

MANUEL ROSA

COLUMBUS

THE UNTOLD STORY

LIMITED EDITION



outwater
MEDIA GROUP

COLUMBUS

THE UNTOLD STORY

MANUEL ROSA
LIMITED EDITION

outwater
MEDIA GROUP

GARFIELD, NEW JERSEY

2016

Copyright © Manuel Rosa
Published by Outwater Media Group
70 Outwater Lane, STE 401 Garfield, NJ 07029
(212) 594-2266 | outwatermedia@me.com

All Rights Reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any matter whatsoever without written permission except in case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information contact Association Cristóvão Colón, mr@CristovaoColon.com

TITLE: Columbus-The Untold Story
AUTHOR: Manuel Rosa
PREFACE: Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão
BOOK DESIGN: Blubberies Advertising
PAGE LAYOUT: Nick Sadowski
COVER DESIGN: Rafał Brózio
PRINTING: Bang Printing-Brainerd, MN
FIRST EDITION: May 2016
ISBN: 978-0-578-17931-5

www.Columbus-Book.com
Printed in the USA

We express our sincere gratitude
to **Mr. Piotr Chomczyński**

This Limited Edition in the English language of
Columbus-The Untold Story
has been made possible through a grant from
Mr. Piotr Chomczyński to Association Cristóvão Colón
his support in bringing this research
to American readers is greatly appreciated.



Association Cristóvão Colón
is a non-profit organization with a mission
of spreading the truth about Colón,
(commonly called Columbus.)

The author is an independent and unaffiliated researcher.
The research presented in this book has only been
possible through the author's personal investment of
uncountable time and capital over 25 years.

Please help get more research done, books printed
and lectures presented by donating at
www.CristovaoColon.com

A Big Thank You to **Bob Lamming** for valuable editorial assistance with the last third of our manuscript. Special thanks to **Mr. Leszek (Nick) Sadowski** for his tenacity in support of this project and help in paginating the book, Nowy Dziennik Polish Weekly News (dziennik.com), Bluberries Advertising (www.bluberries.com) and Outwater Media Group

This English edition is printed from an unabridged and unedited translation. We appreciate the readers sending feedback on any errors encountered in the text to: mr@CristovaoColon.com. Corrections will be posted at <http://ColumbusBook.blogspot.com>

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my
three loves,
Margarita, Malena and Elena.

To my dad, **Francisco**, who, until the end, accompanied
my life's journey in all the ways a good father does.

As well as to all those who believe that
the truth will always come out in the end.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Preface	2
About the Author	4
Forward	5
Reviews	11

PART I - THE CARDINAL POINTS

CHAPTER 1	Knowledge Begets Knowledge: Science, Secrecy & Sovereignty	14
CHAPTER 2	The Atlantic Winds of Change	20
CHAPTER 3	Popes, Partisans and Politics	36
CHAPTER 4	Two Kingdoms: One War	48
CHAPTER 5	A Perfect Prince is a Ready King	56

PART II - ALIGNING THE HORIZON

CHAPTER 6	The Myth of an Italian Colombo	70
CHAPTER 7	A Pigeon From Genoa or a Member From Portugal?	88
CHAPTER 8	A Will Without a Way	104
CHAPTER 9	The Trail of Blood	121
CHAPTER 10	Misconceptions, Misgivings and Misleadings	144
CHAPTER 11	Ambush of India to The West	173
CHAPTER 12	A Team of Infiltrators	191
CHAPTER 13	The Trap of Tordesillas	211

PART III BEYOND THE HORIZON

CHAPTER 14	Homeland and Nationality	226
CHAPTER 15	The Last Templar	248
CHAPTER 16	The Mystery of Don Tivisco	269
CHAPTER 17	Son of a Hermit King	284

Epilogue	319
Appendix	326
Notes	333

PREFACE

(from the Portuguese Edition)

BY JOAQUIM VERÍSSIMO SERRÃO



Among my unfinished works for publication is one with the title *Cristóvão Colombo e Portugal*, for which I have gathered a good amount of material over the last twenty-five years. It is a dozen historical essays concerning the Portuguese history between the years 1470 and 1510. I must confess that Manuel Rosa has contributed greatly to improvement of my text with his investigations into the discoverer of the New World, in a colossal effort of revision that deserves to be described as serious and diligent.

Born in the Azorean island of Pico, this apostle of the Columbian story has lived for thirty years in the Portuguese community of Boston in North America, working on the biggest dream of his life, which is this groundbreaking biography of Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of the New World.

Surely Manuel Rosa would be glad to demonstrate that the navigator was Portuguese by birth, although in attempting this, he does not follow the opinions of Mascarenhas Barreto, who got lost in a series of arguments that never received the recognition that author had dreamed.

But the new author follows with the same objective and, although, in our view, he has not absolutely confirmed the Portuguese nationality of Columbus, he puts forward arguments which are worthy of consideration and study.

Fernando, Columbus's second son, gave him the city of Genoa as a motherland... the account of the nobility which is in the *Historia del Almirante* has raised many questions. It was thought that Christopher's childhood took place in Genoa, where he followed his parent's career in the wool trade and that at the age of 15 effected trade trips to Spain's Mediterranean coast and with the port of Tunis.

As I mentioned in my previous point, this hypothesis today is not acceptable...

If Columbus was not really of Portuguese origin, be it with his real or fabricated name, it has been asked, when did he actually arrive in Portugal?

According to ancient tradition, based on the *Historia del Almirante*, his initial arrival would have occurred in the year 1476... But if this had been the way Columbus established himself in D. Afonso V's kingdom, how to understand his subsequent transfer to the kingdom of Castile and Leon? And not only this, but also the support that he was promised for the discovery of the New World, at the service of the crown of the Catholic Monarchs?... Charles Verlinden and D. Florentino Pérez-Embid point to the beginning of the year 1477 for Columbus's arrival in Lisbon, on a return from a trip to England. But this opinion is likely to bring even more confusion to the historical truth.

Historian Antonio Rumeu de Armas puts Columbus's arrival at Lisbon in 1470, in the exercise of his trading activity. Based on a statement made by the navigator in the year 1505 to king D. Fernando, the New World's discoverer says, "I said miraculously, because I went to Portugal, where the King there understood of discovering more than any other. God blocked his sight, hearing and all other senses, that in fourteen years I could not make him understand what I was proposing."

Although this transcription constitutes a criticism of King John II for not having accepted the advice of Columbus, one comes to the conclusion that he reached Lisbon in the year 1470 or even 1471... I am aware that this current biography of

Columbus does not match the painstaking research that historians Jesus Varela Marcos and Dr. Maria Montserrat Guerrero composed on the life of the New World's discoverer. But they ignored the research of historian Antonio Rumeu de Armas who placed Columbus's presence in Portugal since the year 1470...

Now it is certain that his future wife, Filipa Moniz Perestrello, lived at the time in the convent of Santos-o-Velho, where the widows and children of members of the Order of Santiago had a decent residence. The wedding would be held in 1479 and a year later was born the only child of the marriage, Diogo Columbus...

The official Portuguese documentation hardly mentions the navigator's name, although Rui de Pina and Garcia de Resende do, the first was royal chronicler and the other was a friend of King John. But the accounts of his voyages, letters and notes of Columbus contain facts that allow us to shed light on this time his Portuguese past.

We can also, by simple analogy, show the links that Columbus had with grand personalities of John II's court and navigators that John II had in his service of discoveries in the Gulf of Guinea...

Christopher Columbus spoke the Portuguese language with such mastery that most learned authors declare themselves perplexed by the oral and written command he had of this language...

The learned Ramón Menéndez Pidal was impressed with the essence of the Columbian texts, because the discoverer had learned in such few years in Lisbon and Madeira, the language of his adopted country. The accredited linguist noticed that Columbus barely spoke the Genoese dialect, which he never used in his letters and reports.

In later life Columbus wrote Castilian with such frequent Portuguese inflection in lexical and syntactical construction, making Pidal say, "in twenty-one years of living amongst Andalusians and Castilians (1485-1506) Columbus failed to get rid of the Portuguese from his speech and his writings..."

In one of his letters Columbus writes: "I was in the castle of São Jorge da Mina." Indeed, he visited the Gulf of Guinea after 1481, when Diogo de Azambuja built the fortress. In the diary of the First Voyage Columbus states that he "often sailed from Lisbon to Guinea, where he found the degree

value to be fifty-six miles and two thirds." He also refers to his knowledge of that territory, which means the intermingling with the Portuguese navigators of that time, especially with Diogo Cão, whom he accompanied in the first expedition to the mouth of the Congo and the coast of Angola...

It is understandable the sending of Master José Vizinho to the coast of Guinea to measure the height of the Sun in its Gulf area, where the crown of Portugal had already discovered S. Tomé and Príncipe...

It should also be noted that Columbus was in Lisbon during the arrival of Bartolomeu Dias from discovering the Cape of Good Hope, as well as for his meeting with King John II March 9, 1493, while returning from his first trip to the West Indies. This historic meeting took place at Vale do Paraíso, on the outskirts of Azambuja. The curse of the plague abounded in part of the kingdom, therefore the monarch went there to take refuge... Columbus went about 20 leagues to inform the king of Portugal that he had found the long awaited India.

Various comments could also be added to this book about the truth of Christopher Columbus - for example, the likelihood of Christopher Columbus having been a double agent of King John II, a fact that seems perhaps more important than his nationality - that the researcher Manuel Rosa now sends to press...

Personally, I rejoice with the appearance of this Columbus-The Untold Story that this admirer of Columbus adds to the Colombian project. More new discoveries, of course, to add to the puzzles that persist in the life and work of the New World's discoverer. Is this not why 12 October 1492 continues to be one of the most significant dates of modern history?

Surely Manuel Rosa is also worthy of our appreciation for his regard for the history of Spain and Portugal, not to mention the Republic of the United States, where he lives and labors.

Santarém, Portugal, March 30, 2009

JOAQUIM VERÍSSIMO SERRÃO

Professor Emeritus, University of Lisbon

President of The Portuguese History Academy 1975-2006

Prize Prince of Asturias (1995)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Manuel Rosa is a Portuguese-American historian, born in 1961 in the town of Valverde, Madalena, Pico, Azores, Portugal. He immigrated with his parents to the United States in 1973. In 1976, he received the Boston Globe's Art Merit Award and received Lockheed Martin's Lightning Award in 2002.

Since 1991 Rosa has devoted all his free time to researching the life of the Discoverer of America, traveling to the Dominican Republic, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and other places in his search for the historical truth.

After fifteen years of research, he co-authored with Eric James Steele, *O Mistério Colombo Revelado, "The Columbus Mystery Revealed"* (Portugal, 2006), a 640-page book that exposed every inconsistency in the accepted Christopher Columbus biography.

He has since published *Colombo Português-Novas Revelações*, "Portuguese Columbus-New Revelations" (Portugal, 2009) and *Colón: La Historia Nunca Contada* "Colón: The Untold Story" (Spain, 2010), which included a foreword by Professor Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão, former dean of the University of Lisbon, author of fifteen volumes of the History of Portugal, and President of the Portuguese Academy of History from 1975 to 2006. *Colón: La Historia Nunca Contada* was published in Poland in 2012 with the title *Kolumb. Historia nieznaną* and in Lithuanian as *Kolumbas, Atskleista istorija* in 2014. This English edition includes all the latest research results.



Portugal's President Cavaco Silva welcomes Manuel Rosa's book in 2007

Considered today's foremost authority on the discoverer of America, Rosa took part in the DNA analysis of discoverer's bones at the University of Granada. His research has been the subject of several television documentaries and he has been invited to present his findings at conferences and universities around the world. His lecture at the Portuguese Academy of History in May 2012 was hailed as a paradigm changer.

Manuel Rosa is also a published poet, songwriter and founding member of the Association Cristovao Colón, in the Village of Cuba, Portugal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An investigation such as this that covers half of a lifetime would have been impossible to achieve without the valuable assistance provided by various friends and strangers whom I have met around the world. In addition to the continued support and understanding of my wife, which is of course the most important thanks I need to offer, there are obviously hundreds of others I need to thank as well. It is impossible to mention them all and it is unfair if I mention just a few, who, on both sides of the Atlantic, collaborated, encouraged, questioned, argued and, above all, helped to distinguish fact from fiction.

However, I am especially thankful to Professor Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão for having reached out to me in a handwritten letter in September 2007 in support of my research. After reading my first book twice, he avowed that he was "100 percent in agreement" with me. His continued support in convincing the Portuguese academics to read my books and invite me to university lectures has been instrumental in making the changes that are currently taking place within our history in Portugal, and hopefully soon, across the world.

I am also very grateful for the continued support from the readers. Your continued prompting that others read the book before judging it, as well as the comments that you continue to write in websites, blogs, articles and to my e-mail, all contribute to the force for change.

A very big **THANK YOU** to all, and Godspeed.
For the Love of the Truth!

Manuel Rosa

www.columbus-book.com

A MAN, A MYTH AND A MISSION

There is a time for hawks and a there is a time for owls!

KING JOÃO II OF PORTUGAL

*When without sails the tempest put me into Lisbon, I was falsely accused that I had gone
to the King of Portugal to give him India.¹*

DON CRISTÓBAL COLÓN

Dear reader,

Reading this introduction is essential to fully understand this book, as well as the method used in developing the research. The storyline follows a specific path that prepares the reader, step by step, with evidence that builds upon itself. For this reason it is advisable to read each chapter, and do so in sequence.

Over the last two and a half decades many original documents and more than 3,000 books, in seven languages, have been read in order to refine the facts presented here; the footnotes include only the most essential of those resources. Similarly, only the most essential information was included in this book, though much remains of great fascination to those interested.

The famous discoverer did not live in a vacuum. Then, as now, countless things were taking place simultaneously, not only in his society, but also in the societies of other parts of his world. Then as now, there were heroes and villains, friends and foes, warmongers and peace proponents, people who were sacrificed for a cause and people who sacrificed themselves for a cause. Then as now, there were agents of evil and agents of good, and in many cases there were double agents who, by their very nature had to be both evil and good. The discoverer spent most of his Spanish life as a double agent in the employ of João II, King of Portugal, and as such, he was evil when he needed to be. The Discoverer of America might just be the best double agent in history, having managed to keep his secret for over 500 years.

Now, before we get too far ahead, we need to review our elementary school history lesson. The following is perhaps far more detailed than some classes entailed, but until now has been the accepted version of history:

- Christopher Columbus is a name recognized the world over, known for discovering America in 1492. We all have heard his great tale of adventuring into the dark unknown sea, of being the first to cross the Atlantic, the first to reach lands west in a fantastic but misguided quest for India.
- Schoolchildren the world over have been taught to admire his tenacity in seeking financial backing for his project, his tenacious relentlessness in convincing monarchs that the world was indeed round.
- As a poor peasant, he had no chance at schooling, and because of his illiterate past, it is easy to understand why they laughed at him in court, calling his plan *una burla*, a joke.
- No matter that Columbus had been born a lowly peasant, he had big dreams. As soon as he could walk, he had been drawn to the sea. During his youth he sat for hours on the docks, dreaming of discovering the unknown. He wondered if the earth was truly flat, as people believed it to be, or if it could be a sphere, such as the moon and the sun, and if so, could he not sail to the west and end up reaching India at the east?

- India! The land of spices and riches, gold and rubies that could make him rich beyond belief and allow him to join the upper class of his medieval society.
- He was barely 14 when he decided to leave his wool-weaving career behind and try his luck at sea. The former weaver began slowly by enlisting as a common seaman. He began sailing the Mediterranean Sea, alongside his Genoese compatriots.
- In his day there was little to no access to schooling for commoners, but Columbus had a great desire to learn. Because he never attended school, he never learned to read and write Genoese. History books affirm that he could barely speak Genoese. Instead he spoke a sort of mariner's language based on words he picked up from different ports, just as his newly found mariner friends. Unlike them, however, our hero was not content to sail the Mediterranean, a sea so well traveled that it had served as a route for the ancient Greeks, Egyptians and Romans. This was the Renaissance and he wanted to venture outside of this old sea, one that seemed to him perhaps nothing more than a big lake trapped between Europe, Asia and Africa. He wanted to be the first to sail the fresh waters of the wide-open Atlantic.
- He dreamed to sail far into the unknown and farther than anyone.
- Following this desire, he left the merchant trading ships and enlisted as a crewmember of a French Pirate fleet. If it was adventure he sought, he was not about to be disappointed.
- It was mid-summer 1476, the French Pirates lay in wait along the famous Straits of Gibraltar for any ships coming and going through the narrow waterway.
- Four merchant ships approached flying the flag of Genoa, enemy of the King of France. A harrowing battle ensued, and it would be his last as a pirate, for it nearly cost him his life. A gunpowder barrel exploded catching fire to the ship Columbus was battling in. The fire spread quickly and soon everyone was jumping into the sea, preferring drowning to being burned alive.
- Columbus too dove in amid the corpses floating alongside the ships, but he wasn't looking to die. Being a great swimmer he headed for a coast off in the distance, some eight miles away. He reached the small kingdom of Portugal. It was his lucky day!
- He felt invincible with a sense that God himself had saved him for greater things. But he was nearly 25 years old with nothing of his own and illiterate. As soon as he got to land, he set about making a plan to study. He sought out his younger brother Bartholomew, a mapmaker in Lisbon, setting out to teach himself how to read and write.
- He learned Portuguese and Spanish plus Latin. In a few short months he became so proficient that he was reading numerous books, writing notes on their margins and writing to famous scientists, such as Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli. But he wasn't satisfied with languages alone, if he was going to discard his peasant roots and become somebody, he also needed to learn cosmography, geography, algebra, geometry, cartography, theology, and navigation. And so he taught himself all of those subjects.
- Being that this was the late 1470s, he had to possess some rudimentary sword and lance skills picked up during his youth, but he also decided to learn secret ciphers so that he could write letters in code to his brother, in case there ever became a need.
- But Columbus was not yet finished. He still dreamed of India, the sea, and of a better life. He went so far as to steal a coat of arms and feign nobility. He changed his name to "Cristóbal Colón" married a noble woman and befriended King João II of Portugal, who then hired him as a sailor.
- This so far is, undoubtedly, the most inspiring of all rags to riches stories, but it is not yet over. What he needed was to convince the king of Portugal to sponsor him, but after presenting his plan, the Portuguese king tried to steal his idea instead.
- He sought sponsorship in a new court, bringing his idea to Spain presenting himself as Cristóbal Colón. For seven long years he insisted until Queen Isabel agreed to sponsor his dream voyage to India. By never taking "no" for an answer, he was able to set sail on August 1492 on a voyage that most Spaniards believed to be a voyage of doom from which he would never return.

