casas documents and Fernao d'Ulmo in Portuguese sources), who offered to pay the costs of the voyage himself. Van Olmen left in the spring of 1487 with two ships and enough food for six months. He never returned. A year later, however, Bartholomeu Diaz reached the Cape of Good Hope: by bypassing Africa, the route to the east of Asia was once again open. (But this path remained an option for another decade: Vasco da Gama only reaches Calcutta by way of Africa in 1498, six years after Columbus discovered the Americas.)

It became increasingly urgent for maritime trade stakeholders to find a solution. No risk, no gain, says the ancient law of squid. By 1491, Columbus's 'impossible and futile' plans were backed by powerful financial circles. Science finally gave in. The land is not smaller, two times two is not three, even if the economic interest requires it. Yet Columbus had already rejected his plan for a, was this time approved by a different scientific committee. The plan had to go through two more forums before it was approved. The first, the Royal Council of Castile, would also have approved the plan, but Columbus' demands found them excessive.

These were: he wanted to be admiral, viceroy and governor of the territories he was to explore, with all the rights and income that entailed, his titles and ranks to be inherited by his successors, ten per cent of all commercial profits to go to him, and in addition an eighth share in all enterprises, and therefore an eighth share in the profits, etc., etc.

During the knife-edge negotiations in Santa Fé, near Granada, Columbus refused to give up a single Marauder. All historians, without exception, attribute this to the explorer's stubborn stubbornness, a psychological factor inherent in his character.

It seems more likely, however, that Columbus already confident that he had the approval for the voyage. Who assured him of this, and on the basis of what prior secret negotiations, can only be guessed at.

The Royal Council refused to meet Columbus' demands.

Columbus left Santa Fe. He is said to have gone to France to visit his brother Bartolomeo in Fontainebleau.

He was eight miles from Granada when the queen's cavalry messenger caught up with him: return, his demands would be met.

In the final, supreme forum, the decision was in the hands of the Queen. She herself decided.

THE COSTS

The way historians describe these dramatic hours is that, after the Royal Council rejected Columbus' demands, Luís de Santangel, *Escribano de la Ración*, in today's terms the King's Minister of Finance (himself a member of the Royal Council), personally intervened with the Queen to get Columbus' and offered to pay (or at least lend to the Queen) the cost of Columbus' voyage.

Santangel's generosity, his immeasurable service to humanity, would be one of the great human gestures, touching to the point of tears, if it were true. Madariaga's fictional assumption that Santangel's act reveals the evasive Jew's biased sympathy for the other *converso*, Columbus, almost certainly does not hold water.

Professor Verlinden, who must have something to back up his rock-solid claim that Columbus was a Genoese and an Italian, Santangel this time, it provides data on his generosity. To quote him:

"Santangel, like the treasurers of kings of all this age, was a businessman and was connected with the Genoese merchants. One of these, Francesco Pinelli, known in Spain as Pinelo, was, along with Santangel managed the finances of the Santa Hermandad, the political police force of the Kingdom of Spain. Together, the two decided to invest 1 400 000 Maravedes from the Santa Hermandad's coffers in Columbus' expedition. Other Genoa merchants, no doubt informed by Pinelli, registered 250 000 cattle in Columbus' name. And since the voyage

costs totalled 2 000 000 maravedes, with the remaining 350 000 maravedes being by Santangel himself, presumably from the royal treasury of Aragon. It is clear that to conduct business in this way required prior agreement, and that Pinelli was the intermediary. We have the impression, Verlinden writes, that without the involvement of Pinelli of Genoa, Santangel could neither have used the money of Santa Hermandad nor could he have easily obtained the financial contribution of the Genoa merchants. Consequently, Columbus was backed by a small but effective financial group, and Santangel was one of the most important members of this group. group to the Queen. Pinelo, for his part, continued to keep an eye on American business, and in 1503 he became one of the founders of *Casa de Contratación*, which was to manage the affairs of the trade with the 'Indies'."

It is obvious from all this that a financial transaction of this magnitude cannot be completed in the few hours, or even a few days, so dramatically described by historians. The financial manoeuvre was carefully prepared well in advance.

It also seems quite impossible that Columbus knew all this and would have happened without his consent, although history nowhere tells what role Columbus played in this. In this light, at least, it is likely that his stubborn and intransigent his conduct before the Royal Council was not only of character. he gasped: presumably he already knew there that he could not lose. So why would he give in to his demands?

A SECRET AGREEMENT?

The suspicion that there may have been some sort of collusion between Columbus and the financial group behind him is inevitable. And if there was, what were the terms? What did Columbus undertake, apart from risking his life and putting his decades of seafaring experience and expertise at the disposal of a financial group hoping to profit from his expedition? And what form did the financial group behind him hope to take? Santangel offered the money to cover the costs of the expedition to

the queen. The best they could hope for was interest on the two million Maravedi. It seems more reasonable to assume that Columbus made specific commitments to them, perhaps promising them a percentage or commission of his profits and earnings for their exit and financial support.

Columbus's "promises and offers" on the road west to Asia were related to the opening of. The possibility of trade with India, Cathay (China) and Cipango (Japan), of which you Columbus also wanted a share.

And how much would Columbus' own share have been, after all?

He himself gives the answer in that certain will, at least in parts forged, which has already mentioned: '... which, with my rights (emoluments) from my office as admiral and viceroy and governor, totals more than twenty-five per cent.'

For this, after all, was contained in the treaty, not secret but concluded with the royal court, the so-called "Capitulation of Santa Fe", which, although it literally only concerned the inclusion in capitula (chapters) of his rights and obligations in respect of the lands he was to discover, but which - symbolically at least - it also meant that the skilled scientific guard and the Spanish monarch finally capitulated after a few weeks of years of reluctance. Columbus (and the financial group behind him). The capitulation at Santa Fe was formulated and put into words by Columbus' namesake, Juan de Coloma, "according to the wishes of their Majesties". Seventeen days earlier, the same Juan de Coloma had drafted and signed the decree expelling the Jews from Spain.

BEFORE?...

The capitulation of Santa Fe is a strange document. It is in fact nothing more than a protocol of bilateral agreement. Its introductory sentence reads:

"The things requested, which Your Majesties grant and cede to Don Cristóbal Colón as some satisfaction for what he has discovered in the Ocean Sea, and for the voyage which he will now make thereon in the service of Your Majesties, with the help of God."

The past tense of the verb "to discover" in the text was considered so unbelievable by chroniclers and historians that, in an obvious error, it was corrected to the future tense: "for what he will discover in the Ocean Sea..." In the original document, however, the verb is in the past tense. That is why a good many Columbus scholars then believed, and tried to prove, that Columbus, before he officially discovered the Americas, had once secretly discovered it. For example, Luis de Ulloa, a Peruvian, in his work *The Spanish-Catalan Pre-Discovery of America in 1473*, published in Paris in 1928 provides ample evidence to support his hypothesis that Columbus was the same as a Danish or Polish navigator named Johannes Skolvus, who had once secretly discovered America nineteen years earlier.

Rumours, legends and beliefs about the existence of mysterious lands, islands and cities (Brazil, the mysterious island of Antilia, the Seven Cities, etc.), but they are mostly related to the Atlantis legend.

were versions of the mysterious survival of the mysterious. There was often talk of shipwrecks being washed ashore from distant lands (Columbus himself described seeing two shipwrecked Chinese off the coast of Ireland in 1477). It is not impossible that some ships were washed as far as the American coast by the storm, nor that some sailors returned from there.

Garcilaso de la Vega (the Incas) tells the story, as told by his father and his friends (*Comentarios reales de los Incas*, 1609), that around 1484 a Huelva sailor named Alonso Sánchez sailed his ship for twenty-nine days was swept away by the storm, and so made his way to an island (presumably Santo Domingo), from where he managed to return when the storm had passed. Only five of the seventeen, including Alonso Sánchez himself. They landed in Terceira, one of the Azores, and there the famous Genoa Cristóbal Colón

(Columbus did indeed live in the Azores at one time.) Their health, however, was so shaken that they could not recover, but they would have told Columbus the secret and details of their voyage before they died. This then enabled him to discover the New World.

Francis Bacon (*The History of the Reign of King Henry VII*, St Alban's, London, 1622) probably refers to the same story, mentioning the "casuall and wind-beeten Discouerie" of the Spanish sailor who died in Columbus's house.

But there was no evidence for these legends and rumours, and even if there had been, there was no entrepreneur who would have dared to repeat such adventurous journeys. Even the shipwrecked men whom Columbus believed to be Chinese may have been Finns, Lapps or Russians with Mongolian faces.

There is little doubt that the Vikings reached the shores of the Americas as early as around 1000 BC, but their discovery did not change the way the world was seen at the time. Co-Lumbus's did. For his sails were already swollen not only by the warm winds blowing westwards, but also by historical necessity.

NAGYPOLITICS

Our trained neural pathways now automatically associate Columbus' name with America. But in early 1492, America did not exist. Columbus was not a 'brilliant visionary', as he is often called, but a half-educated, mad sailor whose whimsical plan was known 'not only to the skilled scientists, but even to the less educated individuals' to be impossible and futile, that his calculations were wrong, that he was one in a thousand of the the likelihood that he will return alive at all. This chance, which is only slightly more than nothing, was put into legal terms in the treaty the Spanish kings signed with Columbus, and was the basis for the two million Maravedi coins collected by the Pinelo-Santangel group behind Columbus. On one occasion when Columbus was summoned to court, 'Our Lady the Queen has sent twenty thousand Maravedes in forints, brought by Diego Prieto, a resident of the city, and has delivered the said in a letter to the hands of the witness, give it to me.' Cristóbal Colón to dress himself decently, buy cattle and appear before His Majesty.")

The whole enterprise promised to be a shabby little business, and not much bigger when Columbus returned a year later, after discovering a few islands. His entry into Seville was a triumph; the spectacle, however, was justified to a much lesser extent by the real significance of the discovery (although Columbus believed it was), but rather the power struggle that had been going on between the Spanish and Portuguese crowns for decades.

The Treaty of Alcagobas (1479-1480) confirmed the Spanish possession of the Canary Islands, but gave Portugal Madeira, the Azores, Cape Verde and Guinea, and also gave the Portuguese the written right to "explore" south of the Canary Islands and Guinea (i.e. along the coast of Africa).

Columbus' success opened up the possibility of a new settlement for the Spanish crown. Barely a month and a half after Columbus had arrived in the port of Palos on his way from the islands already discovered, in early May 1493, Pope Alexander VI, in two successive bulls of the same date (*Inter cetera*), granted the kings of Castile all the lands of the western ocean discovered and *to be discovered*, as hereditary possessions. The world had not yet been divided up, but the division had already taken place.

The Portuguese possessions were separated from the Spanish zone by an imaginary line drawn from the North Pole to the South Pole, defined as three hundred and fifty miles west of the Cape Verde Islands, according to the Treaty of Tordesillas, concluded a year later on 5 June 1494.