- Amazingly, due to his supreme ignorance, he felt no fear of a voyage that would last half a year to reach India. The very real possibility that he would run out of food and supplies halfway through the voyage never entered his mind. After all, as all the history books tell us, he had severely underestimated the size of the globe. His self-taught ways had him confused about geography, had left him lacking in navigational skills, geography skills, math skills and all his calculations were wrong. In fact, once he lost sight of the lands of Spain he became hopelessly lost. Had it not been for the Spanish pilots on board, it is certain that he never would have found his way back to Europe.
- In just one month, as luck would have it, he reached some land on the other side of the Atlantic. By being fearless and ignorant, he had succeeded where others expected him to fail. He was convinced he had reached India, and so he named those natives Indians, a monumental misnomer that continues to this day.
- Having succeeded in reaching the famous India, he needed to rush back and claim his just rewards. In the excitement, he became careless allowing the Flagship, Santa Maria, to run aground and sink on some banks off the coast of Haiti. He believed Haiti to be the island of Japan, and Cuba to be the continent of Asia.
- The return voyage took him to the Portuguese Azores Islands and on his way from the Azores to Spain, he encountered a great storm that forced him into the port of Lisbon. Unfazed by the fact that King João II wanted him arrested, he wrote to his old employer and went to meet with him while his new employers in Spain awaited his return. After almost two weeks of mingling at the court of Portugal, he finally made it back to Spain, entering the harbor of Palos on 15 March 1493.
- His flawed plan and patent ignorance about navigation and India inspired the following saying: When he left, he had no idea where he was going. When he got there, he had no idea where he was. When he returned, he had no idea where he had been!
- Hailed as a hero, he was named Admiral, Governor and Viceroy plus awarded a new coat of arms. He was even knighted as a Knight of the Golden Spur. Through sheer willpower, persistence, ignorance and good luck the lowly peasant Colombo from Italy had been transformed himself into the Spanish high noble Don Cristóbal Colón.

Many of us read this awe-inspiring story of the life of the Discoverer of America in elementary school and believed it. But today it appears to be the most unbelievable rags to riches tale ever sold and it was all done without using any of Walt Disney's fairy godmothers.

This official history now sounds so unbelievable to you because most of what you just read about Christopher Columbus was a monumental lie.

Only in a Walt Disney fantasy could a peasant marry a princess, but in the real medieval world where Don Cristóbal Colón lived peasants could not marry nobility. It was against established social rules. If such marriages took place people would have been killed over it. It would be like saying that a black person married a white person in America in 1800, knowing that such marriages were impossible and only in 1967, by a Supreme Court decision, did interracial marriage in the United States become fully legal in all U.S. states.

This entire story of deception begins but does not end with the man historians mistakenly call Christopher Columbus. Most likely you have never asked: Who was this Christopher Columbus? Who were his parents, and how did he end up married into high nobility in Portugal? When did he learn Portuguese, Spanish, and Latin? Where did he learn to captain a ship? Did he know where he was going when he left Spain in 1492? Did he know where he was when he reached the New World? If so, why did he call it "India"? There is an endless stream of questions such as these that had never been answered fully and properly. Like most people, I had not thought of these questions either. I probably never would have doubt of them, except for the fateful opportunity that I experienced in 1991.

I never started out to look for Cristóbal Colón. In a way, he came looking for me.

While working on genealogy tables for the English translation of an unusual book by Mascarenhas Barreto about Cristóbal Colón, I became aware of this ongoing controversy.² I viewed the claims in that book as so outrageous that I began my own research in order to disprove them. Thus began a journey of discovery that has lasted over two decades now.

This journey has led to chasing the illusive truth in seven different countries and uncovering the facts of a conspiracy of lies that is much larger in scope than anyone could have imagined. Everyone around this man, from kings to friends, lied about his true identity. For 500 years, there have been historians inventing details, forging documents, and countries maneuvering against one another in order to claim this “Christopher Columbus” with political and economic investments at stake.

Yet, while others fought over claiming him, in Portugal they continuously rejected him like a leper.

What I soon began to realize is that the life of Cristóbal Colón cannot be looked at as a mere misinterpretation of history so much as a crime scene, one that involved many accomplices. There were so many lies and deceptions propagated that it became hard to tell the facts from the fiction. Therefore, Colón’s life must be researched as a detective solves a crime. Every claim must be verified, all sources questioned.

To highlight just one misconception, let us examine something we all assume to be factual: his name. The first confusion concerning the name Christopher Columbus (as derived from Cristoforo Colombo in Italian – the version most recognized in English-speaking countries) is that it is a gross mistranslation of the discoverer’s chosen name of Cristóbal Colón.

The history books, no matter how hard they argued, cannot back up with facts his original name, his nationality, his date of birth and real family, his motivation and patriotism – not even his being the first man to sail across the Atlantic Ocean to the New World with the certainty that we had been taught.

In actuality, the reverse is true. For every piece of the accepted details of the discoverer’s life, there is more documentation negating it. Historians debated this issue for hundreds of years, and most had wrongly accepted that the Italian Cristoforo Colombo was the same man as Don Cristóbal Colón. The support for this accepted piece of the myth had many holes in it and was finally sunk in 2004 by forensic science.³

For five centuries rumor and rhetoric have kept the controversy of Don Cristóbal Colón alive, yet the certainties were still very few. Why? Why, when so many less significant historical figures are so well documented, do Colón’s identity and motives continue to baffle historians? The answer is rooted in the initial deception perpetrated by Cristóbal Colón combined with the power of an accepted myth.

The evidence needed to understand the true Don Cristóbal Colón has been hiding in plain sight. It was often discarded, minimized or explained away because it did not fit neatly into the concept of a poor weaver’s son born in Genoa, Italy. This book shows a much different story. That weaver Cristoforo Colombo has nothing to do with the nobleman Don Cristóbal Colón other than having a similar name. It was a case of mistaken identity.

The research does show that Don Cristóbal Colón did not know any Italian language, but that he knew Latin, Portuguese and Spanish. He even knew a secret cypher alphabet of unknown characters that at least one of his brothers also knew.⁴

The seeds of the confusion were sown when Cristóbal Colón assumed this alias almost ten years before he sailed in 1492. In 1486 there was already confusion in Spain where they wrote Colón’s assumed name as “Colomo” but documented his real nationality as Portuguese.⁵ Regardless of what is written in history books, Cristóbal Colón never admitted to outsiders where he was born or who his real family was.

As time passed, Cristóbal Colón's true role in the events surrounding 1492 faded, his place in history became clearly – though wrongly – defined. The result is the unbelievable story many of us learned in school. The controversy, however, continued to percolate beneath the surface in some European countries.

Much was discovered when, in 2002, two professors from the Seville area of Spain, Marcial Castro Sanchez and Sergio Algarrada, decided to perform DNA tests on the bones of Cristóbal Colón. In September of that year researchers in Seville dug up the bones believed to belong to Cristóbal Colón's younger brother, Diego Colón. On June 2, 2003, researchers finally took the bones thought to be Don Cristóbal Colón's and those of his son, Don Fernando Colón (the only remains accepted as having no doubt of origin), from the Cathedral of Seville.

Professor José Lorente led the forensic and DNA tests at the University of Granada. Some subjects were tested at our request. Those forensic tests have further proven that Don Cristóbal Colón could not be the Italian weaver Cristoforo Colombo.

Although Don Cristóbal Colón is the central thread of this book, it is apparent that the larger picture of the political climate of where he lived, including the Portuguese secrets of discovery must be considered. We will discuss the larger political, naval, cultural, and economic forces that surrounded the world of Don Cristóbal Colón before we actually deal with Colón and his mission to reach India by heading west.

So, who then was Cristóbal Colón, if not a poor weaver's son from Genoa?

That is the question this book attempts to answer while at the same time dispelling many myths and misconceptions about the accepted history.

Many historians have refused to read my previous books, opting, instead, to believe the old tale while dishonestly criticizing this research as another run-of-the-mill "conspiracy theory" book.

One would be wise to ignore them because those academics that have read the research have realized that there is no other way to interpret the evidence, other than the obvious conclusion that the history, as it had been written, was false. (See Some Reviews below.)

There is only one history of the world, although there are countless ways for people to retell it. We all seek the truth. As a means to promote the exchange of new information, both among scholars and laymen, the book's website at www.columbus-book.com contains a link to a blog and an email address, so that those who are interested in this history puzzle can participate in the discussion.



SOME FACTS

Don Cristóbal Colón was a nobleman whose life was tangled in international politics in a true to life a James Bond role; full of intrigue, deception, secrecy and part of a high-stakes international spy vs. spy conspiracy where his life was constantly on the line and his skills were constantly being tested to their limits. The evidence presented will illustrate that:

- All contemporaries agree Colón had expert sailing knowledge at par with the expert Portuguese pilots of the day.
- He continued his secret communications with the King of Portugal while in Spain.
- He intentionally made false statements to Spain regarding India and enlisted others like Amerigo Vespucci to do the same.
- He hid his real name and nationality not from the kings, as history books claimed, but from us, the public at large.
- He always knew he was not in India and he never planned to reach India. He lied when he said he had reached India and wrongly convinced others that he believed the New World was India.
- The Last Will of 1498 said to be written by Colón is a forgery written some 90 years after he died.
- His wife was not merely a Portuguese noble, but was aunt to the highest Portuguese nobles, including the king's Lord Chamberlain.
- Historians had denied that Colón could have sailed to Canada in 1477. We show that he did.
- Colón lied in saying that the Ship Santa Maria sank off the coast of Haiti on Christmas Eve 1492. It was marooned on purpose on the beach and shot with a cannonball to leave the court overseers stranded so they could not reveal the truth to Queen Isabel.
- It was claimed that King João II rejected the discoverer's idea as fantastic and ignorant. We show how João II took part in planning the 1492 voyage because it was nothing more than a Portuguese ruse against Spain.
- It took 500 years to construct a lie and two decades to debunk it. The history of the Discovery of America will never be looked at the same way again.
- Just like James Bond who had a codename 007, the explorer had the codename of "Cristóbal Colón," the difference between Bond and Colón is that Colón's life was real and his secret mission against Spain so successful that it has endured, undetected, for over 500 years.
- The man we came to wrongly know as Christopher Columbus called himself Cristóbal Colón in Spain to hide his true identity. He went to Spain on a secret mission at the behest of the king of Portugal. That mission was to divert Spain away from the real India and protect Portugal's monopoly. The machinations of Portugal's mission to deceive Spain along with Colón's true identity will be explained in the pages of this book.

This and much more awaits you in the next pages. I hope you enjoy your voyage through these pages like the truth-seeking adventure that it should be.

REVIEWS

This book “is a magnum opus and by no means should be considered a work of pseudo history or just another source of nutty conspiracy theories. Rosa’s numerous reliable findings and solid theories would make Sherlock Holmes jealous. The History of Colón has many mixed-up facts and personalities, and maybe the time has come for the discoverer’s life to be finally rewritten.”

– *Renowned Greek-Polish historian, Miltiades Varvounis*

“Another nutty conspiracy theory! That’s what I first supposed. I now believe that Colón is guilty of a huge fraud carried out over two decades.”

– *Professor James T. McDonough Jr., St. Joseph’s University*

“The book is an extensive and well-documented work on the still-enigmatic figure of Cristóbal Colón, with evocative and notorious contributions that will, with absolute certainty, be talked about for a long time.”

– *Professor D. Félix Martínez Llorente, University of Valladolid*

“Colón was Portuguese born noble tied to the House of Viseu.”⁶

– *Professor Manuela Mendonça, declared to the media following a lecture at the Portuguese Academy of History, May 16, 2012, as its president*

“Any historian who is lucid (also if he is not lucid he can hardly be called a historian), given the knowledge of the social relations that prevailed at the time, cannot have any doubt of the FACT, that is more than obvious, that CRISTÓBAL COLÓN HAD TO BE SOMEONE BORN OF THE HIGHEST NOBILITY. Regarding this fact, END OF DISCUSSION. The evidence is now so plentiful that one merely needs to enumerate it to come to this obvious conclusion. His high nobility birth is an issue that is no longer worth wasting our time debating.”

– *João Abel da Fonseca, Deputy Secretary-General of the Marine Academy, Secretary of the Class of Maritime History, Academic Correspondent of the Portuguese Academy of History, Vice-President of the Division of History of the Geographical Society of Lisbon, and Chairman of the Council of the Institute of European Culture and Atlantic*

“I am a professor of History who specializes in 15th and 16th century Portuguese contacts with West Africa. I do Portuguese paleography, and my research supports your conclusions that Colón was a Portuguese spy for King João II.”

– *Professor Trevor Hall, - PhD. in History from Johns Hopkins University*

World-renowned Professor *Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão*, ex-Dean of the University of Lisbon, declared that he “agrees with Manuel Rosa’s research one hundred per cent.” He wrote in his preface, “Nothing invalidates the concept that he could have been born in our country.”

“No serious historian, after reading the original Portuguese, Spanish and Italian documents from the 15th-16th Centuries and after having done a proper study of Colón's original heraldic shield, can be indifferent to the truth, and continue insisting in sanctioning unequivocally what others had written prior to the new evidence. Manuel Rosa made an exceptional investigation methodological and well documented.”

– *Professor José Carlos Calazans, Lusófona University in Lisbon*

“For the first time ever, a book was written about Colón without starting from any preconceived certainties and every piece of the puzzle is explained point by point.”

– *Professor Antonio Vicente, History Professor at Lisbon University*

“Finally we have a work of investigation into the history of the discovery of America that is amply documented and shows the real fraud created by the proponents of the accepted tale of an ignorant Columbus. It offers abundant clues to unraveling the great mystery that surrounds the «discoverer of America» and puts forth the long needed change in the perspective of the analysis of this historical figure.”

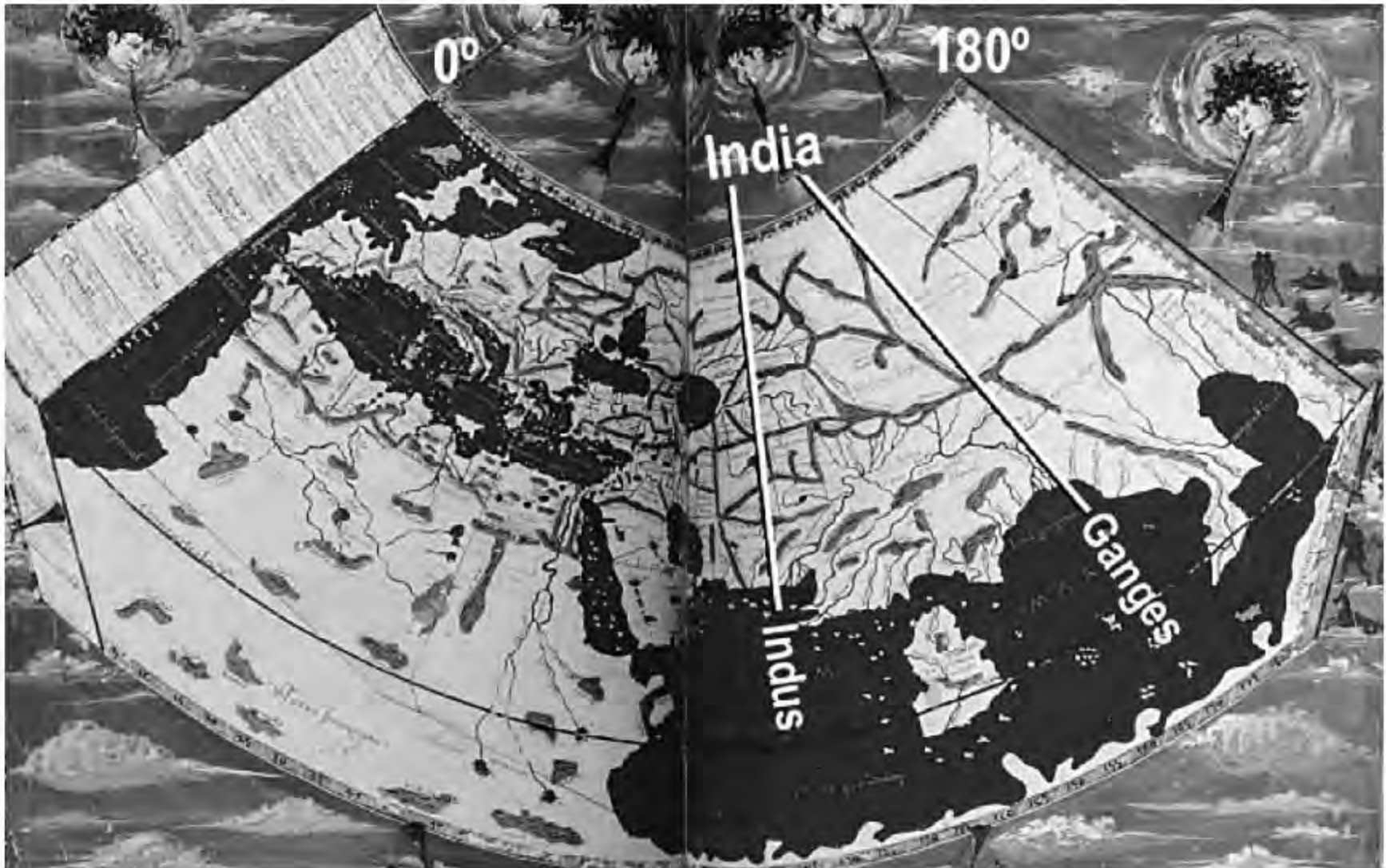
– *José Rodrigues dos Santos, nightly news anchor for RTP, Portugal*

While editing the last third of this book, which contains all the new findings, I became deeply engrossed in its dramatic content. The writing, the structure, and the painstaking research it's based on are highly intelligent. I'm convinced that Rosa's phenomenal thesis has been very compellingly proven. I believe the appearance of this monograph in English has the potential to bring it great renown.

– *Bob Lamming*

PART 1

THE CARDINAL POINTS



The discoverer of America owned a copy of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, published in Rome in 1478, which had this map representing the half of the globe that was then known. See the added labels, in white, where we indicate the mouth of the river Indus to the west and the river Ganges to the east. The territory between these two rivers was for thousands of years called India.

CHAPTER 1

KNOWLEDGE BEGETS KNOWLEDGE: SCIENCE, SECRECY & SOVEREIGNTY

*Although I don't know much, I know no one who has me for such a fool
that I would be unable to tell, that although the Indies are mine,
I could never sustain myself without the help of some Prince.*

DON CRISTÓBAL COLÓN



Figure 1.1: Title page from Cristóbal Colón's Book of Privileges made by the discoverer in 1502 reads *Cartas Privilegios Cédulas y otras Escrituras de D. Xpōval Colón Almirante Mayor del Mar Oceano Visorey y Governador de las Islas y Tierra firme* (Letters, Grants, Bonds and other Documents of D. Cristóbal Colón, Admiral Major of the Atlantic, Viceroy and Governor of the Islands and Continent.) His official documents show that he was named Dō Xpōval Colón (Don Cristóbal Colón).

What we don't know about our human history far surpasses what we do know. Just because we have no knowledge of some events, it does not mean those events did not happen. Furthermore, most written accounts are those scripted by the winners and propagate the winners' point of view over the losers. Losers rarely get to write their stories. Those controlling the quill and the archives were free to write, to censor, to corrupt and to distort the events for their own benefit and glory. Distortion and censorship by the victorious does not lead to an accurate account but to a false account of history. Nowhere can we illustrate this point better than with the well-circulated tale about the life and deeds of the Discoverer of America, Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón, (SEE FIGURE 1.1).

The Discoverer of America, erroneously called *Christopher Columbus* in the English language, was not the dim-witted navigator lost in a dark sea of ignorance, thinking he had found India half-a-world away from its true location, as we are incessantly told.