(The Spanish monarchs sent a letter to Columbus, who was then on his second voyage, inviting him to be present as an expert to help them determine the line, or, if he was unable to do so, to send his brother Bartolomeo in his place. The Admiral had the legal right to do so. Only a few days after the papal bulls were issued, the ruling couple, apparently for political reasons, issued a royal charter extending *all* Columbus's *rights to all* Spanish territories covered by the treaty to be concluded. Using today's geographical definitions,

With the exception of Brazil, which became a member of the EU under the Tordesillas Agreement

later Portuguese possessions - whole of Latin America, including of course the later Mexico and Florida, California and Texas.)

Columbus' first voyage of discovery was not of practical importance, but of political significance. It proved that the waters of the ocean were not the only thing between Europe and Asia: there were islands, small for the time being, but there were islands.

Consequently, Columbus' second voyage was one of the truly great maritime enterprises of the age. One of the most organised state apparatuses in Europe was set in motion. Seventeen large ships with a crew of between one thousand and five hundred set sail. They took cattle, sheep, mules and horses. Also grape must. Many of the crew had this official status: gold panning. As early as 1494, just two years after Columbus raised the Spanish flag on the island of Guanahani, a regular mail service was established: one boat a month, one from the mainland to the islands and one back. In 1496, the first two ships built in America arrived in the port of Cá-diz. There was almost nothing to colonise yet, but the modern era colonialism was already in full swing.

Columbus's first voyage, established (partly) with royal money and permission was a private company. A royal committee of three was already organised to prepare the second voyage (one of its members was Francesco Pinelli-Pinelo of Seville, the Genoese treasurer who had acted as liaison between the Genoese merchants and Santangel in raising the money for the first voyage. But by the time the second voyage was being prepared, he already had fifteen thousand gold ducats of public money.)

The "poor stranger", so often mocked and ridiculed, was suddenly elevated to the highest ranks of the state's overlords. "We were very angry when we learned that you do not respect the Admiral of the Indies as he deserves, and do not carry out his orders as we wish," the royal couple wrote in a letter to Don Juan de Fonseca and Juan de Soria (the other two members of the three-member royal commission), and added: "because we want the Admiral to be given the respect and to carry out his orders in accordance with the rank we have given him". Columbus is therefore not a private man

but a representative of the Spanish state, the highest public dignitary on the few islands with high political hopes.

After his second and third trips, however, it begins to emerge that behind the Santa Fe capitulation, thought to be little more than a paper rag to throw away at the time of signing, the biggest deal in world history is unfolding: a new world of gold, silver, gems, real pearls, plant and mineral treasures, cheap labour, the potential for gigantic commercial profits.

Eight years later, everyone knew that this land was not Asia, except Columbus himself, who stubbornly continued to claim that he had been to India, China and Japan.

His stubborn disregard for reality is illustrated by the fact that on his second voyage, despite being told by the Cuban natives that he on an island, he took an oath from all the crew that they had reached the Asian mainland.

(On June 12, 1493, Fernando Pérez de Luna, notary public for the Queen and Columbus's fleet, interviewed the helmsmen, deckmasters, sailors and shipwrights one by one, on the Admiral's orders, "let them, if they have any doubt that this land is not dry land at the beginning or end of India, they

for those who would come here from Spain by land; and if they have any doubt or conviction of this, they are invited to say that they may be put in doubt, and made to see that it is so, and that this is the land."

Columbus foresaw a fine of ten thousand maravedí [a hundred lashes for shipwrights], and the tongue of anyone who "ever afterwards says anything contrary to what he has just said". They all swore.)

New World or India, it was after all - at the time - only a theoretical question. But the stubbornly imaginative Admiral clung on to his share of the conch: he was entitled to more than twenty-five per cent, on paper, of all the profits.

What we do not know is what the terms of the secret agreement between Columbus and the financial group behind him may have been, since the very nature of such a contract is such that it would be completely illusory to look for written evidence of it. We do, however, have circumstantial evidence. With the exception of Madariaga, his biographers do not mention them either. They don't even refer to it.

THE WATERS

Already during Columbus's second, but especially during his third voyage, complaints, accusations and denunciations made against the Admiral and Bartolomeo Colón.

It was increasingly clear that the two Columbus brothers were unfit to govern. Today we would say that they were not capable of leadership. Their actions were characterised by resourcefulness, haste, cupidity; indulgence and severity, punishment and reward, internal they lacked a sense of balance, sometimes overdoing one, sometimes the other. When were in trouble, they preferred to use excessive rigour and penalty was applied. "It was a question," writes Las Casas, "of sending someone to remove the Admiral from his post and governorship. But the ruling couple wanted to consider the matter, thinking how much they owed Colón, and they were reluctant to do so."

But then they did. Francisco de Bobadilla, a knight of the Order of Calatrava, was given the task and given full powers.

Bobadilla arrived in Santo Domingo with two ships at the end of August 1500. He asked what was new on the island. The answer was this: seven Spaniards had been hanged this week for rebellion, and five more were waiting to be hanged the next morning. He was also told that the Admiral was out of town, that he was in La Concepción to investigate a Spanish mutiny, and that Bartolomeo Colón was in Xaragua to put down another plot. From time to time, they both send prisoners to Santo Domingo to be hanged. So much so, that one gallows is no longer enough, another had to be erected on the other side of town.

Of the Columbus brothers, only the weak Don Diego stayed in Santo Domingo.

Bobadilla heard a mass and then publicly read out the decree of the royal couple, which gave him full powers.

Later, the Admiral and Bartolomeo returned, and with irritated brashness began to dispute the legitimacy of Bobadilla's mandate.

Bobadilla then arrested the three Columbus brothers, and beat them with iron sent them to Spain. On the same ship, they were accompanied by the voluminous files of the Bobadilla investigation, which later disappeared from all knowledge. In the Pegli Maritime Museum near Génua, they are still

they also show a handcuff that Columbus refused to during the whole long voyage, saying it was put on by order of the royal couple and could only be removed by them.

Most of the accusations seemed to prove that the Columbus brothers did indeed lack the ability to govern. Biographers even talk about this, many of them with almost tears in their eyes at the injustice done to Columbus. But let us listen to Madariaga, who talks about something else.

"In addition, the rumour that Colón was disloyal and ready to hand over the island to another nation spread more and more frequently and dangerously. It is difficult to judge the seriousness of this serious accusation. It was woven around an alleged treaty of Genoa. The accusation, it may be, was not entirely baseless, here are some plausible reasons: the persistence of the accusation. This accusation is an additional part of many accusations that have been proven true. Oviedo, a well-informed and impartial historian, writing of the reasons for Colón's downfall, says: "It is said that the truest reason was concealed, because the King and Queen wished to see the Admiral unpunished, and did not wish to ill-treat him." Challenger Colón behaviour towards Bobadilla, when he was informed that its power came from the king and queen. The ruling couple had accurate information, and seems to have given credence to the accusation, for he not only deprived Colón of his governorship of India, but insisted that any future representative of Colón there should be of Spanish birth. Finally, in a deed of Indians' labor service, without an east or signature, there is a strange statement. This document is believed to have been sent by a Hieronymite monk to Archbishop Cisneros in 1517. In the first paragraph of this

is a dry statement addressed to the man who then,

for the last twenty years, he has been a virtual prime minister of Spain:

"In India there are still continuing the serious unevenness and damage began in the time of Admiral Colón, who discovered the islands, and which is the result of the agreement which he made with the Genoese, and

which resulted in the appointment of Commander Bobadilla as governor."

This is Madariaga's factual summary of the results of his research. He then goes on to excuse Columbus: "The whole body of facts and documents seems to be quite overwhelming, but there are also overwhelming reasons to believe that Colón, even if he had thought of such a thing - which it is not possible to go so far as to commit acts of disloyalty get involved." Instead of listing the compelling reasons in favour of the Admiral, however, he only quotes an excerpt from one of Columbus's own letters protesting against the accusation, and then Madariaga adds, "The fact is that no other trace of the supposed treaty he would have concluded with the Genoese has been found, either in Genoa or in Spain, although the compromising documents to this effect may well have existed, and only disappeared with the Bobadilla trial files. This could have happened when Bobadilla returned to Spain with a destroyed in a shipwreck, but they may also have been 'lost' at the hands of the crown officials whom Don Diego (Columbus' first-born, legitimate son and heir apparent) was able to bribe so skilfully after his father's death.

This problem, Madariaga concludes, is one of the many mysteries still unsolved in the life of Columbus, and will remain an open question until more documents are found, if ever."

ANOTHER IMAGE OF COLUMBUS

There are many such open questions about Columbus. For example, the picture of Columbus sketched by Tivadar Ács in his study *The Unknown Columbus* (in Hungarian, manuscript) seems hardly less credible than the theory that he was born in Genoa. He examines the role of Columbus in the context of the struggle for hegemony of intercontinental maritime trade between Venice, Genua, France and Spain.

In the 17th century, the port of Porto Columbo (now Porto Colom) still existed on the island of Mallorca, from where the 15th century Stephanus de

He was a Catalan pirate called Columbo: he pirated against the merchant ships of Venice on behalf of the French kings. His son later became the leader of the French pirate fleet. (Bishop Las Casas refers to him as *Colombo the Younger* in his biography of Columbus, and writes that "Colón sailed with him for a long time.") A Mare Nostrum eseményeit árgus szemekkel figyelő földközi-tengeri hatalmak történészei két tengeri csatáról is beszámolnak, amelyet a francia kalózflotta hajói vívtak a Szent Vince-fok közelében ennek az „Ifjabb Colombó”-nak (más átírásokban Colion, Casenove-Coullon or simply Captain Colón) in the under the command of. was the naval battle against the Genoese ships in 1476 that led to the shipwrecked Columbus swimming ashore in Portugal. The second was fought in 1485 against Venetian ships by Colombo the Younger. Some historians confuse the two battles or, like Tivadar Ács, mention only one of them.

According to him, his nephew Christopher Columbus, born in Onnfleur (now Honfleur, Normandy), worked as a navigator alongside the French fleet captain for a decade and a half. The documents of the High Council of Venice do indeed seem to prove that Venice had hired an assassin to murder a French pirate captain, and this assassin, in addition to the captain, was also supposed to have killed the navigator of the fleet, Christopher Columbus himself.

Columbus' own handwritten manuscripts show that he did serve on one of King René Anjou's French pirate ships. It is also from Columbus himself that the much debated, disputed or at least difficult to explain claim that 'I am not the first admiral in the family.' (Colombo Jr. was an admiral in the French pirate fleet.)

Columbus, who was later so often and more and more emphatically referred to as Genoese, was naturally assumed to have been taken into the sea from a Genoese ship during the battle between French and Genoese ships on 13 August 1476. Professor Verlinden, of course, says so. Although Columbus was born in Genoa, according to Madariaga, he believes (in agreement with Bishop Las Casas) that Columbus was in this battle served on a French ship. By way of explanation, he says only: "Columbus

was a genius, but he was not a patriotic genius." (By the way, Italian researchers have proven that the crew list of the Genoese ships involved in the naval battle did not include a person named Colombo.)

However, the events of greater history make the question much more complex. The small republic of Genoa changed hands several times during the war between the French and Aragonese kings. Columbus himself tells us that he visited the island of Chios. Whether he sailed under a French privateer flag, as Madariaga assumes, or on the ships of the great Genoese merchant houses of Spino-La, di Negros and Centurionis, which monopolized the Chios honeycake trade, as Verlinden claims, is certainly not now possible to say.

What seems certain, however, is that Columbus also captained a French (pirate) ship as a privateer. In a letter to a Spanish royal couple, he tells the story, which is clearly intended to show off his cunning and his shipboard skills: 'It happened to me once that King René, who was blessed in God [the French King Anjou René, to whom the Catalans, who had rebelled against the Aragonese kings, had repeatedly offered the crown], sent me to Tunis to capture the galleon *Fernandina*. I was already on the island of San Pedro, off Sardinia, when I received news of a three-masted ship, which, in addition to the galleon in question, had two other sailing vessels and a passenger ship at anchor there.

My men were furious to hear this, and decided to continue the journey only if we first returned to Marseille for another boat and more men. And I, seeing that I could not change their minds without cunning, agreed to comply, but at nightfall I diverted the point of the compass, and by the next morning at dawn we were in the Bay of Carthage, while they were all convinced that we were going to Marseilles."

From a comparison of historical data, the researchers have calculated that this incident could only have occurred in 1472 or 1473, at the time when a certain Cristoforo Colombo is recorded in authentic Genoa documents as being present in his native town (Madariaga explains this by saying that he was no longer a permanent resident of Genoa, but only returned to it.)

However, this does not change the point, and we are not interested in whether Columbus was a patriotic or unpatriotic Genoese, but in who had an interest (and why) in spreading the word that Columbus was a Genoese.

The undisputed fact is that he was in contact with the great Genoa merchants. We have evidence of this, which we will discuss later. For now, we will just mention that Cristoforo Colombo's name is mentioned in a notarial deed dated 1479 in Genoa. It shows that Paolo di Negro (or Dinegro) sent him to Madeira to buy sugar. He himself states, and even swears that he Paolo were in Lisbon in July of the previous year, and that he was then about twenty-seven years old.

"The authenticity of this document has been much debated," writes Madariaga. There is no mention that Columbus was personally present in Genoa when this document was written. The purchase of sugar in Madeira (on behalf of Dinegro) is mentioned by all Columbus' biographers, but it is not mentioned that he himself was in Genoa in 1479. Even Professor Verlinden himself does not claim this, saying only that Columbus went to Madeira in 1478 to buy sugar on behalf of Dinegro. According to Madariaga, however, the last person to visit Génua was Cristoforo Colombo, who is later identified as the discoverer of America, in 1473.

One thing seems certain, however: during Columbus' stay in Lisbon (1476/1484), he was indeed in contact with the Genoese merchants living there.

VARIANTS OF A SURNAME

The variants of the Columbus surname, Colombo, Columbo, Colobo, Colon, Collon, Colom, Coloma, Colón, should not fool anyone. The question has its own literature. As is well known, the Latin languages have (and still do) translate surnames and proper names into their own languages. Thus Pinelli becomes Pinelo in Italian, Centurión in Centurioni, in Porto, Escoto in Scotto, Espindola in Spinola and Palumbo or Palomo in Colombo, or Colom in Catalan. As has been shown above, in all Mediterranean countries there is a large

there are a number of families with the same name as various variants of Columbus.

(It is a practical joke of history that the continent he discovered was named not after Columbus but - by mistake - after Amerigo Vespucci of Florence. Vespucci arrived in Spain as a commissioner of the Medici banking house in Florence and between 1499 and 1507 he took part in several voyages to explore new lands in the New World, during Columbus' lifetime. Vespucci reported on these voyages in two letters to Italy in 1503 and 1504. Details of the letters

are dubious, unreliable, but their colourful, evocative, sensuous descriptions are a testament to a literary talent that is not commonplace. These letters quickly spread to other countries in Europe. In 1507, in the town of Saint Dié in Lorraine, a young geographer named Martin Waldseemüller published in his *Introductio Cosmographiae* two letters by Amerigo Vespucci

Waldseemüller, noting that the ancients divided the three parts of the inhabited world into Europe, Asia and Africa which were "named after women", he continues later:

"Now, however, these parts of the world have also been thoroughly explored, and Amerigo Vespucci has discovered a fourth part of the world... and I do not see why, who and by what right should be forbidden to call this part of the world Amerigo's land or America." No one has forbidden him.

Columbus had been dead for a year. More about him than three hundred years later, only one country was named after him - Colombia - where he himself had never been. This is fairly common knowledge, but less so that his descendants are known to history not so much by the name of the founder of the family, Colón, but by the title given to Columbus' grandson by the King of Spain. The name and title of the head of the line of Columbus' descendants today is Du-que de Veragua, Duke of Veragua, from a stretch of the Panamanian coast - Ver-agua - where Columbus first visited.)

Let's try to give an example of the frequency of the name Columbus in the western Mediterranean: the Budapest telephone directory alone lists one hundred and eighty of the exact Hungarian equivalent of the surname, Galambos, and its variants (Galamb, Galambosi, etc.). In the capital of a country of ten million inhabitants and two million inhabitants, where presumably not all

The Pigeon family has a phone.

Madariaga has also carried out a painstaking and exhaustive search for surnames. In my opinion, unnecessarily. The fact that in 1492, the year of the discovery of Columbus

a pirate named Vincenzo Colombo was hanged in Genoa, how a Catalan Jew named Colom was burned at the stake of the Tarragona Inquisition for heresy, how he was tried in Valencia, or how a family of that name later appeared among the Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam.

(Incidentally, Madariaga does not mention - it does not fit his concept - the French sculptor Michel Colombe, who was a contemporary of Columbus.)

But all this is just proof of what we already know: families with the same names as Columbus lived in the Mediterranean countries in far too large numbers then and still do.

If not, it would not have been possible for at least twenty cities in the 18th and 19th centuries to compete to have the discoverer of America among their natives.

But let's stop here for a moment. In the "dense forest" (Madariaga's expression) of families with the same name as a variant of Columbus, not just any family can be considered, but only those with three (or at least two) sons with a specific first name: Christopher, Bartolomeo and Giacomo (Diego).

The name Christopher is of Greek origin, meaning "Christ-bearer"; it refers to the legend of Saint Christopher, the patron saint of travellers, travellers and water-walkers.

(The Catholic Church, by the way, has just a few years "purge", St. Christopher was removed from the list of saints, along with St. George the dragon-slayer.)

In Spain, it is not one of the more common first names, such as John, Francis or Anthony, but it is much more common than in Spain. Columbus, as contemporary authors have written in several places, attributed to both his first and last names a sense of mission and vocation. Colón means coloniser, settler of distant lands, in modern terms colonizer, and Christopher means to go to these lands spreading the faith and the word of Christ. (It is interesting to note here that

although Colombo means "dove", Columbus never applied the meaning of this name to himself.)

The first names of the other two Columbus brothers are common in both Mediterranean countries, and we see them very often. According to church history, they were both apostles, disciples of Christ. Diego is as commonly used a name as, if I try to compare it with our first names, Stephen, because San Diego (in its common Spanish form Santiago - Saint James) is the patron saint of Spain (and later Chile), and a world-famous pilgrimage site was named after him in the time of Columbus. Legend has it that the elder Saint James is buried in Santiago de Compostela. His name day is, if I remember correctly, an official feast day, just like ours was that of St Stephen.

(Otherwise, the identification and role of Giacomo-Diego would not have been decisive. If the three sons were indeed descendants of the Colombo family of Genoa, Giacomo was, according to his records, seventeen years younger than Cristoforo, whom he last saw in his parents' house when he was four years old. When they were reunited many years later, Giacomo-Diego could not have been in a position to identify his two brothers beyond any doubt with the brothers he had known as children.)

Bartolomeo, on the other hand, is in Columbus' life for thirty years. He was already - supposedly - Lisbon, painting maps for a living, when Columbus arrived in 1476. From that point on, they are on good terms. Columbus trusts him as himself, entrusts him with his plans and sends him to negotiate with the English and French courts. Their relationship is not only that of intimate friendship but also that of brotherhood. Bartolomeo later settles in Fontainebleau, where he makes his living by painting maps, but after his brother's first voyage, he returns at his brother's invitation and takes part in his subsequent voyages.

The fraternal relationship between the three brothers is crucial and indispensable if one wishes to question the identity of Columbus: it is the only concrete and real thread that links the "known" Columbus of August 1476 to the

Columbus' the 'unknown Columbus' of the previous one. Columbus acknowledged these two brothers until his death, and made provision for them in his will (the parts of the will relating to them can hardly be disputed).

as we know - neither of Columbus' two brothers claimed (either during Columbus' life or after his death) to be Genoese. (Nor the opposite.)

It is easily possible that in the 'dense forest' of families with the same name as Columbus, there was another family (possibly five or ten more) whose three sons were named Christopher, Bartolomeo and Diego.

The question is why, from the beginning of Columbus' life, research was concentrated almost exclusively on Genoa and its surroundings.

So let's look at the will.

Three wills and an apocryphal letter

THE WILL

We know of three Columbus Final Decrees. (Cristóbal Colón: *Los cu-atro viajes del Almirante y su testamento*, Espasa-Calpe, México, 1958.) The second of these two was dated 25 August 1505, and was notarised and witnessed by Columbus in Valladolid on 19 May 1506, the day before his death. Its text is essentially summarizes and confirms a previous will, which he writes in these words in this will: "When I left Spain in the year 1502, I made provision for my property and the order of succession (mayorazgo) ... which I left with Fray Don Gaspar in the convent of Cuevas in Seville."

This testament, written in 1502, has disappeared like a hair. We only know of its existence from the fact that it is mentioned in this will, authenticated before his death in 1506. Before Columbus's third voyage, in April 1497, he was granted the right by the royal party to found a majorat. This was a special favour. Only the heads of the most noble aristocratic families were entitled to inherit the family fortune and privileges, always to the eldest son, thus ensuring continuity without dissipation.

(The marjoram was abolished in Spain a long time ago, but in England it is still a privilege of the aristocracy.)

Otherwise, this testament of 1506 seems to be genuine, as can be clearly seen from its content and wording. In it, he precisely delimits - according to the definitions of the Treaty of Tordesillas - the geographical areas to which his share applies: 'in the said Indies, those islands and mainland areas from the Azores and Cape Verde a hundred miles west of the line drawn from pole to pole", and also what that share is: "one and a half and one and an eighth part of all, and in addition the tenth part of all that lies in these (the areas) is".

He names his eldest son Diego, born in Portugal, as his first heir and executor of his will, leaving a million and a half of the inheritance to his second-born illegitimate son Fernando (later his biographer), 150,000 Maravedes to Bartolomeo and 100,000 Maravedes to his brother Diego. In his case, he notes that he leaves him less, "porque es de la Iglesia" (because he is a churchman). Diego's brother is known to have aspired to ecclesiastical dignity.

The authenticity of this will of 1506 has never been doubted by historians. It would be hard to doubt it. Its substance, its content, its style, its air of atmosphere, is an accurate reflection of Columbus's situation at the time.