Despite what schoolchildren around the world have been learning for generations, Cristóbal Colón did not stumble upon the New World by accident, nor did he set sail in 1492 toward what he considered to be the famous India of spices. Our misunderstandings of his well-planned deceptions coupled with the misinterpretations of the facts of his life have created the current and well-divulged pseudo-history of "Christopher Columbus."

Before appearing in Spain in 1484, Colón lived and was married in Portugal, where he acquired his extensive experience in Atlantic navigation. He was also very well-connected to the court of Portugal, for reasons that will become obvious.

To understand what really happened in 1492, a broad study of the historical times and social-political context in which Cristóbal Colón lived must be made.

Reviewing the facts, unraveling the historic evidence and trying to decipher the truth has been the goal for these last twenty-five years of investigating. The work has involved studying more than three-thousand books (many of them contradictory), documents, letters, and

chronicles in six different languages (Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Catalan, and Italian), as well as versions of books that Colón owned.

Cristóbal Colón was a scientist and scholar who read and annotated lots of the books he owned, among them Ptolemy's *Geographia*, published in Rome in 1478, a facsimile of this book was published in 1991.⁷

During King João II's reign (1481-1495), Atlantic Ocean navigation reached the highest level ever known in Europe. As a part of Portugal's oceangoing scientific research, ships were perfected, routes were explored, winds and ocean currents were mapped, science was expounded, and navigational instruments modified or invented.

In those years, no one in Europe knew more about the Atlantic Ocean and its navigational secrets than did King João II of Portugal, for whom Cristóbal Colón sailed until 1484 and with whom João II often consulted. Portugal's overall knowledge of the navigational sciences was unparalleled in the fifteenth century.

To protect his kingdom's sailing knowledge and its claims over the Atlantic and the African trade monopoly, King João II employed complicated deviant schemes of misinformation and secrecy. The monarch even took part in military experiments to perfect ships and artillery. He came up with the idea to equip tiny sailboats with huge canons, as well as the trick of firing the cannon close to the surface of the water, thus creating a ricochet shot that would hit the enemy ship at the waterline. These were two incredibly useful inventions because a small militarized boat, basically a floating cannon, aside from being a very difficult target to hit, could literally run circles around a larger one, and a ship struck by a cannonball at the waterline was sure to sink very quickly.

To understand Colón's 1492 voyage and Colón's own importance during the peak of the Age of Discovery, we must immerse ourselves into João II's atmosphere of naval scientific knowledge, royal power, and secrecy going on in Portugal as well as the complicated European geopolitics that Portugal was involved in. Otherwise it is impossible to understand the affiliation between King João II and this most famous of all navigators credited with discovering America in 1492: Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón.

But to plummet into the Portugal of King João II, into the Spain of Queen Isabel, and into the life of Don Cristóbal Colón, one cannot begin in August 3, 1492, as Colón lifted anchor and set sail into the great ocean blue.

Neither can we begin to tell Colón's story starting 72 years prior to 1492, as Portugal's Prince Henry "the Navigator" takes over the Mastership of the Portuguese Templar Military Order of Christ, leading the enterprise of these Templar Knights. We cannot even begin at Portugal's proclamation of independence from Leon and Castile by King Don Afonso Henriques in 1139.

No. To begin understanding the whole scenario of events surrounding the "discovery" of America, one must begin by reviewing the first work written in Europe about the geography of our physical world. Therefore, one must trek back to the year 150 A.D.

Colón owned Ptolemy's *Geographiae*, (Claudius Ptolemaeus, aprox. 87-170 AD) written around 150 AD. This book demonstrates that, already long before Ptolemy's time, the ancient mariners had been navigating the Mediterranean Sea, Baltic Sea, Red Sea, the India Ocean, and were even navigating far to the northwest Atlantic to a land known as *Ultima Thule*: today's Iceland.

The ancient mariners had already reached Iceland, the western boundary of the then-known world, located some 1,000 kilometers from England, before 150 AD. Yet our history books continuously declared that it was impossible for Colón to have sailed beyond Iceland in 1477, as Colón claimed to have done.

By the year 150, that is 1342 years prior to that famous First Voyage of Cristóbal Colón, not only had Europeans sailed to Iceland, but also had already circumnavigated that island and made maps of it. Ptolemy already described Iceland as an island in his book and its location had obviously been visited many times by then.

This fact should not be viewed by us as an insignificant deed, seeing that the ancient mariners of Ptolemy's days worked with poorer ships, less knowledge and utilized instruments of lesser quality than those used by the Portuguese navigators some 1300 years later, during Portugal's *Age of Discovery*.

These undisputable facts alone contradict a commonly accepted theory that insists that before the famous 1492 voyage, sailors never set out into the high seas but sailed, instead, within sight of land. There is plenty of evidence that ancient sailors sailed the high seas long before 1492 and this is especially true of the Portuguese sailors who, before the year 1424, had already sailed west some 1400 kilometers of high seas to discover and then populate the Azores Islands.

The sailing of ancient sailors to Iceland before the year 150, and the discovery of the Azores by the Portuguese, all of these located in the highest of the high seas, are accepted and considered unwavering fact. But mentioning the arrival of Europeans to America before 1492 used to be met with incredulous doubt. Certainly, we would have some declaration of such voyages had they happened, skeptics insisted.

These same critics, however, accepted the fact that a Viking expedition led by Leif Erickson reached Canada around the year 1000 and they didn't deny that Iceland was reached before year 150.

The first recorded permanent Norse settler in Iceland was Ingólfur Arnarson, who built his home-stand in present-day Reykjavík in the year 874. Thus Iceland was quite well known to the Danes and other Nordics for 600 years prior to Colón's voyages. In fact, recent archaeological excavations at the ruins of a cabin in Hafnir, Iceland, revealed that Celtic monks known as the Papar already lived there around the year 770. That's 100 years before the Norse settlers arrived.

In the year 2015, a Viking burial site dating to the 10th Century was discovered at Stony Point north of Manhattan.⁸ That puts the Vikings in America some 500 years prior to Colón's voyage.

The scenario that accepts Cristóbal Colón as the first mariner to reach land across the Atlantic makes no sense to anybody who begins to question the events logically and makes even less sense once one becomes aware of the existent scientific facts, so often left out of Colón's story, facts that prove that voyages had been made to the west by Europeans for hundreds if not thousands of years.

Contrary to how he has been portrayed, Cristóbal Colón was not an ignoramus dreamer but a highly knowledgeable and schooled man for his times who planned everything carefully. He possessed many books during a time when books were expensive and not readily available. He could read and write in several languages, including Latin, Spanish and Portuguese. Some of his books, given their topics, are of extreme importance to anyone who wants to investigate his life, such as the Book of Marco Polo and Ptolemy's book of geography.

Miles Davidson in *Columbus Then and Now: A Life Reexamined*, writes that "*Ptolemy's Geographia became available in manuscript in Europe in 1409 and was first published in 1475, with five more editions up to 1492.*" Cristóbal Colón owned the 1478 edition of the *Geographia* published in Rome.⁹ In this way one can establish that Cristóbal Colón, in 1478, knew at least as much about our world as Ptolemy knew 1300 years earlier. Colón, himself, informs us often about his knowledge of Ptolemy's work.

The *Geographia* contradicts the notion that Cristóbal Colón was the first person to understand that the world was round, as was common school curriculum and Colón's own writings further dispel the inaccurate statements made in the history books, claiming that Cristóbal Colón "was the first to realize that the earth was round" and to "invent" that if you sailed west you would reach the east.

Cristóbal Colón tells us clearly during his account of the third voyage that:

*I always read that the world, land and water was spherical... that Ptolemy and all the others wrote... by lunar eclipses and other evidence... Ptolemy and the other wise men that wrote of this world believed it was spherical... Plinio writes that the sea and land make all one sphere.*¹⁰

As is evident, scholars in Ptolemy's time already understood that the world was a sphere and Pytheas of Massillia had already shown that the earth was a sphere 500 years prior to Ptolemy.

From ancient times, mariners used the North Star, or Polaris, as a reference to determine their locations at sea and they sailed using *degrees*. These degrees are a reference to the 360 degrees of a circle, thus a globe or *sphere*.

Since 360 degrees is a constant in any circle of the sphere, the only element that changes is the number of miles in each circle as we move away from the Equator to the poles. The largest circle is found at the Equator while the shortest circles are at the poles, (SEE FIGURE 1.2).

The farther north or south you travel away from the Equator, the less distance there is in each degree. For example, at the Equator a degree has about 111 kilometers, while at 45° North a degree has about 78 kilometers. Therefore, to know his position at sea, a pilot not only has to keep track of how many miles traveled East-West, but also where he is located North-South relative to the Equator. Any person living in the 15th century instructed in geography and navigation, as Cristóbal Colón was, knew these facts: it is a basic part of oceangoing navigation.

Only by having this expert navigational knowledge and experience would Colón be able to determine his exact position on the sphere so that *"the island of Flores [one of the Azores] lay to the N, and to the E Casablanca in Africa and he was windward of the island of Madeira"* as he wrote on his ship's Logbook on February 10, 1493.

A mere four days later Colón's Niña was coasting the Island of Santa Maria in Azores, thus his above-mentioned calculations are proven correct. Keep in mind that Colón was able to calculate this position on February 10, 1493 after having traveled the high seas for 25 days and over 4000km of seeing nothing but infinite water. Colón was never lost on his voyages, as writers had us believing up to now.

To measure Latitude, the Equator, at 0° N-S, was always used as the reference point. Longitude, which is the location on the globe as you move east or west, was not as easy to measure. There is not as obvious a place to set 0° Longitude as the Equator is for Latitude. Ptolemy placed his 0° Longitude at the Canary Islands because it was the furthest western lands known to him.

By the year 150 AD, Ptolemy was already able to understand the relationship between degrees and the earth's surface, as well as to make a good estimation of the earth's size. He was able to localize many features of our globe such as the Equator and the Poles. His description of known places ranging from the Canaries all the way to China and their locations were not perfect, but they were the high tech of his time.

Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, is located at 38°43' N and 9°8' W.

Ptolemy lists Lisbon as being located at 40°15' N and 5°10' E. This latitude is off by a mere 1.5°, or 160 Kilometers, placing Lisbon to its North at the location of today's Figueira da Foz.

Should we consider this a Ptolemy error of gross proportions? From Lisbon to the Equator it is some 4,666 Kilometers and Ptolemy placed it at some 4,832 Kilometers. Making a mistake of only 160 Kilometers, off by less than 4%, over a distance of over 4,600 Kilometers without the use of a GPS or any other modern instruments was a tremendous feat to accomplish in the year 150. It seems even more so when we recognize that Ptolemy never visited some of these places but took the information from older scholars like Pytheas and others who had traveled there.

As for Lisbon's longitude, Ptolemy may appear very far off target, but when we consider that our 0° is now measured at Greenwich, England, and Ptolemy's 0° was at the Canary Islands, which we locate today at Longitude 15°24' W, we can easily deduct the current Lisbon 9°8' W from the Canaries at 15°24' W, leaving 5°16' E, and see that Ptolemy's calculation of 5°10' E was dead on.

Ptolemy wasn't perfect but his book shows that the size of the Earth, as well as the Earth being a sphere, was already well understood more than a millennium before Colón's voyage. Therefore, the Earth being round and measuring your location at sea was not news to any scholar or navigator in the year 1492.

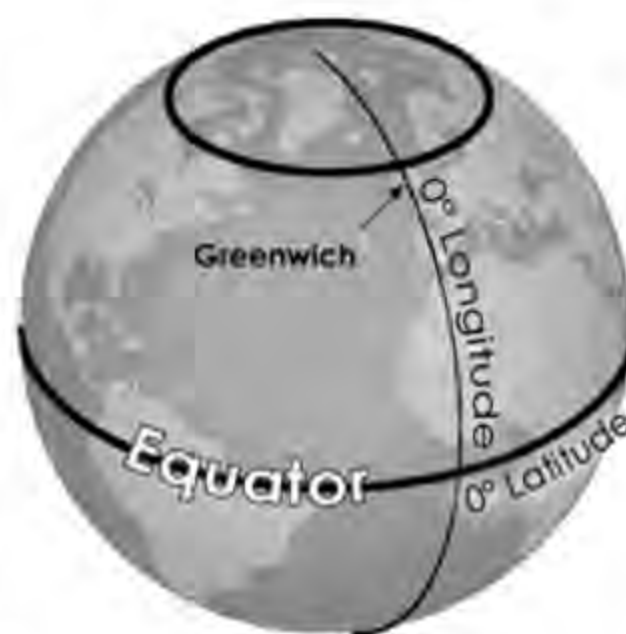


Figure 1.2: The Equator, at 0 degrees, is the largest circle located midway between the North and South Poles.

What educated Europeans knew about our world in 1492 must be taken into account if we wish to understand the truth. It is important to recognize this point, since Cristóbal Colón owned Ptolemy's book. Those descriptions of the known world are relevant and are not simply an artistic sketch. Ptolemy had already placed on his map India's major rivers; the *Indus* and the *Ganges*.

Further to the east of India, Ptolemy placed the region of *Sinae* (China) and wrote, "Sinae... is terminated on the east by the meridian [180° line] marking the unknown lands."

Ptolemy explained that the territory of *Sinae* (far beyond India to its east) was not the last land; rather, his 180° line (a half globe) marked only the end of the *known* lands; beyond this line were yet more uncharted lands (SEE FIGURE 1.3).

From this information alone one would understand in 1492 that India was located well within that known half of the globe that included Europe. They also knew that beyond India lay another huge stretch of known land (China) up to the 180° line and beyond that 180° line was yet more unknown territory.

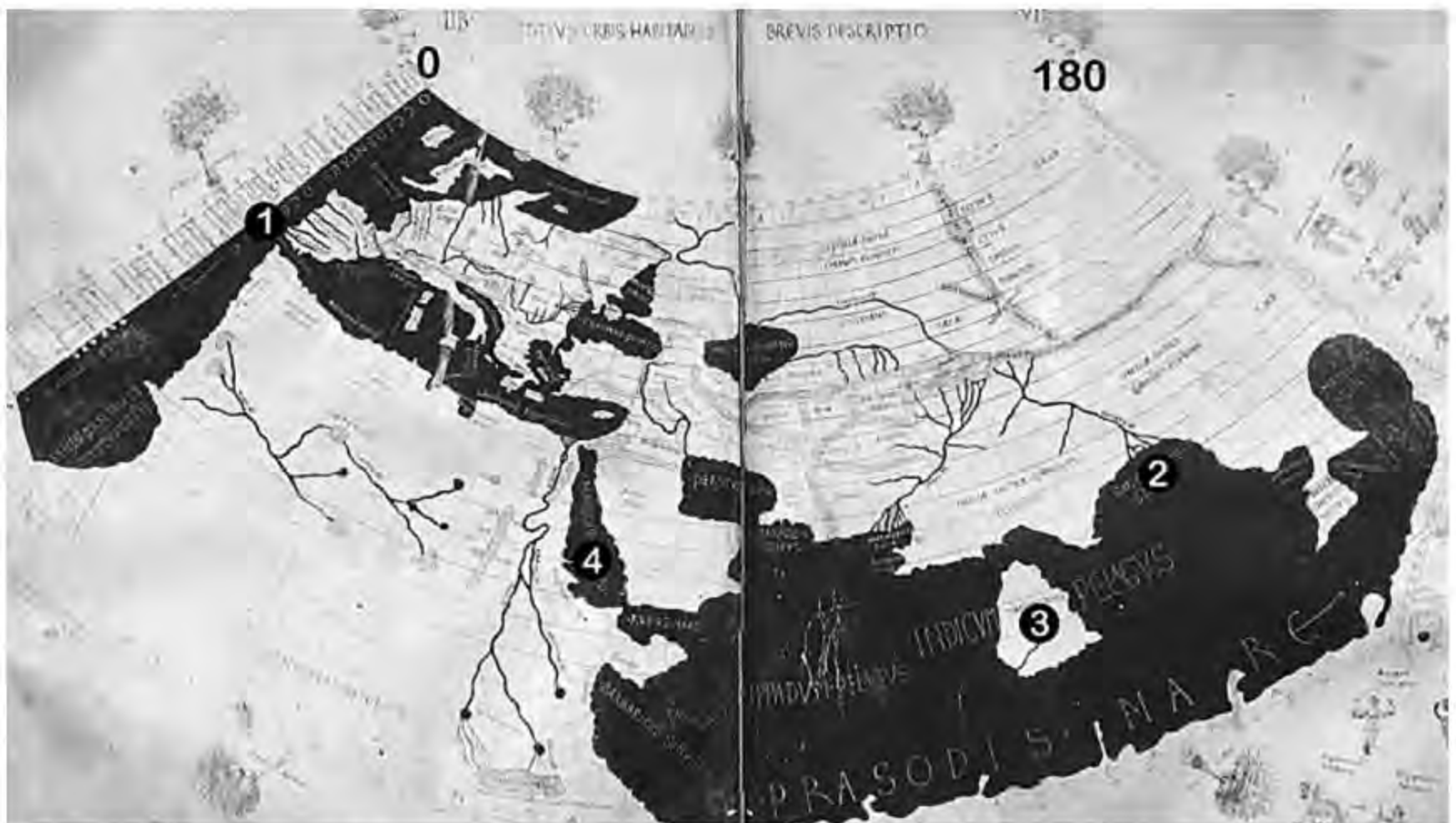


Figure 1.3: The map in Ptolemy's book represents half the world from the Canaries to China. The labels we added show 0° at the top left, 180° at top right, the Mouth of the Mediterranean (1), the mouth of the river Ganges (2), Sri Lanka (3) and the Red Sea (4).

India was by no means an unknown land in 1492. India's fame as a rich, powerful and advanced civilization stretched for thousands of years. It was well known that in India lived Nestorian Christians and that the Apostle St. Thomas had evangelized and died there. They also knew the history of Alexander the Great who had tried to invade and conquer India and that the large Indian armies and warriors he met there surpassed his own, proving that as early as 326 BC India was already a major power.

India's known culture and inhabitants were nothing like the naked and frightened natives that Cristóbal Colón met in the Caribbean in October 1492.

If Cristóbal Colón had only the information we just pointed out, and even if there was no new knowledge gathered about India since Ptolemy's time, he would have a very good idea of the distance that separated Europe from India to the east, India to China further eastward as well as the distance from the Canaries to India, heading westward across the Atlantic, he needed to travel 180° just to reach Ptolemy's 180° line.

If the discoverer truly accepted all that Ptolemy wrote, as many authors have insisted when propping up the current history of a lost and incompetent navigator, then by Ptolemy alone one can see those pundits to be incorrect. Furthermore, Cristóbal Colón's own statements, not only prove his expertise, but also show that he knew that his ships were nowhere near the real India, as will be demonstrated later on. Sufficient proof of his expert knowledge in geography and in navigation contradicts much of the accepted tale.



Now, focusing on the Portugal of King João II and on Colón's time we gather more details about their knowledge of astronomy, geography and navigation. João II established a *Junta de Matemáticos* (Committee of Mathematicians) to systematically investigate and resolve the challenges his navigators faced. Today we would call this a Think Tank.

The Portuguese were the first Atlantic navigators from Europe with a national plan to reach the Equator, which they reached around 1470 and discovered the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe.

Also of high importance is the fact that Cristóbal Colón acquired all his sailing knowledge in Portugal. In 1485 Portugal's experts were able to create a chart, or navigational table, containing the height of the Sun at the Equator. This innovative chart allowed navigators to measure their location during the day and Colón was directly involved in this Portuguese secret of high technology (SEE CHAPTER 10.)

One of João II's experts involved in this research was a member of the Committee of Mathematicians named Duarte Pacheco Pereira. He was also one of João II's 25 royal bodyguards along with Colón's brother-in-law, Pedro Correia.

Duarte Pacheco Pereira, although more widely known for his warrior actions in India, was in fact a genius in geography and cosmography as well as in navigation. He lived in Lisbon from a royal pension and authored the geography book *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*.¹¹

On June 7, 1494, Duarte Pacheco Pereira signed the Treaty of Tordesillas, dividing the world between Spain and Portugal, as a "*continuo da casa do senhor rei de Portugal*," (employee of the household of his lordship the king of Portugal.) In the late 15th Century this great cosmographer was able to calculate the equatorial degree with only a 4 percent error; a measurement that took some 200 years to improve on.

There is a tremendous amount of inaccuracy in the history books about the 1492 voyage to America because the Portuguese component was either underestimated or left out altogether. Because Portuguese historians either disregarded the facts, or were not interested in making them known, both the reason for the 1492 voyage to across the Atlantic, as well as what the discoverer knew or didn't know have been incorrectly interpreted. This makes it necessary to review everything cautiously.

Imagine that in the late 15th Century the Portuguese experts had calculated the size of the earth to within 4 percent of its true size and yet, at the same time, scholars wanted to accept that a schooled navigator, as clearly Cristóbal Colón was, working for the same king on the same projects would be incapable of making the same calculations.

Cristóbal Colón not only lived in Portugal and navigated with the Portuguese in secret missions for King João II, but also King João II described Colón as *ingenious, industrious* and *very necessary to the crown of Portugal* in 1488.¹² Colón even had access to João II's secret weapon, the chart of the height of the Sun at the Equator. Should we continue accepting that Colón, who was held in such high regard by the king and who utilized the same high-tech knowledge and sciences as the expert Portuguese navigators utilized, would not know how to take these same navigational and geographical measurements?

CHAPTER 2

THE ATLANTIC WINDS OF CHANGE

*Twenty-three years I have been at sea without leaving it for any time that counts,
I saw all of the East, and all of the West, that we consider by sailing towards the North, that is, [to-
wards] England, and I have sailed [the routes of] Guinea.*

DON CRISTÓBAL COLÓN

History books insisted that no one before Cristóbal Colón could have reached the Americas or else we would have heard of this great feat from some contemporary source. After all, news of such a prior discovery would have traveled the world over, just as it happened in March 1493.

Little consideration had been given to the fact that Portugal, a kingdom on the cutting edge of Atlantic discovery, had been exploring the lands and seas of America long before 1493. However, Portugal had a national policy of secrecy that covered all things related to Atlantic navigation. The king of this covert nation had instituted a *Penalty of Death* for anyone who divulged any navigational secrets. Why would a king create a Penalty of Death law covering matters of navigation if there were no navigational secrets to protect?

The Portuguese Atlantic discoveries, which would be better described as Portugal's Atlantic cover-ups, didn't begin in 1492, as was the case with Spain, nor a few decades before – it began ages earlier.

Already by 1340, some 150 years earlier, the Portuguese navy was sailing far and wide in an attempt to conquer the Canary Islands. By 1424 the Portuguese had reached Canada, naming those lands **Antilhas**, a Portuguese word meaning opposite the Islands [*ante*=opposite, *ilhas*=islands]. The referenced *Ilhas* [Islands] used to name the opposite lands of **Ante-ilhas** are the *Islands of the Azores* that are on the 1424 Nautical Chart, (SEE FIGURE 2.1). This means that the discovery of those very *Ilhas* of the Azores, had already taken place before 1424.



Figure 2.1: The 1424 Nautical Chart shows two large landmasses (Antilhas) located west of the Azores (Ilhas) at the same latitude as the Azores and Portugal (Lisbon). The author's name, written vertically at the left edge of this map, has clearly been forged (SEE FIGURE 2-2.)

Portugal had over 150 years of systematic Atlantic discovery experience by the time that Spain entered into discovery undertakings in 1492. Even then, Spain entered into this new activity only as a result of seven-long-years of unremitting prodding by Cristóbal Colón. From 1485 until 1492, Cristóbal Colón maintained constant pressure on the Spanish monarchs, Queen Isabel and King Fernando, with his proposal to discover "India" but only for "Their Highnesses"; reserved only for them under the Spanish flag.

However, the Spanish court continuously rejected Colón's proposals because the Spanish court had never been involved in planning a single voyage of discovery in the Atlantic prior to 1492. Those monarchs didn't understand such ventures, didn't support them and had never shown any interest in seeking new lands in that sea. Their focus had always been on conquering cities of the well-known kingdoms of Iberia and the Mediterranean.

On the other hand, in the kingdom of Portugal, discovery was part of the national strategy for centuries. Maintain-

ing control over its navigational secrets was essential to Portugal's success.

Imagine what would have happened if the USA had tried to develop the atomic bomb without maintaining absolute secrecy? This is the exact way that one must view the atmosphere surrounding the Portuguese Discoveries. Only through secrecy was Portugal able to succeed as it did.

To understand the reasons for secrecy, aside from the usual arena of politics, it is necessary to understand that Portugal was then, as it is today, a tiny territory. Portugal's population was insufficient to head out and conquer any of those new lands it discovered. In the year of 1500 Portugal's territory was home to around one million people. By contrast to Portugal, the Spanish territory subject to Queen Isabel of Castile and King Fernando of Aragon had some 8 million subjects. Portugal's enemy next door had eight times the population of Portugal.

If half of Portugal's population, say 500,000, were females and the other half was made up of 50 percent old men and young boys, there would be only 250,000 able bodies to protect the kingdom from invasions, never mind being able to go and take control of any large overseas territory such as Africa or the Americas.

The amount of manpower available to King João II for his undertakings was merely the number needed to fill three football stadiums today and nothing more. What could any kingdom do with such a small contingent? Certainly they could never take over any large territory the size of the Americas without depopulating the kingdom.

The Portuguese kings always understood the limitations of their numbers and hired foreign soldiers to reconquer its continental land from the Moors as well as Ceuta in Africa. They even invited foreigners from Flanders in Holland to populate the Portuguese Azores. This practice of utilizing the subjects of friendly kings offers much insight to the state of Portugal in those days.

Portugal could only keep control over any discovered lands by keeping them secret, not by publicly claiming possession of some new territory it could never defend.

Countless books claim that, if Portugal had already discovered any lands in America prior to 1492, Portugal would have proclaimed such discoveries to secure its rights to those lands. It is more rational to see how maintaining secrecy worked in Portugal's favor. Any discovery announced by Portugal to the world before it had been dully secured by forts and agreements with the natives would have been unwelcomed advertising since other kingdoms could have easily taken it over.

Portugal knew that to announce any new land would amount to losing its rights over it. For this reason, neither the discovery of Madeira circa 1418 nor that of the Azores prior to 1424 was broadcast to the rest of the world.

What Portugal did, instead, was to quickly and quietly send people to populate and secure those islands long before anyone else found out they had been discovered. So secret was this endeavor that we still don't know today the exact year in which their discovery was made.

Though it is hard to imagine a world not so globally intertwined as the one we have today, in those days a discovery was not protected by "copyright." It was not an option for a king to simply convince a Hague Tribunal that his people had been the first Europeans to set foot there and that all other European kings would obey a "hands off" order. During those times the power of the sword ruled and if you were weak or foolish you lost.

King João II understood well the nature of his times, and because of this he ordered that his own ships be burned at S. Jorge da Mina (today's Elmina) in Ghana so that no foreigners would ever see square-rigged ships return to Portugal.

Ships took years to build using hand tools and were vital assets to any kingdom, even more so to this kingdom whose main industry and therefore survival was seafaring navigation and discovery.

Why would the king order his own ships to be burned in Ghana? To maintain secrecy, as García de Resende explained very clearly when the crew was sent to Ghana in 1481 to build the S. Jorge fortress: *Because in all the Atlantic Ocean there are no lateen ships, except the caravels from Portugal... the King, so that no one would dare go to those parts, made every one believe that from Mina you can't return in square-rigged ships because of the currents... he ordered that all materials be sent in old ships to be destroyed there and to be said that, because of the currents, they couldn't return and this way it was done with much secrecy and grave sworn oaths, and it was had by all so certain that during the king's life it always seemed that squared-rigged ships could never return from there, and this way he always maintained Mina safe [from foreigners.]*¹³

The ploy of the burned ships in Ghana formed part of a long list of counter-intelligence and misinformation put in place by King João II and his Council of Mathematicians. Other ploys, aside from killing all the foreigners found sailing in those areas, included the falsification of maps, invented sea monsters, rumors of Africans that ate whites, inaccurate coordinates for points of interest and false measurements to the equatorial degree. King João II, not having the brute force of soldiers to control his monopoly, did so with high secrecy and carefully planted false information.

State secrets have always existed in all parts of the world. Who would believe that in Spain there was no secrecy practiced by the State? Take a look at the following short example of a letter from Queen Isabel to Cristóbal Colón on September 5, 1493:

We send this transcription of the logbook that you left here, the which has taken a long time because it was done secretly so that those that are here from Portugal nor anyone else learned of it.

The Argonauts of Portugal, just like the Astronauts of the USA, were not only fighting against the unknown. They were also fighting foreign enemy powers that were eager to discover their secrets and steal their conquests.

To succeed in its plans and accomplishments, Portugal required a great deal of concealment and so it was *done with much secrecy and grave sworn oaths* as João II's Pageboy and private secretary, Garcia de Resende personally witnessed.

Portugal's use of secrecy was not used only during King João II's reign – that should be clear. Every kingdom or state used and uses secrecy to maintain their advantage over their enemies. It is a most basic part of politics.

EARLY PORTUGUESE NAVIGATION IN THE ATLANTIC

Portugal was not the first recorded nation to explore the Atlantic. There were the Carthaginians, the Vikings and others, but Portugal's location at the edge of the Atlantic and its Templar Order of Christ were important factors contributing to Portugal's initial plunge into the sea.

This transformed the kingdom into a seafaring power of expert navigators, explorers and conquerors of far-off exotic places. Once the invading Arabs were expelled from Portugal's territory in 1249, confined from the North and the East by Spain, its only bordering neighbor, and its only enemy in all of Europe, Portugal had no place to grow but into the sea. It was, therefore, not by accident that the world's most famous navigator came from Portugal to peddle his "dream of India" at the court of Spain.

During the reign of King Dinis (1279-1325), we see a clear Portuguese strategy tied to the Atlantic. In September 1297, King Dinis fixed Portugal's border disputes with Spain by signing the *Treaty of Alcanizes* – making Portugal, as a territory, the nation with the oldest borders in the world.

Then, in 1307 King Dinis created the first Portuguese post of Admiral given to Nuno Fernandes Cougominho. Interestingly enough this is the year when France, backed by the Pope, outlawed and arrested the Order of the Templar Knights. However, none of the ships belonging to the Templar Fleet were found anchored in its port of La Rochelle.

Was it coincidence that the Portuguese king created a post of Admiral at the same time that the Templar Fleet vanished? Or did he do so after inheriting the Templar Fleet due to his refusal to arrest the Portuguese Templars, acting against the Pope's orders?

King Dinis, titled the 'Protector of the Navy,' not only refused to arrest the Portuguese Templars but also protected them and their territories, transforming the Templar Knights into the Portuguese Military Order of Christ.

Another coincidence happens in the year 1317, King Dinis "imported" for his new Admiral the Genoese Manuel Pezagno (called Pessanha or Peçanha in Portugal), "to evolve, organize and command" the Portuguese Navy? In this exact year 1317, King Dinis sent his ambassadors to Pope John XXII, Jacques d'Euse, the former bishop of Oporto in Portugal, to solicit the transformation of his Portuguese Templars into the Portuguese Military Order of Christ.

Once the new military order had been established, King Dinis sent a new round of ambassadors to Rome. This time the new Admiral Manuel Pessanha and special envoy Don Gonçalo, Dean of the Cathedral of Oporto, went to the same Pope John XXII to ask for monetary help outfitting the Portuguese Navy to fight the Moors.¹⁴

The contract of vassalage between King Dinis and the Admiral Manuel Pessanha authorized the Admiral of Portugal to run corsair (pirate) activities against the Moors. It also stated that he and his descendants (the post was inheritable) maintain always in their service "vinte homens de Génova sabedores do mar," *twenty men of Genoa experts of the sea*, and that they must "maintain secrecy."¹⁵

The forward thinking King Dinis also made sure that a vast 24000 acres at Leiria were planted with pine trees in order for Portugal to have future shipbuilding lumber.

Soon, the Portuguese fleet was sailing far and wide in search of the Atlantic's secrets. In 1340, as already stated, it sailed to conquer the Canary Islands. It would be another 152 years before Spain would expel the invading Arabs from Granada and be forced by Colón into its first Atlantic discovery.

The immediate objectives of the Portuguese crown had always included returning Christianity to the Muslim occupied territories of Africa and Granada, and the re-conquering of the Holy Land.

Portugal's constant archenemy was Spain but other European states, although friendly to Portugal, were also a threat. The news of Portuguese discoveries taken to Italy and attributed to Italians were nothing less than leaks of secret missions planned, promoted, managed and financed by the Portuguese crown in which the *twenty Genoese men of the sea* took part.

For instance, Lanzarote Island in the Canaries got its name from the Genoese Captain Lancelotto Malocello who commanded a fleet from Lisbon in 1336. Not all of those Genoese men kept the secrets, as was required by their employment agreement. The Genoese sea captains who had taught the Portuguese the latest techniques in sea battles, in navigation and in cartography, starting in the early 1300s, even included the famous Boccanegra in 1342.¹⁶

One hundred years later, at the beginning of the 15th century, the Portuguese had become the best experts in the world in Atlantic navigation and those *twenty Genoese men of the sea*, who could not keep quiet, were an unneeded risk. For this reason, King João I ordered Admiral Manuel Pessanha's descendant to get rid of the Genoese captains.¹⁷

The secret information about the lands of Antilhas exposed on this 1424 map must have been due to one of those twenty Genoese who integrated the Portuguese fleet to the Americas and could not keep quiet. The author of the 1424 Antilhas map, attributed to Zuane Pizzigano, may have been a relative of the Portuguese Admiral Manuel Pessanha. Look at how similar the name of *Zuane Pizzigano*, attributed to the mapmaker, is to Pezagno, Pessagno and Pezagni – all forms of Admiral Pessanha's Italian name (SEE FIGURE 2.2).^{18,19} We contend that the appearance of the 1424 Antilhas map, showing an important Portuguese secret discovery, must have been the reason that King João I fired those *twenty Genoese men of the sea*.



Figure 2.2: Forged Name. Who knows what name was there originally before it was erased and Zuane Pizzi[gano?] written? We contend that the name was erased to protect the guilty mapmaker who was dispersing Portuguese secret information. A good analysis of this map with modern technology may yet reveal what the mapmaker's true name was, (author's photo, 2001). University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. University Libraries. All rights reserved.

CANARIES ADVERSARIES

For 140 years there was a dispute between Portugal and Spain over the Canary Islands, which was only resolved by the Treaty of Alcáçovas/Toledo 1479-1480. Few write that Portugal was already making Atlantic voyages of discovery in the 1300s and fewer write that, already in the 1300s, the Spanish crown was forcing itself into those Portuguese discoveries with the help of the Vatican.

The Genoese Niccoloso de Recco spread the news of the first secret Portuguese expedition to the Canary Island, but, due to the Vatican's aversion to Portugal, the Pope gave the rights over that conquest to the Spanish prince Luis de La Cerda. In the Vatican's Secret Archives is the letter from Portugal's King Afonso IV to the Pope complaining about the Vatican's decision to award the conquest to a Spaniard when the Kingdom of Portugal was the first Christian kingdom to sail there and attempt the conquest of those islands, (SEE FIGURE 2.3). But for 150 years, Spain neither conquered the Canaries, nor allowed Portugal to conquer them.

Afonso IV's letter, translated here from the Latin, is explicit in that it was Portugal and not Spain who deserved the right of conquest of the Canaries for being the first kingdom to arrive. Only another war with Spain interrupted that planned conquest:

Replying to your letter accordingly, indeed it seemed obvious to us that we respond – properly, with reverence – that the first discoverers of the aforesaid islands were inhabitants of our kingdom... Truly we, expecting that aforesaid islands exist for us more than for any [other] prince... We sent our people and some ships to that place for the purpose of examining the condition of that land... for the purpose of conquering the aforesaid islands, we took care to send our armada along with an abundant multitude of soldiers... the war arisen first between us, and the king of Castile [Castile is part of today's Spain], then between us and the Saracen Kings, it hampered our plan.

The reality of history is that, before Cristóbal Colón's historic *First Voyage*, the Spanish did not sponsor voyages of Atlantic discovery and exploration but instead sponsored voyages of exploitation into Por-

tuguese-discovered locations. This was the structure in place already a century and a half before Colón came along.

Portugal had always been a small country, and, because of its small size, secrecy was of the utmost importance to its survival and Atlantic success. Although

Sanctissimo patri ac dno dno Clementi duum prouidentia sacrosce ac uniuersalis ecclie summo pontifici humilis et deuotus filius noster Alfonsus rex portugalie et Algarbij cum reuerentia debita et deuota pedum oscula btor. Ille qui summo angulari lapide suam sciam fundant ear sic ea uoluit p successores suos in posterum gubernari q recta p omnia inpendere numero ac men sine assidue salubrioribz proficiet mactementis ut augmento fidelium cotidie dilatare encir nati paganorum pfidia per totum uigore fides xpi. Et uos quide dignissimus successor dnm qui ommoda cura est xpiote grege et solamudo comissa no solum cum custodire a lupo mor fibus neq etiam ampliare curas quod in lueris a una sanitate directis suscepimus dum ad certipandos in fidelitatis palantes infelices qui totam terram insular fortune inutiliter occupat et plantandum uineam dei dilectam dnm Ludouicum co sanguinem in m primape elegit ad quas quide litteras rescribentes prout nobis uisum erat p ordinem cum reuerentia respon demus q predictas insular fuerint prius in regno nre inuentores Nos uero attendentes q predictas insule nobis plus q alia primapi propinquiores existat qz p nos possent comodius subiugari ad hoc oculos duximus nre mentis et cogitatum in m ia ad effm pducere aspicientes

Figure 2.3: Part of the letter from *Alfonsus rex portugalie* in Book 138, pages 148-149, of the Vatican Secret Archives written to Pope Clement VI in 1344.