(When Columbus and his brothers arrived back in Spain in shackles, they had nothing. Bobadilla confiscated all their property gathered in Santo Domingo. The royal couple kept them waiting for weeks, but finally sent them two thousand ducats to pay for their passage. appear at court in the form of. The meeting took place in a theatrical setting. Columbus sobbing at the feet of the reigning couple Bartolomeo stood defiant and dignified. But the spectacular reconciliation was more of a formality. Columbus was not restored to his viceregal and governorship rights, and title of admiral, which was granted to him, was merely a title without actual power. But he was not resigned to this. For a year and a half, property disputes and negotiations continued, with varying degrees of success, but without any particular result. Of the benefits accruing to him

and a little bit of a share here and there. The ruling couple would have been happy to retire him - in keeping with the customs of the time, of course. He was offered a high lordship and a large estate in Santo Domingo, but Columbus proudly declined. He asserted his treaty rights, and demanded their full compliance. The king and queen were tired of and when Columbus asked for permission to set out on another voyage of discovery, he was allowed to set out on his fourth and final voyage in 1502. He was even granted his rights to the property confiscated by Bobadilla and kept in Santo Domingo. He then used this to buy four ships and set sail with a hundred and forty men. However, he could not dock in Santo Domingo. He was expressly forbidden to do so.

Of course, he went straight there, but Nicolás de Ovando, the new governor who succeeded Bobadilla, who had been deposed in the meantime, refused to let him go ashore.

Anchored near the harbour, Columbus saw a magnificent fleet of thirty ships about to sail back to Spain. He sent a warning to Ovando not to sail because a storm was brewing. They laughed at him. But the squadron had barely left the eastern tip of the island before the hurricane broke. Twenty of the thirty ships sank, including the lead ship carrying the crown's gold, on which Bobadilla himself was travelling. Nine ships made it back to Santo Domingo, and the tenth, the only one, reached Spain. It carried Columbus' confiscated and returned gold.

On his fourth journey, amidst terrible adversity, he discovered the Admiral, up the Panamanian coast to Honduras, his caravels were wrecked one after the other, he himself was plagued by fever and gout, his crew rebelled, he was stranded for a year in Jamaica, where the natives, initially peaceful and obliging, began to show threatening behaviour.

That's when he resorted to his famous chelagion. On board with him was an astronomical calendar of Johannes Müller, the former chief astronomer to King Matthias of Hungary, known as Regiomontanus, which predicted a total lunar eclipse on 29 February in the leap year 1504. Columbus summoned the Indian jokes, and told them through an interpreter that the white god would take the moon out of the sky that night because the natives disobeyed the great white chief. The Indians didn't believe a word he said, but when Columbus, who was watching the hourglass, pointed his finger into the dark night

pointing to the waning moon, whose disc of light was diminishing, the Indians panicked, bowed down and pledged their eternal allegiance to him.

He could barely move from illness when they docked at Sanlúcar in Andalusia on 7 November. He was carried on a stretcher to Seville. (He was terribly tormented by gout, living on loans, because he spent all his money to bring his men back to Spain on the fourth voyage.)

Isabella died in late 1504. Columbus hoped that the Queen would at least restore him to his rights and income in her will. This did not happen. Columbus, through his son and his benefactors, desperately instructed the court to enforce the life sentence laid down in the capitulation of Santa Fe (and since extended several times, to life imprisonment). valid and inheritable), he gets back his titles of admiral, viceroy and governor and, of course, his emoluments. "I have ten million a year in favours - he writes in a letter to his son, "and I can never get it back."

The will of 1506 is full of bitter complaints. It is a harsh reproach, daring to say what is in his heart. 'Our Lord and Lady the King and Queen, when I served them with the Indies (I served, I say, for it seems that I gave it to them according to the will of our Lord God, as something that was mine, I may say, for I harassed their Majesties for it, for they were unknown, and the way to it was hidden from all I could tell), and in order that I might go and explore the Indies, after I had brought it to their attention and offered my person, their Majesties neither spent nor would spend but a million of Maravedes, and I had to spend the rest..

Columbus would not dare to write this in a notarised document if it were not literally true.

But he did not have a million cattle in 1492. Where would he have got it? One million was taken by the ruling couple, the other by Columbus. From what? Would you have signed a bond for the Santangel-Pinelo group? Would this have been one of the points of the secret treaty, "the agreement he made with the Genoese"?

By 1503, Genoa merchants were already eagerly and formally organising trade with the Indies. Columbus, even on his deathbed, had almost nothing: "For hitherto there has been no revenue from the said Indies to distribute, which I shall hereafter enumerate, and I hope in the mercy of our Lord that there will be a goodly revenue, my intention being therefore to.

In his will, notarized before his death, he instructs his son Diego to "take care of Fernando's mother, Beatriz Enríquez, and to live in the circumstances in which his father's welfare is at heart.

"Do this to ease my conscience, for it weighs heavily on my soul. I cannot write about the reason for this now".

There is not a single mention of Genoa in this will.

THE FORGED WILL

Dated Thursday, February 22, 1498. Notarised and not witnessed, contrary to the custom of will-writing, the date is not at the beginning at the end, and there is no indication of where it was written or in which town.

It is twelve pages long, detailed and thorough. It sets out the order of succession to the majorate in exactly the same way as the 1506.

According to historians, this will is not entirely a forgery either. Madariaga sums up his own view of it (his detailed reasoning on the matter will be discussed later): 'The will of 1498, although apocryphal, was undoubtedly forged on the basis of the lost document of 1502 (precisely in order to put the forgery in its place), and therefore those paragraphs of it which do not show any contradiction (with the will of 1506), and especially those have no material significance, are almost certainly genuine'.

Professor Verlinden, however, in a simple and subtle turn of style, avoids even mentioning this forged will of Columbus.

you should have a say. It says only: "On 19 May 1506 he made a last will and testament".

And in the American S. E. Morison there is no doubt that the will of 1498 is authentic from the first word to the last. He refers to its contents in a few words and then writes: 'On 19 May 1506 he confirmed his last will and testament'.
will."

Yet there are crucial contradictions between the two wills.

In this document of 1498, Genoa is first mentioned only in a small, interpolated sentence: . and to the memory of the services which he has rendered to the

I, who was born in Genoa and came here to Castile..." etc. etc.

In a later paragraph, he instructs his son Diego, "or the person who succeeds him in the order of succession, to keep and to hold always in the city of Genoa, a person of our tribe, who shall have a wife and a house there, and shall have an income to live on, and who shall set his feet and take root in the said city as a resident there, because he may receive help and advantages in the things he needs in the said city, because I came from there and was born there".

Not only in this, but in the two following paragraphs of the will, there are instructions for Genoa:

"Item: That the said Don Diego, or whoever succeeds him in the order of succession by right, shall send all the money saved out of his income under the said majorat, in the form of bills of exchange or in any way he may be able to do, and shall sow for it in the name of himself and his heir.
certain securities [*compras*], called *logos*, which are available at the office of St. George's [bank], these now pay six per cent and are very safe money, and this is to be done for what is here
I will tell you."

"Item: because it is right for a person of high position and income to be able, for the service of God and the good of his own honour, to act in his own interest and to dispose of his possessions according to their value; there, in St. George's [bank], any money is in great safety, and Genoa is a noble city and mighty on the sea."

A later sentence in the same paragraph refers once again to the Bank of St. George in Genoa: "And so you shall gather and deposit your treasures in the institutions of St. George in Genoa, and until he has gathered as many as he thinks and knows that he can do some good work in Jerusalem."

One additional paragraph does not mention the St George's Bank, but it also mentions Genoa. And it says:

"Item: I leave it to the said Don Diego, or whoever comes into his possession according to the order of succession, to strive and work always. for the honour, benefit and enrichment of the city of Genoa, and to use all his strength and goods to promote the property and honour of the Republic of Genoa protect and increase it, not opposing the service of the Church of God and the exalted position of Our Lords the King and Queen and their successors."

This testament, which contains proven forgeries, is the only document in which Columbus, during the known thirty years of his life, describes himself as a Genoese.

Thus, singled out from the whole text of the will, these passages concerning Genoa are given special emphasis, if only because, on the one hand "contradict the will of 1506", on the other hand, "they are of material importance".

There are other differences of "material importance" between the forged and the real one, but these do not relate to the identity of the heirs, but mainly to the size of the expected inheritance.

In this will of 1498, Columbus is still thinking in millions: an indeterminable and only in the future

as the owner of a vast and expanding fortune. You don't know how much. A lot. A dream of a fortune, the size of which, however, in his imagination later be predictable to the last Mara Swede and, from now on, forever, to be inherited by his descendants. ("Ten per cent of all that is found, is, or may be profitable in the territory of my admiralty, and likewise the eighth part of the lands and all other things, besides the salary due to me as admiral, viceroy, and governor, together with all the rights and revenues which belong to these said offices, as
as further set out in the privileges and detailed enumeration which I have received from Their Majesties.")

The four heirs-in-chief are the same (one else is mentioned by name), only the proportions of the inheritance left to them are changed in the real will of 1506, simply because, in 1500, the
because of his disgrace - the expected wealth ratios became more uncertain and realistically smaller in his imagination.

In both wills, he leaves an equal ten percent to the poor needy, mainly to relatives (no mention is made of Genoa relatives in the real will), except that the fund from which the ten percent is to be calculated is smaller.

If the two wills are placed side by side, it is immediately apparent that they are so similar, both in their substantive content (i.e. the persons of the heirs, the order of succession, the whole conceptual structure of the will) and in their reasoning, style, expressions and order, that there can be little doubt that they express the final will of the same person. The difference between them is explained by the time that elapsed between the two wills.

The details concerning Genoa, however, contradict the above, have material significance, and are clearly an alien body to the text as a whole.

MADARIAGA AND THE FORGED WILL

The first version of my study of Columbus was already in print when I read the eighth edition of Madariaga's book. As I mentioned in the introduction, the book's notes not only provide a wealth of new information, but also summarise the current state of research on certain issues, including the forged will.

Madariaga does nothing to change his view that Columbus was born in Genoa, but the explorer never spoke about it, concealing his Jewish origins. But he does not hide his doubts.

"Nowhere does Columbus claim indisputably," Madariaga writes, "he came from Genoa. The *mayorazgo* document of 1497-98 cannot be accepted as authentic. [By this Madariaga means a forged will] It is one of those forged documents that were either created to prove the misconceived interests of the Genoese theory or, more likely, to support the claims of an interested party in the 16th century litigation over Columbus' legacy. The document did indeed turn up in very suspicious circumstances during one of the trials."

But let's listen further to Madariaga's arguments.