Portugal kept secret most of its great achievements of the 14th and 15th centuries in the Atlantic, some spies were able to pass along information that made it into foreign manuscripts. The Genoese Niccoloso de Recco, mentioned above, declared that he was a captain of one of the ships of the expedition that the King of Portugal sent to the Canaries on July 1, 1341.²⁰ This Genoese, one of those contracted by the Portuguese Admiral, was unwilling to maintain the secrecy as was mandated in the Admiral's contract, "*and must guard our secrets.*"

By the middle of the 15th century, the Canary Islands were so important to the Portuguese discoveries, as a departure point to the South Atlantic, that on March 9, 1448, Prince Henry "the Navigator" purchased Lanzarote Island from its captain, Maciot de Béthencourt, and arranged residency for Captain Maciot on the Island of Madeira. Madeira was a possession of Prince Henry and of his Templar Order of Christ. Spain never saw Prince Henry's purchase as legal since a captain cannot alienate a possession of the crown.

For a century and a half both Portugal and Spain would attempt to conquer the Canaries from their indigenous owners until King João II decided to offer the conquest to Spain through the Treaty of Alcáçovas/Toledo of 1479.

In 1479 King João II agreed that the Canaries would be left as conquest for Queen Isabel and Spain. However, these islands would then be given to Portugal as part of the dowry of Princess Isabel when she married João II's son, Prince Afonso. In this way, wily João II was giving Spain only an opportunity to conquer the Canary Islands for Portugal, which he, no doubt, prayed would happen before his son's wedding, thus saving Portugal the trouble to conquer them.

A FOOTHOLD IN AFRICA

Most of the famous Portuguese navigators were at the same time corsairs (pirates on the king's payroll) and sea captains, who were tapped by the kings to lead discovery expeditions. These included Bartolomeu Dias, Vasco da Gama and João Gonçalves Zarco. Zarco came upon the Madeira Islands around 1418 while on a raiding mission to Morocco to support the Portuguese garrisons in Ceuta. Madeira became the Portuguese Order of Christ's first Atlantic acquisition.

In 1411, Portugal's king João I (married to Philippa of Lancaster sister of King Henry IV of England) was planning an international tournament where he would knight his sons. His sons, however, wanted to be knighted the traditional way, on a battlefield fighting for God. This is how the conquest of Ceuta begun. Ceuta (located opposite Gibraltar) was used by the Moors to guard the Straits of Gibraltar and to launch attacks on Christians as well as to supply the Muslim Kingdom of Granada.

The conquest of Ceuta is a great scenario of how secrecy was employed by Portugal. As Zurara narrated in his "*Crónica da Tomada de Ceuta*" (*Chronicle of the Taking of Ceuta*), the planning was so secret that just a few of the king's men knew about it even though the king hired soldiers and ships from all over Europe.

Portugal managed to maintain the target secret for four years, from 1411 until the day when the fleet left Lisbon in 1415.

The preparations were immense. The then Prior of *Crato*, (Order of St. John, today's Order of Malta), had spied the city of Ceuta under the false pretense of a voyage to Sicily to negotiate the marriage of Prince Pedro with the widowed Queen of Sicily. In the words of Oliveira Martins:

*The Prior left Lisbon in the fleet, went to Sicily to pretend to arrange a wedding that was never to be arranged, and having stopped in Ceuta on the outward voyage and again on the return voyage brought the most complete information [secretly to the king].*²¹

Once it was agreed to continue with the reconquest, a tactic was needed to keep the target unaware while still amassing a large quantity of foreign ships and soldiers. To achieve this objective a secret diversion was sorely needed, just like burning Portuguese ships in Ghana 70 years later.

During a secret meeting of the Council in 1414, the decision was made to send a Portuguese noble, named Fernão Fogaça, as ambassador to William VI, Count of Holland, with a false Declaration of War due to attacks of Holland's corsair on Portuguese trading ships. The Count of Holland, after being secretly informed that it was a farce simply for the eyes and ears of foreign spies, played out his part so well that Fernão Fogaça almost believed a real war was about to break out.

The reasons why the Count of Holland was chosen for this play-act, why he agreed to participate, and why he kept it secret were immensely intriguing. The answer was found during an investigation of religious, military and chivalric orders. Portugal's King João I became the first foreign king to be initiated into the British Order of the Garter in 1400. William VI, Count of Holland and Duke of Bavaria, however, was already an initiated member since 1390. Here was the answer. Two member knights of an elite order were cooperating to trick the world and keep secret Portugal's final target.

There's still much to be known about Portugal's early connections to Holland and other kingdoms such as England and Germany where anti-Vatican movements like Lutheranism, Anglicanism and Erasmism, had their roots. It appears to be deeper alliances than just their leaders belonging to the same order, or having the Flemish populate the Azores. A Portuguese community settled in Holland in the 1300s in a town called *Poortugaal* that still exists today. The town's coat of arms is so typically Portuguese it incorporates the arms of the Kings of Portugal (SEE FIGURE 2.4).

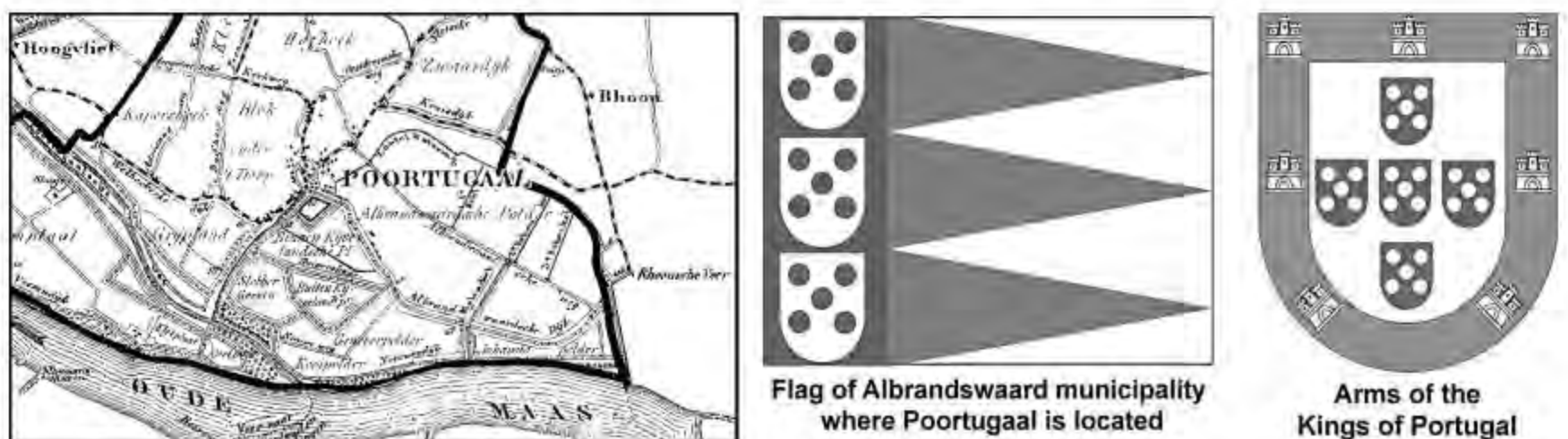


Figure 2.4: The town of Poortugaal in Holland (map above) was named for its Portuguese settlers and this municipality's flag (center) still incorporates today the arms of the Royal House of Portugal (right).

The amount of misinformation circulated by King João I and all his cronies during those four years was extensive. On June 26, 1415, when the attack fleet was ready at Lagos in Southern Portugal and the target was announced as Ceuta, many assumed it was yet another ruse and refused to believe it.

Ceuta having been conquered, the three Portuguese Princes were knighted: Don Duarte (future king), Don Pedro (future Duke of Coimbra) and Don Enrique (Henry "the Navigator", future Duke of Viseu and future Master of the Templar Order of Christ).

This 1415 step across the sea was a turning point, a first step of conquest that would lead the Portuguese and their caravels to sail the whole world and control many parts of it, if only temporarily, from Africa, to Brazil, to India, Macao, Timor and even to Australia. Portuguese experts now believe Australia was secretly mapped in 1522 by Cristovão de Mendonça. Mendonça was a nephew of Colón's father-in-law Bartolomeu Perestrelo, as well as a cousin of King João II's mistress Ana de Mendonça. For 250 years the Portuguese maintained the existence of Australia and its map secret before Britain's Captain James Cook got wind of it and made it public.²²

Describing the Ceuta conquest, Oliveira Martins expressed Portugal's first toehold in Africa this way: *The taking over of Ceuta is not only a decisive event for our national history; it is of monumental importance to the history of the world as well, because it marks the beginning of the age of discoveries. It is monumental in the European duel against Islam, because (at the same time that Islam was conquering in the Orient at this same time [Portugal] began the taking over [from Islam] of Occidental Africa), where the Byzantine Greeks had been for centuries submerged by the Arab inundation.*²³

The Arabs had taken Ceuta from the Christians in the year 710 and held it for 705 years. Now it was Portugal's turn. Great sacrifices were made by Portugal to maintain this town for centuries.

In 1437, Prince "Saint" Fernando youngest brother of Prince Henry, "the Navigator" was held captive in Morocco. In exchange for his freedom the King of Fez requested that the King of Portugal return Ceuta to the Muslims. Prince "Saint" Fernando was put through six years of torture in an attempt to force his brother in Portugal to cave in. The rulers of Portugal refused. On June 5, 1443, Prince "Saint" Fernando, severely weakened by the torturous treatment, died being claimed a Saint by the very Muslims responsible for his death.

In the drama "El Príncipe Constante," (*The Constant Prince*, 1629), by the Spanish Pedro Calderón de la Barca, the King of Fez complains to "Saint" Fernando: "Today Ceuta is in your control, if you confess to being my captive, if you admit I am your owner, why don't you give me Ceuta?" The captive Saint Fernando replies, "Because Ceuta now belongs to God and not to me."

The Portuguese Templar Order of Christ had raised its flag in Ceuta and there it would remain. In 1580, after 500 years of trying, Spain finally took over the Portuguese throne. In 1668, Spain succeeded in keeping control over Ceuta through the Treaty of Lisbon, which restored Portugal's Independence, putting an end to 60 years of Spanish rule.

The Portuguese conquest of Ceuta in 1415 is an excellent example of the way Portugal operated, how the Portuguese planned overseas conquests, how they utilized secrecy, political alliances, foreign resources, clandestine friendships, mission focus, self-sacrifice and false events in order to achieve their final goals.

King João II's plan to protect the conquest of the real India for Portugal was planned and carried out 80 years later much like Ceuta by implementing a ruse of "discovery" and a secret agent code-named Cristóbal Colón.

MAPPING OUT A PLAN

In the year 1320, King Dinis initiated a new era in Portugal with his new Templar Order of Christ, a new navy and a new Admiral. In the year 1420, Prince Henry "the Navigator" initiated another new era, as Master of the Templar Order of Christ*. In 1420 Portugal's Templars initiated a New Era both in the gathering of knowledge as well in the thrust into Atlantic discoveries.

Prince Henry, enlightened by 300 years of Templar secrets and immersed into that same secretive society, not only cloaked much of his own life's accomplishments in this secrecy but much of Portugal's achievements as well. This blanket of secrecy is one of the factors responsible for the lack of Portuguese documentation for the period between 1420 and 1500. It is also worth noting that the Order of Christ's records from the 15th century, when the order was at its most influential period, seem to have vanished (possibly taken by the Spanish crown during their occupation of the Portuguese throne 1580-1640).

So secretive were the operations of the Portuguese military knights that much of what we know today comes to us from foreigners who caught a glimpse of what was happening in Portugal. These tiny tears in the Templar cloak of secrecy (such as the 1424 Antilhas map and the Bratislava Codex) become lucky events for truth seekers; otherwise there would be no record at all of any of the feats performed by Prince Henry's sailing monks and King João II's navigating knights.

* There is a bit of confusion surrounding these two titles although they held the same powers over the order. The true Masters were elected by a vote within the monks of the order just like the Papal elections. The Governor was appointed by the King and Prince Henry was considered the first Governor. The distinction is minor and one would venture to assert that by being the king's son, Prince Henry certainly would yield more power than merely an elected monk.

The Portuguese caravels carried the red and white cross of the Order of Christ on their sails (SEE FIGURE 2.5) because the *Age of Discovery* was truly a Portuguese religious initiative in support of Christianity. It could almost be called the *Age of Enlightenment* in the way Portugal and Cristóbal Colón saw it. Prince Henry propelled his enterprise of discovery for the same reasons as Cristóbal Colón, and all with the same goal: the defeat of Islam and the retaking of Jerusalem.



Figure 2.5 At left is a Portuguese square rigged ship from a 1498 drawing showing the Order of Christ's crosses on its sails and at right a photo of a reproduction lateen caravel on the River Tagus in front of Restelo, Portugal where Admiral Cristóbal Colón anchored on March 4, 1493.

Prince Henry's first objective was to get his Order of Christ's ships into the Indian Ocean and reap the benefits of the spice trade, thus taking this commerce away from the Muslims. The second objective was to make contact with Christians in India and Ethiopia, especially those ruled by the famous Prester John, descendant of King Solomon and of the Queen of Sheba. Prince Henry hoped to join their armies in the reconquest of Jerusalem.

Although Prince Henry, as Templar Master, is often credited with the idea of reaching India and constricting Islam by denial of the spice trade, it was not his. Marino Sanuto presented the idea, in September 1321, to the same Pope John XXII who granted King Dinis the right to rename the Portuguese Templars. Sanuto's *Secreta Fidelium Crucis* described a plan to attack the Saracens by first refusing to trade with any Islamic city and then by establishing a Christian fleet in the Indian Ocean.²⁴

The legendary Prester John, the Coptic King's title, was already written about in the year 1145 by Otto, Bishop of Freising, in his *Chronicle*. The Coptic King is connected to the creation of the Templar Knights whose Coptic orbital cross emblem they adopted for their own.²⁵ These things are all intrinsically connected: the Coptic Prester John, King of Ethiopia, was tied to the creation of the Templar Knights: The Templar Knights' true name was *Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon*: King Solomon, as it happens, was the ancestor of those Kings of Ethiopia.

The Portuguese Order of Christ was the continuance of the Order of the Temple thus making Prince Henry's quest to reconnect with Prester John an attempt to close the circle. He wanted to follow through on the Templar Knights' original mission to take back the Holy Land where the Temple of Solomon had been erected and which was occupied by the restrictive Muslims.

These kings kept in contact through ambassadors. Prester John's ambassador George visited Portugal's court and visited Prince Henry as Master of the Order of Christ in 1452.²⁶ From Portugal, Prester John's ambassador went to Burgundy to the court of Prince Henry's sister, the Duchess Isabel of Burgundy, a lady of the Order of the Garter and wife of Duke Philip III, "*le Bon*" of Burgundy, who had instituted, on his wedding day, an elite knightly order named *l'ordre de la Toison d'or* (Order of the Golden Fleece) and was its first Master.

Another ambassador to Portugal from Ethiopia was named Lucas Marcos who visited the court of King João II. João II then sent to Prester John his own ambassador, the famous spy Pêro da Covilhã, who provided valuable information for the planning of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India (SEE CHAPTER 12).

The continuous efforts of Prince Henry to force his navigators to go further and further south along the African coast, and to the west and northwest Atlantic, were all part of the same Templar enterprise initiated centuries prior and aimed at constricting Islam with a final goal of freeing Jerusalem.

The Holy Land would be retaken by controlling the spice commerce, by defeating the enemies of Christianity in the Indian Ocean and by joining forces with the legendary Christian soldiers of Prester John of Ethiopia to march into Jerusalem, thus completing the Templar Knights' mission of liberation.

Admiral Cristóbal Colón subscribed to this same mission and he was preparing to pay for "ten thousand mounted soldiers and one hundred thousand foot soldiers" for the conquest of Jerusalem.²⁷

ON THE CREST OF THE WAVE

This is a condensed account of a long list of events that serves to put in perspective the connections, motivation and religious mindset of Portugal in its Age of Discovery. By this small vignette one can understand the friendly relations Portugal fostered and how members of the knightly orders helped one another.

Aside from Prince Henry's men, his older brother, Prince Pedro, Duke of Coimbra, was also enlisted in the plan to gather secret information and make alliances. In 1418, Pedro left Portugal in a group of 12 knights, symbolizing the 12 Apostles, among them Álvaro Vaz de Almada, Count of Abranches, another Knight of the British Order of the Garter.

The pilgrimage had its first stop in Hungary in 1419 where they battled to end the Hussite Wars alongside two other knights of the Order of the Garter: the Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund of Bohemia-Hungary, and King Eric XIII of Pomerania; King of the Kalmar Union - which included Denmark, Sweden and Norway, all the former Viking lands that King Christian I would later reign during João II's reign.

This Christian I of Denmark was the king who, in 1477, collaborated with Portugal's João II to send Cristóbal Colón on a secret voyage to Canada, as we will show later on.

The Holy Emperor Sigismund awarded to Prince Pedro the County of Treviso near Venice, and Álvaro Gonçalves de Ataíde was made its governor. After about five years of fighting alongside Kings Sigismund and Eric, the small band of Portuguese Pilgrim Knights again set off – this time to Cyprus on the way to the Holy Land.

In Cairo, Prince Pedro briefed his companions about the secret intent of their mission to seek the Christian King Prester John. While his brother, Prince Henry, was busy beginning the ocean-going plan to reach India and Prester John, Pedro was attempting the same by land. From Cairo the pilgrims went to Jerusalem, traveling the edges of the Dead Sea into the valley of the Jordan via the city of Bethlehem. In Jerusalem they visited the Holy Sepulcher and other historically religious sites. A Muslim temple was built on the site of the Temple of Solomon, but they were denied entrance because Christians were forbidden to enter.

Leaving Jerusalem, they headed for Nazareth and back to Cairo making another attempt to reach Prester John by heading up the Nile and eventually ended up at the Red Sea (opposite Yemen). The symbolic group of the Twelve Apostles then headed for the monastery of Saint Catherine, located in the mountains of the Sinai Peninsula where 20 years later a mysterious Knight of Saint Catherine would be initiated. This knight, called Henry the German in Portugal, will be presented later in this book as Don Cristóbal Colón's father (SEE CHAPTER 17).

Unable to make their way to Prester John, the Pilgrim Knights returned to Europe by way of the Mediterranean Sea. Prince Pedro visited the universities in Paris and made his way to Denmark. From there they went to England, where in 1425 Pedro sat in session and was initiated into the Order of the Garter by his cousin, the King of England.

In December of that year, Pedro left Dover for Ostend Flanders to visit Philip III, "The Good" Duke of Burgundy – most likely to negotiate the wedding of Pedro's sister, the Portuguese Dona Isabel, with Philip III, which took place four years later. Pedro spent the next year at Gand, as a guest of his future brother-in-law and sent regular correspondence to the Court of Portugal.

Jan Dlugosz mentions Portugal's Prince Pedro as being part of King Segismund's army in Moravia 1424.²⁸ In the spring of 1428, Prince Pedro again headed to Hungary, then to his County of Treviso. From there, Prince Pedro, Duke of Coimbra and Count of Treviso, entered Venice accompanied by 300 knights. Pedro's last stop was in Rome, where a distant cousin of Zarco's wife, Pope Martin V (Odone Colonna 1368–1431) handed him the Papal Decree that bestowed anointment upon the Kings of Portugal, the same as those of France and England.²⁹

Finally, after a 10-year absence, Pedro returned home to Portugal without reaching Prester John. He was able to bring with him, however, valuable maps gathered in Florence and the *Book of Marco Polo* with which the City of Venice had honored him.

From Prince Pedro's voyage one can see Portugal's plan taking shape through alliances, orders of chivalry and knighthood, maps, books, Prester John, the Holy Land, and India. At the center of all this was the Portuguese Templar Order of Christ and its Master, Prince Henry the Navigator.

A CRASH COURSE IN DEEDS DONE

The voyage that took place in 1492 did not occur spontaneously nor was it one man's crazy dream. There was an ulterior motive for Cristóbal Colón to show up in Spain peddling this thorny project of India. To understand what motivated King João II and Cristóbal Colón against Spain, one must review not only the politics but also the progress made in the preceding decades by Prince Henry, whose explicit scientific aim "was the exploration of the ocean beyond Ptolemy's scope," in his goal to reach India.³⁰

Prince Henry brought to Portugal as many wise men and scholars as he could and put them to work solving navigational problems. He built a viable trade business from these new territories so he could finance his missions. According to Duarte Pacheco Pereira in his *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, that Prince brought "*Mestre Jaime de Maiorca* (Master Jacome from the Island of Majorca), a skilled mapmaker of *navigational charts*. By the offer of many grants and gifts, he secured his services and from this man, the predecessors of those who make such charts in our day learned how to make them."³¹ Note that these were "navigational charts," not generic maps, and according to Historian Jaime Cortesão, Master Jacome was the Christian name of the Jew, Jafuda Cresques, son of the famous cartographer, Abraham Cresques.

When Prince Henry died in 1460, the Portuguese navigators had already unlocked the Atlantic sea southwards all the way to a place they named Serra Lioa (Lion Mountain) today Spanishized as *Sierra Leon*. They had discovered and populated the Madeira Islands and all of the nine Azores Islands. Those, plus the Sargasso Sea and Canada (the true Antilles) were already commonly drawn on maps.

King Duarte died unexpectedly in 1438 and his brother Prince Pedro, Duke of Coimbra, became regent of Portugal, since Duarte's son Afonso V was underage. The Regent and former Pilgrim was well in tune with the plan of his brother Henry and he instituted laws to help him and his Order of Christ in their mission. These policies, such as Portugal's *mare clausum* (closed sea) policy of 1443, denied to all kingdoms the rights to sail the African routes without the permission from Prince Henry. These policies were later leveraged into conquest rights, which Portugal pressured the Pope to grant only to Portugal and to its Templar Order of Christ.

The legend at the time was that the seas boiled as you got closer to the Equator and that the ships slid downwards as they moved southwards, (as dew slides down an apple) making it impossible to return North once a ship got beyond Cabo Nam, (the famous *Cape of No Return*).*

Sailor Gil Eanes not only busted the myth of Cape No in 1434, but eventually demonstrated that a ship could get back to Lisbon easier by the *volta do mar largo*, or return by the wide seas – a long half-circle from the Canaries to the Azores and a second, long, half-circle from there to Lisbon, both routes having winds that the Portuguese caravel was well-suited to handle.

Again, from another foreign source we get a sense of Henry's commitment when Luís Cadamosto says that "every year the said prince sent his caravels to Africa's west coast, which wrought such loss to the Moors that he urged them year after year to sail further south."

Prince Henry continually sent ships on raids and journeys of discovery, including one fleet of 25 ships in the year 1445. He built a fort at Arguim Island for trade protection and requested Papal grants giving him rights over those new territories. Among the many grants he received over the years were awards of sovereignty rights over those territories by the Portuguese crown and sole ecclesiastical control bestowed upon the Templar Order of Christ.

* It was called Cabo Nam (Cape No) by ancient Portuguese mariners. It was considered the impassable limit for navigators, the place beyond which no controlled navigation could occur.

In 1436 Henry requested from the Pope the rights to conquer and rule any Canary Island not already inhabited by Christians. These Papal grants were abided by and respected by all Christian kings except the “most Catholic Kings” of Spain. It was a monopoly reserved only for Portugal and only under the supervision of its Templar Order of Christ.

This protectionism was taken even one step further by Prince Henry and Prince Pedro: no one – not even Portuguese sailors – were allowed to sail south of the Canaries without express license from Prince Henry, thus reinforcing the closed sea doctrine.

King João II later increased the sanctions by declaring the Death Penalty for anyone caught in those seas without his authorization.

LAND AHOY

It is widely known that the Vikings settled in Canada just before the year 1000. They also maintained a colony in Greenland until 1408. The Vatican even had a Bishop assigned to that western territory. In those 400 years many voyages between Northern Europe and the New World took place. There can be no doubt that in the 15th century the Americas were already a common port-of-call for some mariners and proof that some Europeans knew land existed to the west has been around for centuries.

The 1424 nautical chart in FIGURE 2.2 shows the lands the Portuguese named *Antilhas*, but it was wrongly described by many as a map being made by a cartographer who invented the landmasses to fill space on his map.

The map measures about four feet by three feet and was drawn by a very competent professional as the accuracy of the coasts of Europe and Africa clearly attest. Both knowledge and resources were applied in its manufacturing during a time when such knowledge, ink and parchment were neither cheap nor easily available.

The cartographer of the *Antilhas* map clearly had accurate details for the Old World. He lacked details of the Azores islands and the lands opposite those islands, both placed in their accurate Latitude directly across from Lisbon, demonstrating that he never actually saw those lands, but had heard of their size and locations. Cristóbal Colón’s son, Fernando Colón, wrote about such maps saying, “since some make these maps without traveling those parts, they incur grave errors.”³²

Since Iberia is accurately depicted on the map, one must not doubt the cartographer’s skills but rather the accuracy of the information he held about the lands “opposite the islands.” Furthermore, the name of the mapmaker was erased and another forged in its place, as can be seen in FIGURE 2.2. The erasure may have been an attempt to protect the mapmaker’s life for making public a Portuguese state secret, as both the land names and their locations confirm. It was a Portuguese state secret because only Portugal was involved in exploring the Azores Islands and those western seas.

Robert H. Fuson wrongly interprets these lands as islands of Japan, ignoring the Portuguese name “*Antilhas*” which clearly means “opposite the Islands.” The “Islands” referenced are the Azores Islands, clearly seen west of Lisbon on the map. Why would the Portuguese call islands opposite Japan “*Antilhas*”? What islands are opposite Japan that the Portuguese were aware of in 1424?

The Azores were also called the *Ilhas Terceiras*, *Third Islands*, and even today are often called by the Portuguese “*as Ilhas*” (the Islands) thus being the main reason the land of Ante-Ilhas acquired its name for being located beyond those Azorean islands. The only lands opposite the islands of the Azores to the west, on the same parallel as Lisbon, are the lands of today’s North America (SEE FIGURES 2.6, 2.7 AND 2.8). This secret knowledge held by the Portuguese and the Nordics is often minimized.

The following text attributed to Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli was copied onto a blank page of Cristóbal Colón’s copy of the 1477 edition of *Historia Rerum Ubique Gestarum* by Aeneas Sylvius (Pope Pius II):

*And from the city of Lisbon, straight to the west, in the said map are 26 spaces, and in each one of them there are 250 miles... and from the island of Antilia – that which you [now] call Seven Cities – whereof we have information... Done in the city of Florence on the 25 of June of the year 1474.*³³

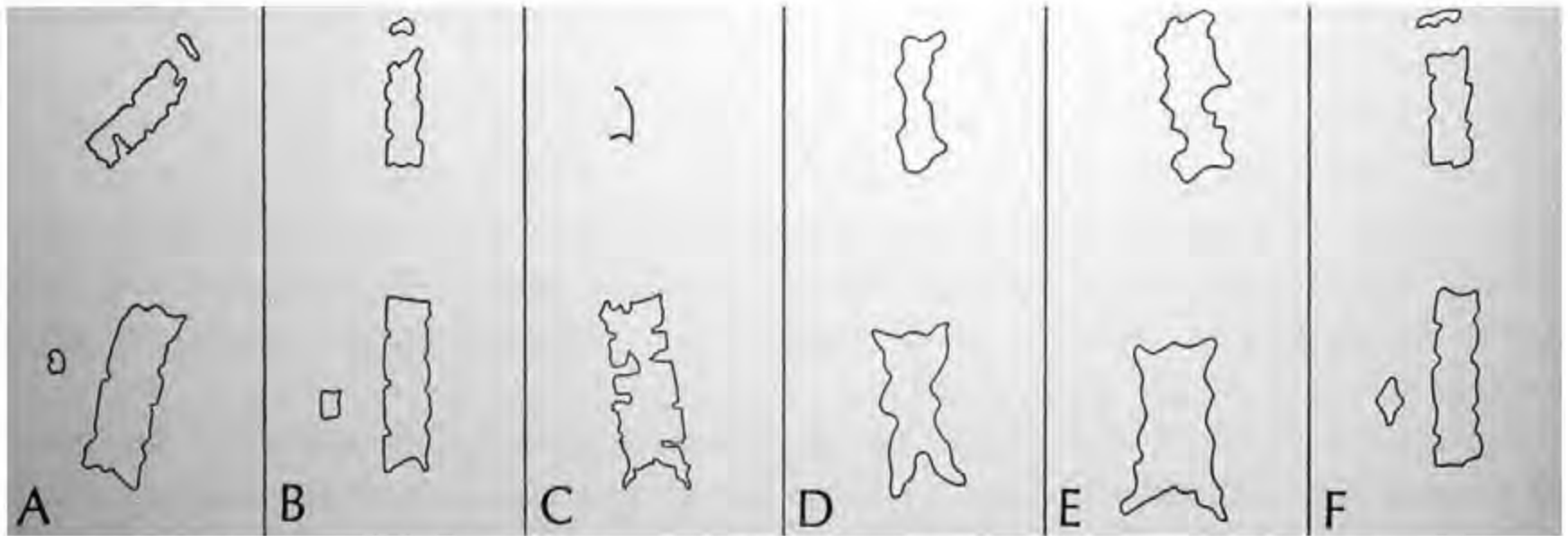


Figure 2.6: The Antilhas in different maps. A: Pizzigano 1424, B: Beccario 1435, C: Bianco (chart) 1436, D: Bianco (world map) 1436, E: Vinland Map about 1434, F: Benincasa 1463. From the book *Vinland Map* by Skelton, Marston and Painter, Yale University Press 1965, page 158.

Figure 2.7: The 1489 Albino de Canepa map is another that shows those lands west of Portugal on the same Latitude as the Azores Islands, which are themselves drawn in no likeness whatsoever at the center of the map because, even though by 1489 the Azores were very well known to Portugal. Canepa had never seen them or an accurate map.



As Toscanelli clearly understood in his 1474 writing to the Portuguese court, from Lisbon straight west were not only the Azores, but also the lands of Antilha already known to Portugal. The Cantino map, made by a spy for the Duke of Ferrara to show the voyages of the Portuguese Corte-Real family to the Northwest, has more evidence. A Portuguese cartographer drew it late in 1502 in Lisbon. The cartographer names Colón's Caribbean Islands not India but Antilhas. Vespucci, who was an agent of Colón, calls Española by the name already used in Portugal – Antilha.³⁴

In 1436, there is already news of another West Atlantic discovery by Portugal, this time of the Sargaço (Sargasso) Sea. This sea of weeds located around Bermuda is also referred to in the 1436 Bianco map as Mar de Baga. Both of these, *Sargaço* and *Baga*, are Portuguese names showing up again on Italian maps no doubt due to intelligence leaks.

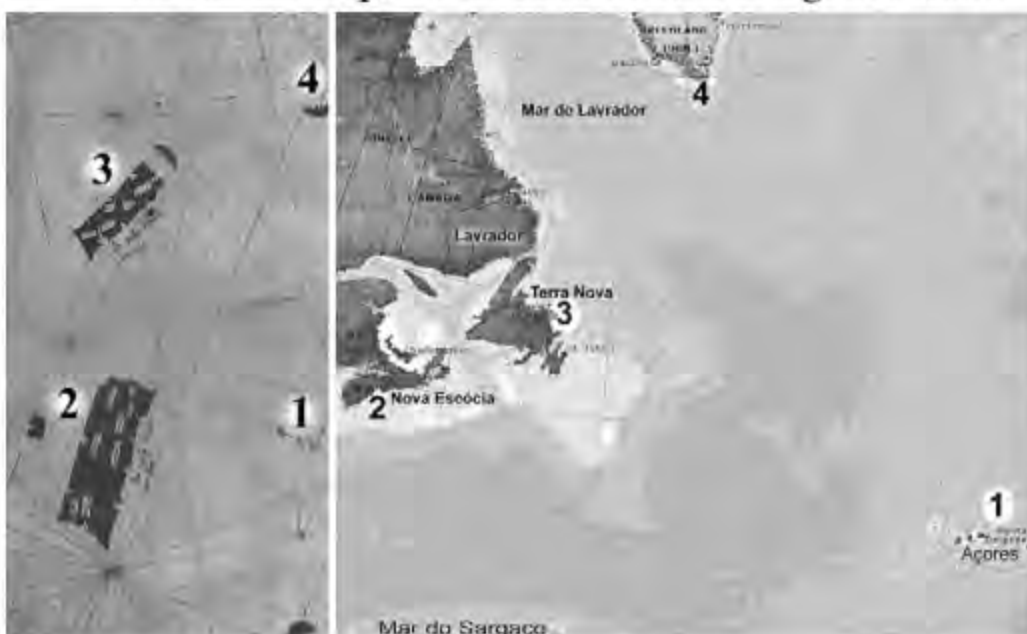


Figure 2.8: Opposite the Islands. The 1424 Nautical Chart (on the left) shows the Azores (1); what should be Nova Scotia (2); Newfoundland Island (3); and the Southern tip of Greenland (4). On the right is a current map showing the Azores, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland – (their names in Portuguese were "Nova Escócia", Portuguese for *New Scotland*, and "Terra Nova de Corte-Real" *New Land* of Corte-Real) – their Latitudinal location, land angles, and positions are undeniable. Even Greenland on the modern map is in exact relation to the land we numbered four on the 1424 map.

The same way that the Azores exist and the lands opposite the Azores to the west exist, as they are shown on the 1424 Nautical Chart, so too this sea of weeds exists in the area indicated. Who can continue insisting that this Sargasso Sea or these Antilhas were never reached and say, instead, that the mapmakers invented them before someone sailing there?

How could a sea of weeds be invented by mapmakers and later be found in the exact location? How could large landmasses be invented west of the Azores in 1424 and later be found there? Since the maps exist, we must accept them as proof of real voyages and refute the claims of those who say such voyages never took place. This evidence becomes even more powerful since it comes from foreigners and not from the Portuguese themselves.

Jaime Cortesão says that the Portuguese discoveries, “especially those of America, and more precisely of Terra Nova [Newfoundland], Terra do Lavrador [today written in Spanish as *Labrador*], and Greenland are almost solely known to us by the testimony of foreign spies, secret Portuguese discoveries guarded for centuries in their foreign archives.”³⁵

Portugal’s western voyages of exploration appear to be a constant over decades prior to 1492, as evidenced from the following excerpts – all translated quotations from “*Congresso Internacional, Bartolomeu Dias e a Sua Época*”, Actas, Volume II:³⁶

- *Antillia is drawn for the first time on the 1424 Zuane Pizzigano chart* [page 175.]
- *Within this big container of silence are the Portuguese discoveries of the 15th century... On one side is the imponderable and problematic document, which is the letter of Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli to the canon of Lisbon Fernão Martins de Roriz, and, on the other side, is that precious testimony of the [king’s] concession to Fernão Telles to discover islands. Islands that on 10th January 1475... [the king simply says], “any island that he discovers,” then [ten months later] on the Royal Letter of the 10th of November, “no longer declares the islands to be uninhabited”* [page 178.]
- *The worries of the Perfect Prince [King João II] could well rest in regards to whatever could transpire in Spain of the efforts of his special friend Cristóbal Colón, on whom he placed no obstacles to his return from Portugal [in March 1493] to the side of the Catholic Kings. And it was thus... because he was well aware of what the cards held for the immediate future* [page 186]
- *King Afonso V, in 1474, awards to Fernão de Telles the rights to the Foreiras Islands that had been recently found by Diogo Teive and his son, João de Teive, and the said Fernão Telles now acquired them by a contract made with João de Teive... on 10th November 1475, the king augments the award [to include]... the populated islands he will make known* [page 192]
- *On 30th June 1484, King João II awarded to Fernão Domingos do Arco the captaincy of the island that he “shall go explore”... “in the same way that the captaincy is had by João Gonçalves da Camara on the island of Madeira.” As we see, at the same instant that João II [supposedly] refused the [supposed] plan of Colón he conceded license to another to go and discover in the same western Atlantic* [page 195]
- *João II, the Portuguese monarch, confronted by the solicitation of Colón and at a time when he expected positive results from the other [western] expeditions already in progress, has every interest in accepting the proposal with this navigator, this way avoiding an eventual sponsorship [by his enemies] in Spain* [page 196]
- *24th July 1486, Fernão Dulmo is granted the captaincy of the island of Terceira [Azores] and for his collaborator from Madeira, João Afonso do Estreito, another letter of award... three [more] letters of award 3rd of March, 12th and 24th of July 1486... [proving] João II never ended his expeditions to the western Atlantic* [pages 196–197]
- *What most interested João II... was not the discovery of peoples who lived in a primitive state “in the infancy of humanity,” but instead a sea route to the mystical Orient [India]. If some voyages in the western Atlantic had favorable exit, what was “found” (Mar do Sargasso, Terra Nova, Lavrador, Groenlândia, Ilha Otinticha [Autêntica]) did not satisfy the [trade] expectations of the crown* [page 199]

- *Pedro de Barcelos and João Vaz Corte-Real, the latter who saw his rights augmented in 1485 as captain-general of Angra and S. Jorge [Azores], effected voyages to the northwest Atlantic around 1473–1474 [page 373]*
- *Gaspar Corte-Real, son of the Captain [João Vaz Corte-Real] of Angra and S. Jorge, explored Terra Nova (Newfoundland) [page 374]*
- *Dona Beatriz, widow of Infante Don Fernando (2nd Duke of Viseu), made a donation to João Vaz Corte-Real, 12th January 1473, of lands located west of Cabo Verde [in the Caribbean], in which is read unequivocally, “outra vez mandar buscar” – ordered [him] to find them again [page 404]*
- *Diogo de Teive and Pedro Vázquez de la Frontera* brought concrete news of lands to the west of the Azores; they were at the banks of Terra Nova [Newfoundland] in the month of August 1452... This news was so certain that Fernão Teles purchased from João de Teive the islands of Flores and Corvo (discovered by Diogo de Teive and Pedro Vázquez de la Frontera) as a base from which to reach the west, and in 1476 he received an award [from the king] of thirty thousand réis, possibly for the discovery of Terra dos Bacalhaus (Codfish Lands) [page 405]*
- *The important thing is to know that the time between 1422 and 1434 was the time during which the [Atlantic] wind and ocean currents relative to the Azores were explored [and mapped]. And the Volta do Sargazo – Return by Sargasso – was discovered and practiced long before 1446 [page 405]*

Thus, even with all the imposed secrecy, we see a plethora of proof of Portuguese voyages headed for lands to the west all before 1492. Further proof comes to us from the “Bratislava Codex” concerning a voyage made by Portuguese ships to unknown lands across the sea in 1466:

In 1466 the embassy of the Bohemian king George of Podebrad, on its tour of west European courts... Václav Sasek of Birkov was the author of a Czech relation [of this trip]... Sasek related an adventurous journey of Portuguese ships to the west, of which only one returned... with hope and with the realization that the world's end had not been reached, but instead a point of departure for unknown lands across the sea.”³⁷

This quotation concerned not a voyage to the Azores (long known lands by 1466), but to unknown lands across the sea. And it looks as if the Portuguese were on a mission to find the world's end.