"It is curious that the forged will should be regarded as authentic by those who hold to the Genoese theory and as false by those who deny that Columbus was Genoese, both parties being led by the idea that if the document is genuine, the title to Genoa (that Columbus was born there) will be proved. But if Columbus mentions Genoa so clearly in 1498, how is it possible that a man so attached to his family would not mention his own father, who was still alive at the time and who would have been in need of support? And how is it possible that his stubborn insistence that his heirs should be 'the Colón family' and not from the Colombos? For it says (in the forged will): 'being a man of legitimate birth, so called after his father and ancestors by the name of Colón, and always so called'. He then repeats this, when he excludes all women from the inheritance, 'unless there should be a man of my true race here or in other parts of the world, who should be called Colón himself, or so called by his ancestors'. And why does he order his heir to 'keep and

to keep always in the city of Genoa a person of our clan, to have a wife and a house there... and to set his feet and take root in the said city as a resident there", when his own Colombo cousins lived in Genoa, whom he does not mention, just as he never mentioned his Genoa relatives?"(I have mentioned the latter argument in my study.)

"If this document were authentic," Madariaga continues, " would prove that Columbus was a Genoese, but it would also make it impossible for him to be the son of the Genoese wool-weaving family mentioned in the Genoese documents, unless this Majorat document is considered an attempt by Columbus to achieve this double purpose. In this case, however, our opinion of Columbus's intelligence and sagacity would be damaged."

"But there are other objections. There is no mention of this document of 1497-98 in the manuscripts of either Columbus or his sons, but in a letter to Father Gorricio written on 24 May 1501 - the very date Columbus intended to make his will of 1502 (since lost) - he asks his friend to send him a certified copy of 'a decree which is there for me to make a *mayorazgo* [will]'. This sentence is translated by Columbus as if he had made a will at a previous time. It is clear from the letter that he intends to use the licence (presumably a copy of the royal decree authorising him to establish the majorat) for the first time."

"All this said," Madariaga concludes, "it cannot be an *ex nihilo* work. Most probably it is a folded document based on the lost will of 1502, and perhaps intended to serve the interests of the same people who folded it. That is why most of its paragraphs have a plausible basis."

GAPS IN REASONING

Nowhere does Madariaga explicitly state that the paragraphs of the forged will relating to Genoa are forged and the rest are genuine. However, it would be very difficult to interpret his analysis otherwise. However, he does not even attempt to examine it from the perspective of a historian of the 20th century, rather than from the perspective of events in the time of Columbus. It does not even occur to him that when the will was discovered in 'very suspicious circumstances' during a trial in the 16th century, it was not a matter of historical or historical perspective,

The historical theory of Columbus' Genoese origins did not yet exist, and consequently there was no "Genoese theory". We know from him himself that, with the exception of members of the Columbus family and the authorities of the Spanish crown, contemporary authors all agree that Columbus was born in Genoa. This was not a controversial issue at the time, ergo it could not be in anyone's interest to falsify the will 'to prove the misconceived interests of the Genoese theory'.

In his biography of his father, Fernando Colón states that during his personal research on the spot, he found no trace of his father's family in or around Genoa. But let us assume that he did not look hard enough. However, we have it on good authority that no relatives from Génua have come forward in the succession proceedings. The suit or suits were brought by Columbus' heirs against the Spanish crown.

Which of the parties could have had an interest in presenting to the Spanish court a false will which, as regards the identity of the heirs, differed in no way from the real will (of 1506), except in the fact that it emphasised several times Columbus's Genoese origins, and instructing his heirs to deposit all their assets in Genoa, in the Bank of St George, and thus to evacuate Spain?

Madariaga mentions in two places his conviction that "the will of 1498, although apocryphal, was undoubtedly forged on the basis of the lost document of 1502 (precisely to replace the forgery)".

However, this assumption - although it seems so obvious that it smacks of a logical cliché (the real will was doctored to replace it with a forged one) - does not stand up.

As we have seen, the apocryphal will is also - of course - a will in the first person singular. The question is where Columbus speaks to us, and where the forger speaks for him.

There can be little doubt that the introductory passage of the will is Columbus' own text. In his own ostentatiously pompous style, he lists the lands and islands he had discovered, mentions Hispaniola (now Santo Domingo), Jamaica, and then continues: 'and three hundred and thirty-three miles of land to the south-west, in addition to the hundred and seven (miles) I discovered, with many islands, on my first voyage'.

It seems clear that these words refer to the island of Cuba, the southern part of the island discovered on the second voyage, which Columbus believed to be so much a part of the Asian mainland that he made all his crew swear to it.

However, Trinidad Island, the Gulf of Paria, Cape Arenal, are not among the lands and islands listed in the introduction to the forged will, The land of Gràcia - the lands he on his third voyage, and which he himself. (He loved to be the godfather of new lands, and he was also keen to promote the lands he had baptised in his writings under their new names.)

The correlation between the text and the known dates is as follows:

1. He returned to Spain from his second journey in June 1496. The lands and islands discovered on this journey are already mentioned in the preface to the (partly) forged will.
2. In June 1498 he set off on his third journey. The lands and islands discovered on this journey are not yet mentioned in the (partially) forged will.

3. The licence to establish a majorato by royal favour from the ruling party dates from April 1497.
4. The forged will mentions by name, and as a living person, Ferdi-Nand and Isabella's first-born son, Prince Don Juan, who died at the end of 1497.
5. The forged will is not notarised by a notary or witnesses, it does not say where it was made, in which city, and the will is not the date not at the beginning, but at the end; the last words are "Thursday, February 22, 1498. - The Admiral."

The following conclusions can be drawn, which seem logically reasonable:

1. The actual text on which the forged will is based was written not once, but several times between Columbus's second and third voyages, and more precisely between April 1497 and 22 February 1498.
2. It was not made as a will, but presumably only for its own
(Although I don't like the insightful, psychological method of writing history, this time I'm forced to do it myself: it's hard to imagine anyone who wrote a dynasty of
is granted a royal charter to establish at least your innermost
would not try to use it, how to write such a majoratate. If I were Columbus, I would certainly have done it myself. He probably would have.)
3. Such a draft or draft will, not intended to be a will, could, if it fell into the wrong hands, have served as a basis for forgers to add paragraphs relating to Ge-nua. As to who did this, when and why, there is no data or evidence.

The subsequent discussion of whether the forged parts of Columbus's will were forged after 1502 or before 1502 may be of great importance for the discovery and clarification of historical facts and contexts.
have been included in the text available to us. However, this does not change

the simple fact that forgery of wills is a crime (even if it has been statute-barred for almost half a millennium.) But Madariaga strangely passes by the most obvious criminal law question, touching it only in passing, as if in passing: who (or whoever) had an interest in forging Columbus' will (or the draft will) and why?

LETTER TO THE BANK OF ST GEORGE

Madariaga also mentions a testamentary clause (Codicilio Militar) published by Navarrete in Madrid in 1825,

A collection of the voyages and discoveries of Spaniards at sea. In this clause, Columbus refers to Genoa as his "beloved country".

"This document, which is now universally recognised as apocryphal," adds Madariaga, "proves that there are those who are prepared to produce documents to prove one or other historical thesis. forge."

I do not doubt the correctness of this statement myself, but I am bound to believe that the details concerning Genoa were simply put into Columbus's will of 1498 out of some historian's overzealousness or sheer patriotic enthusiasm.

I cannot emphasise enough that I am not a historian myself, but merely a curiosity-stricken man who, in order to satisfy his curiosity, has to rely on the research material of acknowledged experts for data.

"There is another document," writes Madariaga in his notes to chapter four of his book, "which Columbus of Genoa as his own declaration of origin. This document is his letter to St. George's Bank in Genoa, which begins with the words, "My body may walk here, but my heart always there." ("Here": in Spain - "there": in Genoa.)

"However," adds Madariaga, "it should be noted that

1. that is all - my body here, my heart there - that (Columbus) says of Genoa when he writes to the Bank of St George, the institution which, after the government, is the most official and important organ of the Republic of Genoa;

2. these words, as well as the whole letter, were written in Spanish.

The authenticity of the letter may be suspected for the following reasons:

a) it contains a phrase that is not in keeping with the style of the time;

b) nowhere is there any indication that as the letter states, Columbus left one tenth of all his income from the Indies as an inheritance (to the Bank of St George), although Giustiniani says so in his *Castigatissimi Annali* (Génua, 1537):

"And at the death of Columbus, he acted like a good patriot, in that he bequeathed by will to the office of St. George (bank) one-tenth part of his income for perpetuity, although the said office (for reason I know not) did not claim this inheritance, nor did anything to obtain it."

c) A letter to St George's Bank dated 2 April 1502 states:

"and because I am mortal, I will leave Don Diego, my son, to give you one tenth of all the income he has, each year and until the end of the year..."

And yet, a few days earlier (in late March), Columbus wrote to his son:

"I give thee charge and trust, which also thou shalt observe with great grace, that thou shalt have one tenth of all the money at thy disposal, whether it be from income or any other source, that is to say

give the tenth without delay, in the service of our Lord, to the poor in need, and to the relatives before to any other: and if they are not where you are, set it aside to send to them."

It does not seem possible that:

1. Columbus should make two such different arrangements what to do with a tenth of his income, both addressed to Don Diego and in such a short time;
2. not even mention the more important of the two in a note to his own son.

The argument put forward by *Raccolta Colombiana* that the memo sent to Don Diego was not the right place to mention this matter (the ten percent left to the Bank of St. George) because it is testamentary in nature, is precisely against *Raccolta*, since the above-mentioned memo hardly mentions anything other than testamentary matters."

So again, a question that can be argued, probable, but not proven. What is indisputable, however, is that Madariaga has serious doubts about the authenticity of the letter from Columbus to the Bank of St George.

But that's as far as it goes. It does not ask the questions raised by the doubts, nor does it attempt to draw conclusions, even in the form of hypotheses.

This is where the news of the commas of the past would be interesting. Unfortunately, I have no data on this. What happened to Columbus' sister, who was a married to a cheese merchant? Did Battistina Colombo have any children? What happened to Antonio Colombo's five sons, the cousins of Cristoforo Colombo, who was born in Genoa? Why did he not find Columbus' second-born son, Fernando, relatives in Genoa? Why didn't any of the Colombo family from Genoa come forward later, in the in a probate action? How is it possible that historical data

pause, or at least hesitate, when it comes to the afterlife of some members of the Colombo family of Genoa, so numerous and diverse, as if some mysterious plague had wiped them out? There is a distorted disproportion between, on the one hand, the abundance of data, details, documents, places, if the life of Domenico Colombo's family is to be authenticated, and on the other hand, the almost total lack of information when it comes to the fate of this typical Italian family breed.

Equally strange is the fact that in the text of both the forged will and the letter to St. George's Bank, there was never in the known life of Columbus a sudden patriotic fervour in a man who had never before claimed to be a Genoese, who had been in Genoa for thirty years never visited his home, never cared for his father or his family living there, but treated the members of his immediate family, his legitimate and illegitimate sons, his two brothers, his illegitimate son's mother, with tender love and cared for them with a jealous heart.

In the last sentence of his letter - February 1505 - he writes to his son Diego: "Tu padre que te ama más que a si" - Your father who loves you more than himself.)

Reasonable suspicion

CONCLUSIONS

At this point we are, whether we like it or not, on the borderline between historiography and criminology. The analysis of events, the confrontation of witness testimonies, the evaluation and grouping of the available data are increasingly carried out by means of an investigative procedure.

In the light of the facts known so far, it does not require any special insight to conclude that Columbus's person and the St George's Bank in Genoa are connected at three points, although it is by no means certain that Columbus himself would have been aware of two (or all three) of these three occasions.

Antonio Gallo, chancellor of the Bank of St George and official chronicler of Génua, is the first (or presumably the first) to be the first to discover the New World

He identifies Columbus and his brother with the sons of the Colombo family of Genoa. It is then that Columbus's birth as a Genoese is spread among contemporary authors. (He himself does not deny this, but never indisputably confirms it.)

Secondly, Columbus' will of 1498, now said to be forged, mentions the Bank of St George of Genoa with great emphasis and considerable financial interest. The text, no doubt a forgery, instructs the heirs, with clear clarity, to send all their money and property for safekeeping and management to the Bank of St George of Genoa (because it is safe there and they will receive six per cent interest). We have no record of the forged when, after February 1498, the passages were included in the text of the will - or draft will - which is otherwise considered authentic.

Thirdly, the Bank of St George is mentioned in a document whose authenticity is questioned by historians who themselves insist that Columbus was born in Genoa. This document is a letter from Columbus to the Bank of St George in April 1502, in which he tells his son that he had ordered one tenth of all his income, yearly and for ever, to be paid to the Bank of St George. That the letter is demonstrably contemporary and not a forgery of some centuries later is confirmed by the passage of 1537 quoted by Madariaga from the Bishop of Giustiniani in Genoa.

These are the three links between Columbus and Bank of St George in Genoa that can be proven by data.

But there is a fourth - not direct, but indirect - which not mentioned in any of Columbus's biographers. Yet this fourth link is so obvious that it does not even need to be proved.

On several occasions during his lifetime, Columbus had personal and close contact with Genoa businessmen, who probably conducted some (or all) of their transactions through the Bank of St George.

The first Paulo di Negro (or Dinegro), a Genoese merchant living in Lisbon, who was commissioned by Columbus to go to Madeira to buy sugar.

We also know of Francesco Pinelli (Pineló in Spanish) of Genoa, who, together with Santangel, raised 1 400 000 maravedes to cover the costs of Columbus's first voyage, but he was also the intermediary for other Genoa merchants who contributed 250 000 maravedes to the same venture. It is the same Pinelo-Pinelli who, as one of the members of the royal commission set up to prepare Columbus's second voyage, was apparently closely and directly connected with Columbus as treasurer. He later became one of the founders of the *Casa de Contratación*, which from 1503 onwards was responsible for trade with the Indies.

Madariaga mentions two Italian bankers, one Pantaleon Italian and one Martin Centurion, who lent three thousand gold ducats to cover the costs of Columbus' third voyage. The loan was conditional on a licence to export wheat to Genoa.

But we also know that Columbus was in close contact with Genoa traders Lisbon long before that, in the late 1470s and early 1480s.

It was their debtor. He owed them money.

With a lot of money for his circumstances at the time.

DUTIES

Columbus lived in Portugal for nine years from 1476. He married in 1479 and had a son, Diego, in 1480. His Portuguese wife Felipa Moniz Perestrello died while Columbus was still in Portugal.

According to Madariaga (but other historians also report this), in 1485, Columbus secretly left (almost escaped) Portugal with his son Diego.

A letter from King John II of Portugal to Columbus in 1488 is known. This date is ten months after Ferdinand van Olmen's two ships failed to return from their voyage west and ten years before Vasco da

Gama would have bypassed Africa and reached India. At this point, Columbus begins to lose all hope of expecting the Spanish court to help him on his journey. A letter from King John responds to Columbus's renewed offer; he invites him to return to Portugal. The letter is addressed 'To Christouon Colon, our distinguished friend, in Seville'. The text reads verbatim, based on the Portuguese original in the archives of the Dukes of Veragua:

"We, Don Johan, by the grace of God, King of Portugal and of the Azores, Lord of Guinea in Africa, on the sea and beyond, send you our warmest greetings. We have seen the letter you have written to us, and we thank you very much for the goodwill and love you have shown to our service in it. As to your coming here, both for what you write in your letter, and for other matters in which your activity and good endeavours are needed, we desire and are very pleased that you should come here, and we will make such arrangements as will satisfy you in that which concerns you. And as you may have reason to fear our justice on account of certain things which you are bound to do, we hereby assure you that you will not be arrested, charged, summoned, or questioned, either on your coming here, or on your staying here, or on your departure, for any cause, civil, criminal, or otherwise. We also command all our authorities to so comply, and we beseech thee, and trust that thy coming may be speedy, and that no impediment may hinder thee in it, for which we thank thee, and will be very grateful, at the good hour written, this XX day of March 1488.

What reason could Columbus have had to fear Portuguese justice? We are left to speculation. Madariaga's hypothesis that Columbus secretly copied the Italian astronomer Toscanelli's letter and map of the "westward voyage" from the royal library and would have fled to Spain with it, but the text of King John's letter does not really hold up. A clandestine act - even if it were classified as theft - would hardly be implied by the royal letter with these

with the words, "because of certain things to which you are bound" (*por razam dalgunas cousas a que sejaees obligado*). The wording rather implies some kind of debt or obligation.

Madariaga also writes that the words of King John's letter "explained in many different ways".

S.E. Morison, the aforementioned Rear Admiral of the United States Navy Reserve, Harvard University professor and well-known Columbus scholar, writes about this in his book (*Christopher Columbus, the Sailor*; Gondolat, 1959): 'Columbus wrote to King John II of Portugal in early 1488. He asked for another interrogation and a letter of marque to avoid being arrested in Lisbon for his unpaid debts.'

Columbus was already receiving an annual subsidy of 12 000 Maravedes from the court in Spain. According to Morison, "this amount is the equivalent of a sailor's salary". He also attempts to make this 12,000 Maravedes to the 20th century value of money, which he says is equal to about 83 gold dollars, or 16 and a half English guineas.

(Morison's calculation of where this 12,000 Maravedi per year would fall on the contemporary wage scale does not seem to be accurate. The crew payrolls for Columbus's third voyage have survived. According to these, sailors, retainers, craftsmen and gold panners were paid thirty Maravedes a day, plus twelve for provisions. This slightly more than 15 000 maravedi per year. Shipwrights received 20 a day and farmers and gardeners 6 000 a year, but the daily rations for the latter two categories were also 12 cattle. The 12 000 maravedi a year are therefore more like the wages of a boatman.)

What and how much unpaid debt Columbus must have had in Lisbon? In the book of wills of Columbus, already mentioned, there is a list after the will of 1506 - which is considered authentic - but separated from it by a space, without a specific date. This *memorial* is not certified by the same notary as the will itself.

The whole article is not long and deserves to be quoted verbatim:

"A list of certain persons to whom I want to give as much of my property as is in this *memorial*, without deducting anything from it. And that it be given in such form that they may not know who he gave them.

First, Jeronimo del Puerto, Benito del Puerto, chancellor of Genoa, father of the heirs, twenty ducats or its value.

For Antonio Vazo, a Genoa merchant who usually lives in Lisbon, two thousand five hundred Portuguese reals, which is just over seven ducats, counting three hundred and sixty-five reals to the ducat.

For a Jew who lived at the gate of the Jewish quarter in Lisbon, or for who is suggested by a priest, it is worth half a silver mark.

The heirs of the Genoese merchant Luís Centurión Escoto are the heirs of thirty thousand Portuguese reals, of which one ducat is worth three hundred and eighty-five reals, which is about seventy-five ducats.

To the Genoese of Paulo de Negro, his heirs and their heirs, one hundred ducats or the value thereof. Of this, half to one heir and half to the other.

To Baptista Espindola, or if he died, to his heirs, twenty ducats. This Baptista Espindola was the son-in-law of Luis Centurión, the son of Micer Nicolao Espindola of Locoli de Ronco, and according to some information was in Lisbon in 1482.

I, the Notary Public, certify that the said *memorial* and letters of the said Don Cristóbal's will is in my own handwriting and I have subscribed my name in witness whereof I have so subscribed. Pedro de Azcoytia."

Not counting the half a silver mark, the amounts to be allocated to the five Genoese amount to 222 (gold) ducats or the equivalent of about 80 000 Portuguese reals.

What this amount represented at the time is almost impossible to determine even with approximate accuracy. However, I am

I was curious to get at least an approximate idea of the size of this sum. I managed to gather the following data.

The maravedi, as I mentioned in one place, was copper money. The real, on the other hand, contained a little silver, and according to my data, at one time thirty-four maravedi were equal to one real. The ducat, on the other hand, we know

was a gold coin of Italian origin - the first ducats were minted in Venice in the 13th century - used in all Mediterranean countries. The text of the *memorial* shows that the value of the ducat was subject to exchange rate fluctuations in the practice of the money changers, with differences of up to 20 Portuguese reals. If we take the above ratio (one real equals thirty-four Maravedes) as a basis for our calculations - and assuming that the value of the Portuguese real in relation to the ducat could not have been very different from that of the Spanish real - the value of the approximately 80 000 Portuguese reals, amounting to 222 gold ducats, could have been more than twenty times the value of the 12 000 Maravedes that Columbus received as an annual subsidy from the Spanish court before his first voyage. The calculation shows roughly 270 000 Maravedes.

DEBATE WITH THE DEBATERS

Of course, in the jungle of hypotheses about Columbus, there are also opinions that either deny that the *memorial* relates to Columbus's debts or simply do not take a position. Among the latter Verlinden's: "Did he have debts? Did he fear other things? We don't know," he writes. He is adamant that Columbus used King John's letter of marquee and travelled to Portugal in 1488, and was even in Lisbon when Bartholomeu Díaz sailed into port in December of that year, after the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope.

Madariaga equally adamant that Columbus not travel to Portugal in 1488.

We have already seen how he explains John II's invitation: that Columbus secretly copied and took to Spain Toscanelli's letter and map of the westward voyage, which had been kept a closely guarded secret.

The strangest thing, however, is that this mysterious addendum to the *memorial*, Columbus's actual will, has - as far as I know - not attracted much attention from researchers, although it contains remarkable data and allows important conclusions to be drawn.

True, it became the focus of a heated debate, but it was not examined on its own, but used as circumstantial evidence in another crucial issue in Columbus' life. Whether Columbus fought on the Genoese or French side in the naval battle of Cape St. Vincent.

The Frenchman Henry Vignaud, who wrote three important works on Columbus in the first decade of the century, claims that Columbus fought on the side of the Genoese against Casenove-Coullon's ships, and argues that the Admiral left certain estates in his will as compensation to Genoese who suffered damage and loss in the battle.

Vignaud's argument is countered by the Peruvian Luís de Ulloa, mentioned above. The debate between the two is described in a note by Madariaga, who adds:

"Ulloa, however, makes the counter-argument - triumphantly, in my opinion - that this reliance was done in secret: "Let it be given in such a form that they do not know who gave it to them", which proves that he (Columbus) wanted to salve his conscience -obviously, since the Genoese-born pirate (and therefore also

Columbus) felt obliged to repair the damage to the Genoa shipowners he had helped to create."

Even as an uninitiated onlooker, one can only marvel at the fact that three historians - including Madariaga - have not bothered to read this appendix to the Columbus Act more carefully.