As all the above show, Portugal had a long history of sailing west long before 1492. How many hundreds of voyages were made but never documented? Who would accept that so many Portuguese voyages to the west, over so many centuries, would have been made to nowhere?

In February 1457, Prince Henry “the Navigator” ordered from Fra Mauro, a monk of the monastery of Murano in Italy who died October 1459, a world map incorporating some of the latest Portuguese-sponsored discoveries. That map was delivered to Estevão Trevizano in April 1459, and on it Fra Mauro wrote:

We have heard many witnesses to the contrary, and especially those that His Highness the King of Portugal sent in caravels to discover and to see with their own eyes... at more than 2000 miles beyond the straits of Gibraltar... the above mentioned made new charts of that navigation and gave new names to rivers, gulfs, capes, ports, of which I had copies. And when we want to doubt what these have seen with their own eyes, the more so should we dissent and disbelieve those who in their writings left [us word of] that which they never saw, but simply conjectured.”³⁸

Fra Mauro had, by the year 1459, seen clear evidence of Portuguese expeditions, which had found and charted lands farther than 2,000 miles beyond Lisbon. The Azores Islands are 1,000 miles beyond Lisbon. Twice this distance from Lisbon is only North America. Therefore there should be no doubt that the Portuguese had already seen the lands of America with their own eyes long before 1457.

* Pedro Vázquez de la Frontera was a Portuguese nobleman, servant of the King of Portugal, and navigator who sailed for Prince Henry. He collaborated with Cristóbal Colón in Spain and was responsible for convincing the Pinzón brothers to join the crew of the First Voyage. (see Chapter 12).

The Portuguese did their best to keep these voyages secret but it is undeniable that Fra Mauro, Cadamosto, Václav Sasek and other foreigners who wrote about Portuguese expeditions did so by having contemporary proof. Had these foreigners not written this information, today we would have no proof whatsoever of those voyages. The secrecy was necessary to prevent the potential loss of privileges to more powerful kingdoms, as had happened in 1341 with the loss of the Canary Islands to the Spanish.

But Spain's interest in what Portugal was doing was always high. In 1434, Don Afonso de Cartagena, Bishop of Burgos, uncovered the following information while in Portugal on diplomatic duties, which he immediately sent to Spain: "*West of Lisbon, exists at an unknown distance, not the Azores, but an uninhabited island of brazil, that the Portuguese sailors were having difficulty in finding again.*"³⁹

This proof comes yet again from a foreigner, showing that by 1434, the Portuguese had reached lands to the west that was not the Azores but some other lands. Again we say there is nothing else west of the Azores but America. However, an "island of brazil" is not to be construed as the Brazil of today. Brazil wood has a fiery red color and got its name from "*brasa*," a Portuguese and Spanish word for burning coals. Brazil was an important commodity and was found on many islands to the west, including Colón's Española [Haiti]. The news referred to one of many places where brazil trees were plentiful. The country of Brazil was named *Vera Cruz* by Admiral Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500 but eventually became known after the brazil trees exported from there.

Through the Order of Christ's Templar mission of crusade, Prince Henry attracted crusading knights from other kingdoms, such as the Danish knight Vallarte (killed in Africa). Prince Henry's Templar Knights also had ready-made allies in those kingdoms that were willing to help in this mission of reclaiming Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon, and who maintained the secrecy needed to accomplish it.

Portugal had Spain as a constant enemy at its back but it could look to most other kingdoms, including those that make up today's Denmark, Norway, England, Germany, France, and Italy, as its friends and allies. Within the Portuguese military orders of Christ, Santiago, Avis and Crato, from which most of the Portuguese sailors were chosen, flourished the perfect atmosphere for maintaining secrecy over navigational matters in the 14th and 15th centuries.

It becomes obvious that in 1493 Don Cristóbal Colón was allowed by King João II of Portugal to make the lands of the New World public because making the existence of the Americas public served Portugal's strategy over the Atlantic discoveries.

Since Pedro Álvares Cabral claimed Brazil in 1500 (secured from Spain by King João II in the 1494 *Treaty of Tordesillas*), the veil of secrecy that Portugal and its Order of Christ had been maintaining was no longer important from the moment that Vasco de Gama returned from the real India. The Indian spice route would be impossible to keep secret. However, the Indian route had been cleverly protected from the Spanish enemy through João II's preemptive *Treaty of Tordesillas* of 1494.

The Treaty of Tordesillas was created specifically as a result of Cristóbal Colón's voyage of 1492 and everything points to the notion that King João II and Admiral Colón were in collusion to trick Spain with a false route to India heading west.

CHAPTER 3

POPES, PARTISANS AND POLITICS

*I replied to France, and to England, and to
Portugal that for the King and Queen my
Lords were those lands and fiefdoms.*

DON CRISTÓBAL COLÓN

In the 1400s Portuguese settlers reported finding an ancient statue of a man on a horse pointing west on the Island of Corvo, at the west end of the Azores. For many authors this was another tale of fantasy. Thus, Samuel Eliot Morison dismissed it outright saying it was simply a coastal rock formation that could be mistaken for a statue looking from the sea.⁴⁰ Morison, however, had not familiarized himself with the history of Portugal enough to know that Damião de Góis wrote that, not only did the statue exist, it had been destroyed 450 years before that “rock formation” Morison saw as he sailed by Corvo. Damião de Góis also confirms that it had an inscription on it:

There was found a statue of stone, positioned upon a slab, that was a man atop a bare horse, and the man was dressed in a cape... with one hand on the mane of the horse, and the right arm outstretched, and the fingers of the hand curled, except the second finger, which the Latins call index, with which he pointed to the sunset.⁴¹

It is even recorded that in mid 1500 Pero da Fonseca, Captain of the islands of Flores and Corvo, had some men copy the letters off the stone but because no person there had knowledge other than of Latin letters, and because those letters on the stone were already old and faded, they could not decipher what the letters said, not even what alphabet they were.

How strange is it that the Portuguese described in detail a statue they encountered and that centuries later their descriptions would be discarded, as if intelligent navigators could not tell the difference between a statue of a man on a horse with no saddle and naturally occurring rock formations.

In 1500, the Portuguese Templar Order of Christ still was, for all intents and purposes, the Order of the Templar Knights. The holder of all Templar secrets would be its Master. At that time, the Templar Master in Portugal was none other than King Manuel I. It was Manuel I, Templar Master, who ordered that the statue be removed from Corvo. But the poor incompetent agent sent to retrieve the statue knew only how to break it into pieces, according to Damião de Góis, who saw parts of the statue, including the retrieved hand, in King Manuel I's chambers. Isn't it more likely that the Templar Master ordered the statue, possibly an ancient clue to a Templar secret, to be destroyed because he was aware of what it and the secret alphabet pointed to?

King Manuel I was involved in covering-up aspects of the Portuguese Templar Order of Christ and was responsible for its change of focus in the early 1500s. Manuel I was also responsible for updates to the decorations and the frescoes inside the main chamber, or charola, of the Templar headquarters in Tomar. Who knows if these changes weren't done to cover-up and make disappear the secret anti-Catholic philosophy of the previous Templar Masters?

It is also during Manuel I's reign that the Order of Cluny, the old French ally of the Templar Knights, is abolished in Portugal in the year 1515. Of equal, or even more importance, is the fact that King Manuel I was the first Portuguese king to align himself with the Spanish so steadfastly that he not only married three Spanish princesses but also allowed the Spanish crown to manipulate Portugal's philosophy, politics and theology. This had never been heard of before in Portugal.

For centuries, the kings that reigned Portugal before D. Manuel I had been allied with the Tem-

plars and maintained an antagonistic relationship against the Vatican and against Castile. It was a centuries-long struggle to keep Portugal independent of the Pope and of the Castilians.

Portugal, as an ideal began in 1096 with a great-grandson of King Hugh Capet named Henry of Burgundy, a French crusader from the Order of Cluny. Henry of Burgundy (1066-1112), became Count Henry of *Portucale* (old spelling of Portugal) by his marriage to the daughter of the King of Leon and Castile. This marriage gave rise to the first Portuguese dynasty: the Burgundian Dynasty.

The Burgundian Order of Cluny settled in Portugal at that time in the monastery of Pendorada, supported by Count Henry of Portucale, who was nephew of the abbot of Cluny, S. Hugo. Another Hugo, Duke of Burgundy and brother of Count Henry of Portucale, Hugo I, abdicated to his brother Odo and also went on to become prior of the Order of Cluny. Yet another family member and monk, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, belonged to the newly created Cistercian Order and was the person responsible for the official sanction of the Templar Knights.

Two uncles of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, thus uncles of Count Henry of Portucale, were part of the initial nine Templars along with two Portuguese knights; Arnaldo da Rocha, of French Borgundian parentage "de la Roche" and Gondemare, possibly named after Gondomar village, near Porto, Portugal. As such, the Burgundians, Cluny, Cister and the Templars worked hand in hand with the first kings of Portugal on a grand new project aimed towards the advancement of humanity that would come to bring them huge international success, but which never got completed.

The dream was to reach a new plateau constructed on the ideals of brotherhood, freedom and spirituality and would later come to be referred by the Portuguese as the 5th Empire, (*Quinto Império*), the Age of the Holy Spirit. The much desired ushering in of the "Kingdom of God" in which the Holy Spirit, not the Vatican, Imams, and Rabbis, would exercise spiritual dominion over humanity. A time when the partiality and disorder would be replaced by an Era of Common Good. This Portuguese 5th Empire, *Empire of the Divine Holy Spirit*, was a vision for a true human Utopia, long prophesized as the Messianic Era: a future time of universal peace and brotherhood on the earth, without crime, war and poverty.

In the year 1129, Count Henry's cousin, St. Bernard of Clairvaux officially approved the Templar Knights who worked hand in hand with the kings of Portugal in the Reconquest of Iberia from Islam. The Portuguese Templars played a unique role, since they were a Portuguese national order before becoming international.⁴²

In fact, the Templar Knights, as an entity, already held territories in Portugal long before being officially created by the Vatican. In a document from 1122 there is already a donation to "*vobis Iherosolimitani Templi militibus*"⁴³ and the Portuguese town of Fonte Arcada has its donation documented in 1126 to the *militibus Templi Salomonis*.⁴⁴ But, already as early as 1114 a contract between the Master of the Temple and the Bishop of Porto shows that the Templar owned property in Fonte Arcada.

It now appears that the Templar Kingdom of Portugal, St. Bernard's Order of Cister and the Templar Knights were created hand in hand by members of the same families of royal blood from Burgundy, France.⁴⁵ These entities had a symbiotic relationship that was still in place in the 1400s when the King of Portugal's daughter married the Duke of Burgundy.

Portugal's first King, Afonso Henriques (1109-1185), son of Count Henry, became a Templar brother on March 13, 1129. The Templars' and Portugal's destiny were thus tied closely together in the defense of a Christian spirituality through the Cult of the Holy Spirit (SEE CHAPTER 15) as well as in constraining the spread of Islam.

Prior to Manuel I's reign (1495-1521), Portugal's kings had continuous problems with the Vatican.

The Templar King, Afonso Henriques, was excommunicated for installing his own Bishops and then threatened to cut the Papal envoy's arm at the elbow if he dared to extend his hand for the king to kiss it. Afonso Henriques further declared that "in Portugal we also have Bibles and we don't need Rome to teach us about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."



Figure 3.1: Two examples of King Afonso Henriques own Templar Seal along with the seal of the Portuguese Templar Master (arrow).

the excommunications weren't having the desired effect, Innocent IV worked to depose Sancho II and put Sancho's brother in control of the Portuguese throne.⁴⁶

Sancho II was exiled and died in Toledo, Spain. His brother, Afonso III, thus became king of Portugal but that didn't relax the Vatican's ire nor the Portuguese throne's hostility towards the Catholic clergy. The Catholic clergy was forced to seek protection against the king from Gregory X in Rome.

Gregory X excommunicated Afonso III and in 1277 new interdictions were ordered upon the kingdom. Afonso III's son, King Dinis I, refused to obey Pope Clement V's orders to arrest the Templar Knights in Portugal and instead protected their lives and possessions and later converted them into the Order of Christ.

Not only did King Dinis support the Cult of the Holy Spirit, based on the theology of Joachim of Fiore, but King Dinis's wife, Holy Queen Isabel, is credited with an intense propagation of the cult in Portugal.

Based on the *Book of Revelations*, Fiore advocated the coming of the *Age of the Holy Spirit* or *Empire of the Divine Holy Spirit*, an age when mankind would attain direct contact with God and achieve the total freedom preached by the Christian message. Because Joachim founded the Abbey of Fiore in the mountains of Calabria, Cristóbal Colón calls him *Abbot Joachim Calabrés*. The Vatican condemned Joachim's teachings as heretical, yet early Portugal supported and spread these teachings.

All of Portugal's kings, prior to Don Manuel I, aligned themselves with the Templars in ideology and maintained an antagonistic attitude towards the Vatican inclined towards Joachim de Fiore and the Cult of the Holy Spirit. Looking back over the history of Portugal's politics and theology, one can see that Portugal was a pro-Templar and anti-Papal state from its inception. This was the state of affairs before Manuel I. Due to King Manuel I, who aligned himself with the Vatican, the Portuguese people suffered for centuries at the hands of the Vatican and its inquisitors.

The Vatican's purging of other competing Christian ideals, through centuries of Christian-on-Christian crusades, and its inquisitions against non-conforming Christians and other Vatican-opposed ideologies, took place solely because they threatened the Pope's power on this Earth. It would take yet another whole book to explain Portugal's religious roots from the Cathars, to the Templars, and to that Cult of the Holy Spirit of that same *Abade Joachim calabrés* that Admiral Cristóbal Colón

The Templar King died in 1185 but again in 1192 Cardinal Rinério declared excommunications and interdictions upon the Second King of Portugal, Sancho I. Again in 1208 King Sancho I was excommunicated and died that way. In 1213 Pope Innocent III ordered the clergy to absolve Sancho's son, Afonso II, by levying a fine of 50,000 *cruzados*. This amounted to political blackmailing by the Successor of Peter, in Rome, against those Christian Kings who did not want the Pope interfering in their lands. Yet again, in 1218, the Bishop of Lugo renewed the excommunication and in 1220 the archbishop of Braga re-enforced it upon Afonso II.

Pope Honorius III not only reapplied the excommunication but now threatened to put the Kingdom of Portugal up for grabs by any "Catholic" king and even released all Portuguese vassals from their oath of loyalty to the King of Portugal. Afonso II died in 1223 excommunicated just like his father.

In 1231 another excommunication was placed upon the kingdom, lifted in 1233 by Gregory IX. Rome again intervened in 1245 and this time more forcefully. Since

idealized. There were lulls in the furor when it became beneficial to both Kings and Popes to put aside their theological differences. In 1717, the year the Freemason's became public, Portugal begun construction of the Mafra Palace, based on the Temple of Solomon's design, planned to be the New Jerusalem and a rival city to Rome, which never came to be.⁴⁷

The main reason for this ongoing struggle, as described by Portuguese Professor António de Macedo, has to do with the ideology of the "Church of Peter" (bricks and mortar in Rome) versus the "Church of John" (the Mystical and Spiritual theologies).⁴⁸ John was the evangelist author of the *Book of Revelations*, (also called the *Apocalypse of John*), and Admiral Cristóbal Colón, who lived in Portugal under these anti-Papal kings, not only wrote his own *Book of Prophecies*, a compilation of apocalyptic religious revelations in line with the Portuguese Cult of the Holy Spirit,⁴⁹ but was a firm believer in the Holy Spirit, (SEE CHAPTER 15).

Portugal's theology better aligned with the Templars, Joachim de Fiore and Ramon Llull (troubadours) as well as with the Fraticelli Franciscans who were also outlawed by Pope John XXI in 1317. The reason why Portugal's King Don Dinis, who was a member of the Order of the Troubadours, protected the Templars from arrest was because King Dinis also belonged to the order of the "Fieis do Amor" (Loyalists to Amor). *Amor* means *Love* in Latin but it actually stood for Rome, *Roma* backwards. The order of the *Loyalists to Amor* was actually comprised of those who were *Disloyal to Roma*, - Amor is Roma backwards, another words anti-Rome.⁵⁰

*"We now understand why these Fiéis do Amor, or Cavaleiros do Amor, faithful of the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John the Enlightened, always found their Beloved in the true Church of Christ - the Temple: the Body of the Holy... The peculiar Lusitanian heterodoxy that, under the external appearance of submission to Rome, comes to us from the Templar Rosicrucian Foundation, the Johannine heritage of Fiéis do Amor, convergent in the Order of the Knights of Christ."*⁵¹

The attitude of those first Portuguese kings and their theology is seen in the way they described themselves in donations of territories to the Order of the Templar Knights saying they were "irmãos da missão Templária" (brothers in the Templar mission) and that they were devoted to their "House of the Temple and to the Master and friars of the same Order."⁵²

In the 1480s King João II put in place a policy that no letters coming from Rome would be opened and published in the Kingdom of Portugal before he reviewed them. João II's secretary, García de Resende, tells us that in 1483, the second year of João II's reign, a Papal nuncio sent by Sixtus IV arrived in Portugal accusing João II of "infringing on the [Roman] church's liberty, as well as trying to **extinguish it completely** through new and audacious laws" and therefore the king should appear in Rome to explain himself.

Now compare all of this anti-Vatican history to King João II's successor, Manuel I. Manuel I was the Templar Master in charge of the Order of Christ from 1484 until 1521. He was the first Master to also be King of Portugal. However, there was nothing *templar* about this Templar Master who sent to Rome the biggest embassy ever sent by any Portuguese king.

While his predecessors fought Vatican policy and were excommunicated for it, King Manuel I changed Portugal's focus from an anti-Papal state to a pro-Papal state. He received not one but two Gold Rose awards from the Pope and Portugal soon would be on its way to implementing the Holy Catholic Inquisition. If the Vatican did not see the Portuguese as heretics, there would be no reason to introduce the Inquisition into that kingdom. During the Catholic Inquisition, the biggest list of outlawed books in Europe was compiled in Portugal confirming Portugal's anti-Vatican past. In the year 1624 alone, the catalog of Portuguese forbidden books had 1048 pages, thanks to King Manuel I's initiatives. And this way Portugal's "heretic" Templar past was whitewashed and the kingdom's new destiny aligned with the Vatican.