For it is clear from *his memory*, even *on* a first careful reading, that there can be no question of reparation for the damage caused at *the same time*, i.e. at the battle of Cape St. Vincent. If nothing else, the exchange rate difference in the conversion of the ducats into Portuguese reals is clear proof of this.

But the same is confirmed by the date in the text ("... and according to some reports he was in Lisbon in 1482.") The original Spanish text can only be interpreted in one way: the Baptista Espindola referred to in this paragraph did not live permanently in Lisbon, but was in fact in Lisbon at the time in question. It must have been then that Columbus borrowed the twenty ducats from him.

But no such elaborate logical reasoning is needed, so clear is the text of the 1506 will itself. A few lines above the *memorial*, quoted in full above, it reads verbatim: 'I leave and bequeath to Don Diego my son, or whoever becomes my heir, to pay all the debts which I have listed here in a *memorial*, and as it is stated therein.

The language is unambiguous. It says *deudas*: debt, indebtedness.

And if some historians now dispute whether Columbus was even involved in the Battle of Cape St Vincent and thus ended up in Portugal, let's not worry about that now. But let us try to look a little closer at the arguments of Vignaud, Ulloa and Madariaga.

If Columbus-Colombo served on a Genoa ship (there is no sailor of that name on the crew list of any of the Genoa squadrons, although Morison even knows the name of the ship he was shipwrecked on - "Bechalla"), being a Kara-suit himself, why would he have left various amounts in his will to the shipowning merchants whose goods were lost in the battle?

But if he had fought on Casenove-Coullon's side, how could he know the people were whose goods were carried by the attacked ships, and especially how much damage they had suffered from his sinful act, which he so regretted that

thirty years later, to "ease his conscience", he wanted to compensate them one by one and in secret?

Madariaga, for example, has no suspicion that Paulo de Negro surname and first name, a merchant living in Lisbon, on whose behalf Columbus went to Madeira to buy sugar, may be the same as the Genoese Paulo de Negro, whose (or his heirs')

Admiral bequeaths a hundred ducats *in* his enigmatic *memoirs* ("... although it is worth noting," Madariaga writes, "that Negro was the name of a wealthy Jewish financier from Lisbon who may have *been related to* the document di Negro concerning the purchase of sugar in Madeira").

But *the memorial* is full of familiar names. Columbus mentions the Genoese merchants Centurión twice, and, coincidentally, one of the two Italian bankers who lent the Spanish crown three thousand ducats in exchange for a Genoese wheat export licence.

Columbus's third voyage was one called Martin Centurión.

Professor Verlinden claims that Columbus served as a sailor on the Spinolas and di Negro ships from the beginning, and that the caravan of ships attacked by the French near Cape St. Vincent in August 1476 was owned by the Spinolas and di Negroes and was carrying Chios honey to Flanders.

Let's not ask now whether Columbus came to sea from a Genoese or a French ship. The name Spinola, however, in the form of the Spanishized Espindola, is also mentioned in the text of the *memorial* with twenty (gold) ducats.

But there can be no doubt, I think, that these large Italian merchant houses were regular customers of the Bank of St George in Genoa.

In this context, therefore, it may not be wrong to assume that the persons and amounts listed in *the memorial* are the same as Columbus's creditors and debts in Lisbon. Nor, perhaps, if Morison we are inclined to the opinion that the phrase "for certain things which you would be obliged to do" in the letter of King John II refers to these debts.

At the time of Columbus's will and death, these debts were twenty-five to thirty years old.

Unpaid debts which the Admiral must have considered very important if he wished to settle them at least in his will after a quarter of a century.

It cannot be excluded that this will clause, drafted with deliberate detachment, almost impersonally and deliberately without any justification is the key to the mystery we are investigating.

I feel, however, that before I attempt to put my conclusions into a coherent framework, I am obliged to express my reservations about my own reasoning.

DOUBTS AND COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

Even the most basic suspicion is not a certainty. In a chain of suppositions in which credible and supposedly credible - that is, provable or seemingly provable - data themselves contain a considerable amount of contradictions that are mutually exclusive, the investigator, at his pleasure must be rigorous and consistent in accounting for the loopholes in its reasoning. This is not exempted by the fact that some professional historians, as we have seen, do not follow this method.

Among the persons listed by name in the will clause, the first is Jeronimo del Puerto, father of Benito del Puerto, chancellor of Genoa.

The paragraph about them does not mention that these two persons were living or had lived in Lisbon, nor does it convert the 20 ducats left to their heirs into Portuguese reals.

Well, in the copious documentary records of the Colombo family of Genoa, dating from before 1473, there are two in which the name of the del Puerto (in Italian del Porto) family is mentioned. Both documents are in Latin. One of them is the famous document of 1470, which states that 'Cristoforus de Columbo filius Dominici maior annis decem novem', that is to say, that Cristoforo Colombo, son of Domenico, who is nineteen years old, publicly acknowledges that he owes to Pietro Beleccio del Porto Mauricio, son of Francesco, forty-eight pounds, thirteen soldiers and six Genoa denarii.

In another document, the father and his sons, Domenico and Cristoforo, are sentenced together to be the guilty parties of Girolamo del Porto (Jeronimo del Puerto).

pay thirty-five pounds within the next year.

The identity of the surnames alone (in the second document even the first name) makes you think. Also the fact that this particular paragraph of *his memoirs*, neither Lisbon nor the conversion key is mentioned.

I could try to claim - and rightly so - that my data is incomplete. I have found no clue as to who this Jeronimo del Puerto, whose son later became chancellor of Genoa, might have been. Nor is there any record of a in the material at my disposal, where and when, in the thirty-six years between the notarial deed of Genoa and the date of Columbus' last will, the debt of twenty ducats of gold which Columbus intended to settle in his will could have arisen. One might be content to suppose that there is a very simple explanation behind this very revealing secret.

Of course, I would not be consistent if I did.

If in my study, when this data was not available, I could venture the assertion that the unknown Columbus before 1476 and the known Columbus after that date were linked by a single thread, that a connection with his two brothers, I must admit that the identity between the names of Girolamo del Porto and Jeronimo del Puerto in the two documents, written thirty-six years apart, seems to establish a connection between the Admiral of the Indies and the son of the Genoese weaver.

I am aware that any novelist could come up with four or five plausible explanations for why my hypothesis is incorrect, or prove that the rhyming of the two names is the result of a strange confluence of circumstances.

(Madariaga, for example, uses this method too often in his book, I think: human foibles, unintentional fallacies, accidental feather slippage,

Columbus explains contradictory or incomprehensible things in his data by a psychological factor arising from his character or from his analysis of a given situation.)

But for me, on the contrary, in addition to the data, a behavioural, psychological factor only reinforces the doubt.

And this factor is the way someone deals with their debts, the way they borrow, the way they repay, default or run away from their debts, the way they are taken to court and ordered to pay their debts by court order, the way they keep track of their unpaid debts down to the last penny for decades.

I am shocked to have to admit that this psychological behaviour bears a striking resemblance to that of the son of the Genoese weaver, Columbus, already living in Portugal, and Don Cristóbal Colón, the Admiral. And I hardly dare even notice that it was the Genoese weaver Domenico Colombo himself (in and out of debt, serving six months, presumably for unclear financial affairs) from whom his son could have inherited these qualities or under whom he could have picked up these habits.

After all - if my conclusions are correct, and I trust they are - Columbus discovered America on credit, on loan, set out on his third and fourth voyages on credit, and - strange as it may seem, according to the data and his own statement, this is the reality - he made his "ho-zomra" will: "For hitherto there was no income from the said Indies from which I could distribute what I am about to enumerate..."

My only good fortune is that I ruled out the possibility of trying to find out whether Columbus was a Genoese or not from the very beginning. I grouped data, weighed opinions, and of course, in the meantime, my own opinion has, willy-nilly, seeped in among the divergent and contradictory views.

However, the doubts I have raised and the counter-arguments I have found myself do not prove that the image of Columbus in the popular imagination today indisputably fits the person of the explorer. It is not only the conflicting opinions about him, not only the conflicting views of historians who sometimes believe in martyrs going to the stake (which, of course, does not prove them to be true), but also the facts as they are currently known about Columbus.

Foremost among these is that Columbus never claimed to be Genoese, but when it was spread about him, he never denied it.

Why did you do this?

"There is a secret behind it", wrote Fernando Colón, and I am only interested in the secret of this human behaviour: the motives behind a man's actions that he himself has kept in the dark.

For I am convinced that my suspicions would not have been well-founded if the above data, which unexpectedly appeared during my investigations and which is backed up by some psychological credibility, could shake their logical edifice.

ALAIPOS GYANÚ

The criminal law aspect, according to which, if a long period of time has elapsed since the events under investigation, there may be difficulties of proof (witnesses may die, essential details of the act may be forgotten, material evidence may be destroyed, etc.), must be applied to a greater extent to the study of history.

It was only after 1492 that Columbus came under the spotlight of historical research. "Colón was not spoken of in Castile or Portugal until he discovered *India*," writes (as mentioned) Madariaga. Not only for his unknown life before 1476, but also for the first sixteen to seventeen years of his life after his arrival in Portugal, all historical research is *ex post facto*.

Excavated years, decades and sometimes centuries later and "beyond all doubt" documents would not be accepted as proof of Columbus' identity by any authority or police force in the world. If there may have been an opinion - somewhat humorous - that Shakespeare was not the author of his works, but another man called Shakespeare, with the evidence of his Genoese origin, and the contradictory evidence, we have much more reason to believe that Columbus, a common name in Latin-speaking countries, is not clearly the person that popular belief has it today. Nor, of course, do we consider ourselves competent to attempt to address this question. It is only with the very justified modesty already emphasised at the beginning of this essay that we dare to venture our view that, even in the face of the arbitrary grouping of data presented here, supported by arguments and challenged by counter-arguments:

1. There are strong suspicions that certain commercial and financial circles in Genoa, motivated by the desire to gain considerable influence and profit from the lands discovered by Columbus and, in fact, in order to possibly take control of these lands, after 1492, during the explorer's lifetime, they spread the rumour that Columbus was of Genoese descent with careful awareness.

2. There is also good reason to suspect that this was done with Columbus' knowledge and - at the very least - tacit consent, since he neither confirmed nor denied rumours about his origins. His silence seems to suggest that he acted under double pressure. He never confirmed the rumours of his Genoa origin

news. He could have done so because he had an important reason for concealing his past before 1476, but also because he might have known or suspected that the Spanish crown authorities knew his true origins. On the other hand, he did not want

(or did not have the means) to refute those who spread these rumours.

3. There is also good reason to suspect that, whether or not this was true, there may have been a compelling reason for his tacit admission of his alleged Genoese ancestry. It cannot be ruled out that he was coerced, perhaps blackmailed. Ignacio Olagüe writes in his work cited above:

"There has also been a seemingly plausible hypothesis that Columbus may have committed some criminal offence in his youth."

But there seems to be no doubt that the identity of the sailor who landed in Portugal in August 1476, seventeen years later, after the discovery of America, is being identified by a conspiracy of conspirators with Cristoforo Colombo, a Genoese. It is not only this stubborn and carefully orchestrated effort that gives rise to the strong suspicion that the two persons were not identical, but at least as many compelling arguments are put forward in the research into this assumption than that they were in fact identical.

It is possible that the identity or similarity of the names of the two different persons, and the coincidence of finding a family in the large camp of such names where the two younger brothers had the same first names, may have played a special role in the blackmail. Coincidental confusion of persons with the same surname and first name still common today, and such name identity is also used by some people for fraudulent purposes.

We know that Columbus took out loans from several Genoese in Portugal for amounts far in excess of his ability to pay, and then fled to Spain, leaving behind unpaid debts. In Portugal this

was rounded up in 1488 because of his "obligations". No one has ever claimed or suggested that Columbus was a Genoese (unless he himself was in Lisbon to obtain a loan), nor did any of his details meet the criteria of a minor fraud, but combined, he was
were a potential opportunity to be blackmailed later by your creditors.

4. There are strong suspicions that in 1490 or 1491 Columbus's unpaid debts in Lisbon began to form an integral part of a plan, supported by the commercial and financial circles of Genoa (which, incidentally, coincided with the explorer's own obsessive plan), for Columbus to head west across the Atlantic and attempt to reach the eastern shores of Asia. Presumably they thought would be worth a few hundred thousand more maravedi if they could get in on the business of
by using a person who is held by them through unpaid debts. On the one hand, the Genoa business
Through Santangel, they also made secret appearances to the Queen
Columbus's west, on the other hand, they most likely made a secret contract with Columbus himself for their share of the profits from any land that might be discovered.

What this secret treaty contained is not known. But if, in his will notarised before his death, Columbus
states emphatically that "Their Majesties neither spent nor wanted to spend on this (first trip), only one million maravedes, and *I had to the rest of it*", a statement almost certainly made only by the secret treaty indirect evidence, since we know that this "the rest" also amounted to a million Maravedes, and Columbus did not have that much money at the time. He borrowed this amount from somewhere, and it seems logical to assume that he had to, or had to, assume obligations beyond the amount of the loan in order to set out on his first voyage west. Indeed, it is hardly credible that his creditors would have risked such a large sum, without the hope of a handsome profit, on a venture with a then totally uncertain outcome, and in which it was doubtful whether their debtor would even come back alive.

Our suspicions about the creation of the loan and the secret contract that laid down the terms of the transaction are not only based on historical logic and Madariaga's

"Genoa contract" data. In the vast amount of Columbus material available to us, there is - as far as I know - no trace or indication that Columbus ever repaid this million Maravedes to anyone. But this negative proves nothing. We have assumed that a secret treaty existed, and we are equally justified in assuming that this sum was

Admiral secretly paid it back when he could.

But more importantly, Columbus never paid off his debts to Lisbon until his death. Nor after his first and second voyages west, even though he was already a great lord - admiral, viceroy and governor - and was closely connected with Genoese circles. But it was not only Columbus himself paid and repaid his debts to Lisbon, but his creditors did not demand that he settle *them*.

5. There is also a strong suspicion that Columbus did not (or could not or would not) fulfil his obligations under the secret treaty. At this point we are really left to conjecture. Between all the apparently proven data in the logical chain, which are far apart, the multiplicity of possible details is an obstacle to clarity. It seems to be a fact that, in the late 1490s, Columbus and his brothers are accused of a secret treaty with the Genoese was given a special weight. In any case, the suspicion that at the time of the secret treaty, i.e. the Santa Fe before the capitulation, as the Spanish proverb has it, compulsive hunger met a tendency to gluttony, i.e. the Genoese merchants Pressure on Columbus with the almost maniacal obsession of Columbus himself to get westwards to India.

But when Columbus's "futile and impossible" promises and offers turned out to be not empty castles in the air by a completely random stroke of luck, the dependency relationship between Columbus and his Genoese clients began to turn decisively backwards. The capitulation of Santa Fe, devoid of any real substance at the time of its signing, put into effect: the mocked and ridiculed sailor of the sea had become one of the most powerful and most respected sailors in Europe.

admiral of his power, viceroy and governor of the lands he discovered. There was a change of magnitude in which Columbus could no longer be blackmailed either by accusations of a crime he might have committed in his youth or by unpaid debts in Lisbon.

Columbus seems to have been aware of all this. If there was indeed a plan or intention to gamble the lands he discovered into the hands of Genoa, it is unlikely that it was Columbus' own initiative. He was certainly already trying to evade the blackmail of the Geonua. This is indicated by the passage of a letter quoted by Madariaga in defence of Columbus in connection with the charges against him: "I know of no one who would think me so simple-minded as not to have been aware of the fact that I could not alone, without the support of princes, hold the Indies, even if I had owned them; and if this were so, whence could I get better help against being put out of them than from our sovereigns, the King and Queen, who have raised me so high from nothing, and who are the mightiest by land and water princes." And it sounds plausible. Columbus is half-educated, mad, stubbornly maniacal, but not stupid. He was well schooled in court intrigue, with an eye on the balance of power.

And not only the apologetic lines of Columbus' letter quoted above, but also the accusations against him and his brothers, his removal from the position of viceroy and governor, as well as the subsequent security measures of the royal couple, support the suspicion that "the agreement with the Genoese treaty" was not a mere loan transaction, but also involved some form of sovereignty of the Spanish crown.

This only seems to confirm our assumption that the negotiations between Columbus and his Genoese clients could only have been conducted in utmost secrecy, behind closed doors and in strict compliance with the rules of conspiracy.

And while behind the scenes, in the background, this secret battle was going on, in the dazzling limelight of the historical tableau, before the eyes of the world, the exciting and blissful unfolding of the greatest adventure story of the age was unfolding. These are the stuff of diaries, accounts, letters, descriptions: exotic landscapes, native lifestyles (including the first description of smoking), sea voyages,

storms; they tell of gold, pearls, Indians, beautiful naked girls volunteering and being raped, battles and small local rebellions, supplies and provisions, the founding of cities, the naming of newly discovered lands and islands, man-eaters and countries under the rule of women. (Shakespeare changed the name Caliban from the new word "cannibal" to "*tempest*" a few decades later.) And during these seven years, between 1493 and 1500, it spreads and becomes

"common knowledge" Europe that Columbus was of Genoese descent. Just as an aside.

6. In this context the suspicion that, following the failure in 1500 of the plan to replace Columbus

Génua could have used it to directly control the newly discovered lands (it is also possible that Columbus himself was), plans for indirect actions to acquire the expected huge Columbus fortune came to the fore. This may have involved the forged will or draft will of Columbus, dated 1498, which is increasingly being called a Genoese. A will that accurately calculates and states that the Admiral claims more than twenty-five per cent of the profits from the newly discovered lands, more than a quarter of all profits.

The forged paragraphs of the same will instruct the future heirs that this expected vast fortune (calculated to be a realistic fortune at that time, the likes of which no private individual, other than a ruling prince, could ever) should be administered by the St George's Bank of Genoa. Genoa. Money and treasure. Everything. The will

He two reasons for this: 1. it is in a good location and money is secure; 2. he was born in the hereditary Genoa.

The actual parts of the will of February 1498 reflect the situation before Columbus fell from grace, before 1500. We do not know when the forged parts were inserted and how and under what circumstances. But, I suppose, it is a rare and most curious forgery in criminal chronicles that does not refer to the identity of the heirs, but merely states emphatically where the testator was born and where the heirs are to place the inheritance.

It does not change the will, it just adds to it. Because *its essence* is the only difference between Columbus's forged will of 1506 and the one he considered genuine.

But if we ask the fundamental criminal law question, which Madariaga only touches on in passing, of who could have benefited from the forgery of the will, the answer can only be one: Genoa, the St George's Bank.

7. There are still countless unanswered questions, unresolved mysteries and unexplored mysteries lurking in the fabric of the Columbus story.

In addition to the financial interest, what could have been the role of the at least dubious letter of
letter? If this letter is indeed apocryphal, when was it written? And if it did exist, why did the St. George's Bank make no attempt to claim at least this tenth of the Columbus fortune and to stake its claim
enforce it? Or would he have done so and attempt failed?

Did the Genoese merchants (or those who lent him) ever recover from Columbus the one million Maravedes, and did the heirs pay the ducats listed in *his memoirs* to the
Genoa? It is possible that the Columbus heirs later secretly settled with the creditors, i.e. the goat was fed and the cabbage was fed
is it still there? Or did both the St George's Bank and the individual Genoa lenders later pocket such a hefty profit from the American deals that the original capital invested in the Columbus expedition was dwarfed? Would they simply have written it off as a loss?

Logically, it seems likely that the one or two years preceding Columbus' death and the actual will of 1506 represent the deadlock in the Admiral and Genoa relations.

The purpose of the *memorial* attached to the will - in this light - could not have been other than Columbus' intention to use this very impasse, when he had no real wealth but still

"hopes in the mercy of Our Lord that it will be a goodly income", he will end his relations with Genoa and the Ge-Nua once and for all.

And he plans to this by settling his debts of nearly 30 years in Lisbon.

For Génua, however, at this point in time, the disgraced, sickly Columbus, stripped of his titles and titles (and of course the income that goes with them), no longer seems a useful person.

It is possible that the forged paragraphs of the 1498 will (or draft will) and the apocryphal letter to the Bank of St. George are another stations in a posthumous attempt to get hold of the Columbus fortune, or at least one-tenth of it, which is once again becoming real. The forged documents may have survived, but the attempt had neither real credibility nor much hope of success.

Columbus' death marked the end of a long, and often controversial relationship between the Admiral and Genoa.

But the traces remain.

We know that seven cities vied for the glory of claiming Homer as their son. More than twenty for Columbus. But he owed money only to Genoa, or rather to Genoa's. But that was enough to make it unnecessary to speak his name today. When you hear 'the Genoese sailor', every schoolchild knows that you must mean Columbus.

AFTER HALF A MILLENNIUM

Five hundred years on, even the most basic suspicions are no more than guesswork, more or less reasonable assumptions or amusing logic. for the game. I have only tried to group facts and credible historical data around the relationship between Columbus and Genoa.

Who the first-born son of the Genoese weaver Domenico Colombo, Cristoforo, was, according to subsequent historical research.

- can be imposed on the person of Columbus, but we do not seem to have clear evidence of the identity of the two, we do not know that.

But that's not what we were asking.

But no-one disputes that the shipwrecked sailor who clambered out of the Atlantic off the coast of Portugal in August 1476 is the same man who discovered the Americas sixteen years later, known today as Columbus. More abstractly, it is safe to say that he was the man who, with unyielding consistency, turned the vast machinery of historical necessity from the Middle Ages to the modern age.
switched.

He was a blind instrument of a lawful process, but also a conscious agent of its execution.

In a way, we all are: human.

I cannot provide evidence for the hypotheses listed and systematised. I have merely played a game: I have tried to support a hypothesis that seems probable and, as far as I know, has never been outlined before, with a few thoughts and data.

There is reasonable suspicion that this is how events could have happened.

BERSERKER

BOOKS