Although in the Azores the Cult of the Holy Spirit remained alive until today, and is now spreading around the world by Azorean immigrants, one can only guess what was in those burned books.

The evil that caused Catholic Christians to prosecute and burn alive other children of God, whom they perceived as a threat to their power, caused the Templars to go underground in order to survive. Professor Manuel J. Gandra professes that when the Portuguese Templar Order of Christ began to be attacked and modified by the un-Holy Inquisition, its inner-circle members remained united in a secret new order called Cavalaria do Amor, (Knighthood of Love), but actually denoting Warriors against Rome, which remained occult for centuries.⁵³

During João II's reign (1481 to 1495), he was the greatest enemy Spain ever had on Portugal's throne while his immediate successor, Manuel I, was the greatest friend Spain ever had in Portugal. So controlled was Manuel I by Spain that the Spanish ambassador in London, on December 28, 1495, just 2 months after João II died, wrote: "*Portugal is now as obedient to the orders of our lady the Queen, as Andalusia*".⁵⁴

King Manuel I turned Portugal in a 180-degree direction not only in theology but politics and did something that no other Portuguese king would have done. Manuel I expelled the Jews from Portugal at the request of Spain's Queen Isabel in order to marry her daughter, Princess Isabel. He then supported the Catholic Inquisition at the insistence of the same Spanish Monarchs in order to marry their other daughter, Princess Maria. Manuel I was so aligned with Isabel and Fernando, who were not called the "Catholic Kings" for nothing, that he was even sworn heir to the Spanish throne in 1498.

Was Spain now in control of Portugal's politics? Where was the crown of Portugal's sovereignty during Manuel I's reign?

The preceding vignette is important to understand because Cristóbal Colón lived in Portugal during João II's reign and his theology, as we can see from his writings, was in line with Portugal's Templar theology and thus contrary to Manuel I's Catholicism. It was also during the reign of King Manuel I, in 1500, that Manuel I's in-laws ordered Cristóbal Colón arrested and deposed from his command in the New World. Colón's fall from grace was a precursor to more ominous changes soon to hit Iberia's Portuguese and Spanish residents.

The Templar statue that existed in Corvo was ordered removed for some important reason, which at the time became inconvenient for the then Templar Master.

Manuel I was the bearer of all the Order of Christ's Templar secrets and was at the same time King of Portugal and a Catholic, just like his in-laws: the *Catholic* Kings.

Furthermore, the Portuguese history that mentions Cristóbal Colón, written by Rui de Pina* in 1504, was written during King Manuel I's reign and must be viewed under that light. There is no trace of any "Colombo" in Portugal prior to Rui de Pina's work.

MAKING WAVES

In 1494 King João II made use of all his kingdom's accumulated knowledge, resultant from hundreds of years of Atlantic experience, to craft the Treaty of Tordesillas with Spain protecting Portugal's interests in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. It especially guarded the Sea Route to India, the secret target of the Templar Order of Christ for nearly a century. Prince Henry the Navigator had begun the Age of Discovery in the early 1400s.

In 1443 Pope Eugene IV (Bulla *Etsi suscepit*) conceded to Prince Henry "the Navigator", Governor of the Order of Christ, the right to profess in the order (if he so wished). The Order of Christ was to possess all new islands and lands discovered by Portugal with the right to nominate its own bishops. On January 8, 1455, Pope Nicholas V (Bulla *Romanus Pontifex*) granted to the Order of Christ the right of conquest with the final goal of "making the seas navigable until those *Indians* who it is said worship the name of Christ."⁵⁵ Notice that these Indians worshiped Christ. The only Indians known to Europeans in 1455 were from the real India, where the Apostle St. Thomas had preached and where his tomb was said to be located.

* To Rui de Pina, knight of the royal household, was awarded the post of chief-guard of the Royal Archives, which was in the Lisbon Castle, as had been doctor Vasco Fernandes who left the post so it could be given to the said Rui de Pina. 1497-07-24. Portugal, Torre do Tombo, Chancelaria de D. Manuel I, liv. 29, fl. 25.

Those territories were awarded to the Order of Christ and this order existed only in Portugal. It was a Portuguese national order. In those days the Vatican had a lot of influence to interfere in international matters, somewhat similar to today's United Nations, with a lot of pronouncements but no armed forces to impose them.

Pope Martin V bestowed on the Portuguese the same benefits as given to the crusaders of the Holy Land and ordered the Portuguese clergy to preach the crusade at the Portuguese monarchs' behest (bula '*Rex Regum*', 1418)... he incited Portugal to continue with its mission (bula '*Super Gregem Dominicum*': July 2, 1418);... to continue defending Christianity (bula '*Ab Eo Qui Humani*': March 26, 1419); pressed Prince Henry to keep protecting the Christians (bula '*In Apostolicae Dignitatis Specula*': 1420). The bulas '*Romanus Pontifex*' (September 6, 1420) y '*Romani Pontificis*' (March 5, 1421) regulated the administration of the new regions conquered by the Portuguese. Eugene IV continued encouraging the Portuguese to press on ('*Romanus Pontifex*', September 15, 1436) and gave the Portuguese rights to trade with the Moors (bula '*Praeclaris Tuae*' May 25, 1437)... privileges to all those who, allied with the Portuguese, prevented the advance of Islam. Nicholas V granted yet more rights (bula '*Romanus Pontifex*': January 8, 1450, January 8, 1454 and 1455); Callixtus III conceded to the Portuguese Order of Christ spiritual jurisdiction over all regions conquered by the Portuguese, in the present and future, from Capes Bojador and Nam along Guinea and beyond to the South, all the way to India (bula '*Inter Caetera*' March 13, 1456)... Sixtus IV confirmed Portugal's Treaty of Alcazovas with Spain and reaffirmed all privileges granted by earlier popes (bula '*Aeterni Regis Clementia*', June 21, 1481).⁵⁶

Nicholas V ordered that no other kingdom "*either trade, nor sail in those seas, nor intervene in those provinces, islands, ports, or seas under the penalty of excommunication*," (January 8, 1455)⁵⁷ and finally Pope Julius II confirmed the renowned Treaty of Tordesillas, crafted by King João II in 1494, that divided the overseas conquests between Portugal and Spain (bula '*Ea Quae Pro bono Pacis*').

In all these consternations between Papal excommunications of Portuguese kings and grants of conquest of non-Christian territories to its Order of Christ is evident the old saying, "the enemies of my enemies are my friends."

Portugal's destiny was, from the beginning, united with the sea. Control over those near and distant lands was only awarded to this chosen *Godly* kingdom and its Templar Order of Christ.

The Portuguese, wrote Jaime Cortesão, received the spiritual flame with which they illuminated the world. The religious fervor instilled in those military knights, just as we can observe in Cristóbal Colón, was the driving force that made them strive and continue against all odds to evangelize those distant territories. Many thousands never returned. Yet year upon year the Portuguese persevered in their secret mission to discover the secrets of the Atlantic.

In order to succeed, blind faith alone wasn't enough; aside from locating the needed manpower it was also necessary to invent new technologies. New technology became one of the main focus points of the kingdom. Foreign trade was also important. For all these interconnected pieces, it was necessary to find many experts. Knowledgeable foreigners had to be enlisted into the secret Portuguese enterprise by Prince Henry the Navigator, (including Alvise de Cadamosto,) who, after returning to their countries didn't keep the voyages secret. These foreign sources, at times, have been the only way to know what was achieved during those secretive years.

Other foreigners who were more adventurous and attempted to intermingle into the territories controlled by the Order of Christ did not fare so well. Prince Henry had begun a policy of protection that included deadly force.

The Spanish were always the first to attempt these incursions. The atrocities committed by Prince Henry's men were not only meant to stop the perpetrators but also to scare any future ventures. This struggle for the Atlantic Monopoly between Portugal and Spain can be seen in this short extract written in 1454 by the Spanish Alonso de Palencia:

The Portuguese kill any Castilians that are caught anywhere beyond the Canaries, some by cruel torments, and to spread amongst all others perpetual terror, mutilate some, cutting off their feet and hands... on April 10, 1454, King Juan II of Castile protested to the Portuguese court that "... certain subjects and naturals of ours sailing some caravels from the land called Guinea... your captain, Álvaro Gonçalves Palenço, took them by force of arms... you ordered arrested and kept in prison the said vassals... and, the same way by your order were cut off the hands of a Genoese merchant.⁵⁸

As one can see, Henry the Navigator was not taking chances with the Spanish, and neither did his nephew King João II forty years later. In this same way, Cristóbal Colón controlled his Española by arresting, hanging and mutilating the noble Spanish who dared to contest his rule, which contributed to Colón's downfall and arrest in 1500.

In order to control these territories all cruelties were allowed, and in the 1480s King João II turned up the heat even more. His standing orders were that all foreigners caught south of the Canaries must be thrown overboard so that they die with their secrets and not be brought to the Kingdom where they may have a chance at escaping and divulging navigational routes.

This new order was put in place because a foreign nobleman caught South of the Canaries and brought to Portugal by Captain Diogo Cão managed to escape from jail by paying a hefty bribe to his jailer.

João II had his hands full with enemy plots from within as well as from outside his borders. Garcia de Resende tells us this account of the lure of taking Portuguese secrets to the Spanish Monarchs, Isabel and Fernando, as well as João II's long reach and commitment to keeping his control over the secrets of the Guinea monopoly:

A pilot and two sailors from Mina, ran away to Castile... with the intentions of [giving away secrets] in doing disservice to the king, who as soon as the king knew, he had such a way that even being inside Castile he quickly had them within his grasp. And bringing them all [back to Portugal], the [Spanish] militias who patrolled the villages were alerted and came upon them from all directions. The Portuguese who were bringing them sensing those militias and realizing they couldn't bring all three prisoners without great risks to their persons, entangled themselves in a big forest, killed their horses so they would not make noise and cut the heads off of the two sailors, which they brought with them. As for the pilot, after the danger had dissipated they brought him, moving during the nighttime with fishhooks through his lips to keep him quiet and brought him to Evora where he was quickly quartered. Because of this nobody would dare do what he should not, because they had no idea where to go that the king could not reach them. Sometimes by ordering the death of a few we save ourselves the death of many and other losses and dangers that can come to the king when no one has fear or worry. For the more good the good people do by love the more bad the bad people avoid doing by fear.⁵⁹

The risk of exposing the State's secrets was not taken lightly. Whatever needed to be done to safeguard Portugal's big Atlantic enterprise was done. João II continued utilizing foreign experts to help his nationals evolve and solve long-standing challenges of navigation and exploration. But he expected from them a high level of loyalty and secrecy just as Jaime Cortesão declared by documenting how João II preferred secrecy over claiming the glory he deserved for his great advancements in science:

In the Munich Library exists the only copy, found until today, of the Regimento do Astrolabio [Regiment of the Astrolabe] a work printed around 1483. In it we learn that the Perfect Prince [João II] had created... a school of scientific navigation... written to train the pilots... João II also turned into a secret [this book], which is one of his greatest glories.⁶⁰

João II's personality has never been quite so well profiled as done by Beaujouan while writing about the *Regimento do Astrolabio*:

*João II of Portugal had the immense merit of knowing how to apply the science of his time in service of a grand national enterprise: this is where his genius as an organizer reveals a revolutionary modern character.*⁶¹

King João II created a group of experts known as Junta dos Matemáticos (Council of Mathematicians) who improved old technologies and invented new ones in support of the Portuguese navigators. In his book about Admiral Cristóbal Colón's discovery of America, Friar Bartolomé De Las Casas wrote:

*This king Don João II ordered that all efforts be made to improve the art of navigation, and he entrusted this to two physicians, one Christian called Rodrigo, and the other a Jew, Master Joseph, and a Bohemian, Martin of Bohemia, who said he was a disciple of John de Monteregio [Johannes Müller von Königsberg 'Regiomontanus'] great astronomer, the said created this certain form of navigation that we use now, by the height of the Sun... This way, for certain that it was the Portuguese the first that found this way to navigate and used it; and from them the Spanish took it... and because Cristóbal Colón and his brother Bartolomé Colón in those times lived in Portugal... there they perfected themselves in this [secret] art.*⁶²

Therefore, the technology utilized by Cristóbal Colón and his brother, who was a great navigator in his own right, was the same secret, cutting-edge technology perfected by King João II's experts, since, in Spain, nobody knew of the *Table of Declination of the Sun* until the Colón brothers brought it with them from Portugal.

In the *Historia de los Reyes Católicos*, by Andrés Bernaldez, we get more clarification about the Portuguese technology:

*The King of Portugal had very high and well-founded navigators that did not value him [Colón], and presumed that in the world there were not any others better discoverers than them. Because of this Cristóbal Colón came to the court of King Don Fernando and Queen Dona Isabel and gave them an account of his idea, the which he was not given credit either, and he talked with them and said it was true what he told them and he showed it to them on a world map.*⁶³

Having thus far shown that Portugal was the center of inventions in navigational technologies while Colón lived and sailed there, and that he made use of those secret technologies while working for Spain, let us put to rest the misguided affirmations that, before Colón's 1492 voyage, no one sailed the high seas, rather sea voyages were made only by keeping land in sight. Cristóbal Colón, they say, was the first brave soul to leave sight of land behind.

Whoever accepts this tale must ignore completely the discovery of the Azores islands by the Portuguese in the early 1400s. It was impossible to reach the Azores without sailing for weeks in the high seas. And we should not accept that the discovery of the Azores was the first sailing of this kind either.

Due to sheer ignorance of the Portuguese history, we have Paulo Emilio Taviani and others accepting that:

*The theory that the Portuguese were the first to face the "adventure of the high seas" and "celestial scientific navigation" is much exaggerated... Genoa was, at that time, the capital of the studies of geography and cosmography and it is not surprising that the greatest discoverer in history was born there... The extraordinary innovation of Colón's plan is that it obliterated two superstitions: one inherited from the Middle Ages and the other kept alive by the Portuguese which consisted of sailing along the African coast avoiding the high seas.*⁶⁴

Continuously, and all over the world, statements like this one about the "discoverer" of America are made without fact. The error can't be blamed only on the non-Portuguese historians. The blame must sit squarely on the Portuguese academics that let this dishonest history stand. This is how the "invention" is able to pass for truth. The fact is, at that time, the great superstitions of Atlantic navigation were being obliterated by Portugal, the only kingdom that sailed those seas in search of science. And at that time, the capital of geography and cosmography, as well as navigational technology, was Lisbon and not Genoa, because all the new information coming to light in these fields were emerging in Portugal, not Genoa.

What *Regimento do Astrolabio* was composed by the Genoese? What *Table of Declination of the Sun at the Equator* was created in Genoa? What Genoese navigator named the *Cruzeiro do Sul* (Southern Cross) or the Cape of Good Hope, by being the first to see them?

It was the Portuguese, at that time, that were obliterating the great superstitions of the Middle Ages that affirmed that after passing Cabo Nam (Cape No) it was impossible to return Northwards. It was the Portuguese who obliterated the superstition that you can't sail to the Equator because the water boiled from the heat at that location and that those areas were uninhabitable due to the scorching sun.

A better assertion is that it was the Portuguese who accomplished all of these demolitions of superstitions with their new Atlantic navigational techniques and not the Genoese with their stale, Mediterranean knowledge. Contrary to what Taviani wrote, it was Portugal that led the way in the 15th century in this area of knowledge and Colón was right there in the middle of it all in Lisbon and not in Genoa.

As one can see, navigational techniques and geographical knowledge did not stop evolving after Ptolemy finished his *Geographiae* in the 2nd century.

João II continued the work begun by his great-uncle, Henry the Navigator, supporting and augmenting “idea factories” and seeking the best experts of his day to create cutting edge technologies. The effort provided new navigation techniques, better maps and geographical knowledge. It resulted in better scientific data and new technologies, which were employed in countless voyages.

In the 15th century the Portuguese caravels sailed on the crest of the technology wave, but this knowledge was kept secret from Portugal's European neighbors and competitors.

SECRET SHIPS IN SEARCH OF OCEAN SECRETS

The Portuguese caravel was another important element of Portugal's technology and a highly prized secret of State. The continuous testing and perfecting of the sailing ships, allowed Portugal to develop a caravel that revolutionized ocean navigation in the beginning of the 15th century. It was a ship that could sail more efficiently against headwinds, thus solving a problem that existed from time immortal. The ship was so advanced for its day that it received praise from many. Cristóbal Colón held many Portuguese state secrets like the Mina route, the Table of Declination of the Sun, the Route to the Cape of Good Hope and other Portuguese gathered knowledge of the Atlantic, yet João II never persecuted him. Cristóbal Colón mentions the Portuguese caravel, saying:

*The strong currents that run there, along with the wind, make it so nobody persists by tacking upwind, because in one day one loses all that is gained during seven; and I don't exclude caravel, even if it is a Portuguese lateen one.*⁶⁵

This highly advanced ship was so well protected by Portugal that its sale was prohibited to foreigners. It was also illegal to build one on foreign soil. These prohibitions remained in place long into King Manuel I's reign. The following text taken from Jaime Cortesão's investigation shows the consequences to those who did not follow the secrecy protocol and gives us an idea of the ship's importance to the kingdom:

- *We order and prohibit that no person of any station whatsoever sell caravels to foreigners nor build one in a foreign land.*
- *December 16, 1454, King Afonso V orders that Afonso Fernandes, servant of Prince Henry, and his associates lose all their belongings – both mobile and immobile – due to the sale or trade of a caravel in the kingdoms of England.*
- *February 12, 1471, King Afonso V gifted to Diogo Figueiro the goods of Cide Roiz, who sold a caravel in Aragon.*
- *Given to Álvaro de Castro the goods of the fisherman, Vicente Anes Rebolim, resident of Lisbon, that sold one of his caravels outside the kingdom.*

- November 10, 1478, then Prince João II allowed the Valencian James Timer, master of sugar in Madeira, to “have part ownership with other naturals of these kingdoms in a nau or ship except not in a caravel.”
- May 10, 1520, Don Manuel I orders the judges of the town of Sines to investigate the sale of a caravel to a Castilian by a certain Diogo Pires.⁶⁶

Don João de Meneses, captain of Moroccan Arzila, having learned that the pirate Moors of Larache had captured four Portuguese caravels, quickly gathered a small fleet to recover them. Arriving in the midst of canon fire and arrows, he found the caravels had already been dragged onto shore. Unable to retrieve them, he set them afire to prevent the enemy from studying or using them against the Portuguese.⁶⁷

Cortesão further states that he found in the Archivo de las Indias, in Seville, all the proceedings relative to the purchase of three “lateen caravels” for Colón’s island of Española that took place in 1504 from a letter of King Fernando to King Manuel I, his son-in-law. King Fernando’s letter requested the Portuguese king for permission to make the purchase. This transaction is the best evidence that the Portuguese were able to keep this technology completely secret for almost 100 years. The fact that Spain, its closest neighbor and biggest rival, was still interested in acquiring Portuguese-built caravels in 1504 and was required to receive special permission from the king of Portugal speaks to this success. Castile had apparently not been able to replicate the ships and only succeeded in acquiring them because King João II was already dead.

João II implemented such a campaign of disinformation to trick his adversaries as well as his friends that we are still unraveling it. Cristóbal Colón’s 1492 voyage to lands already discovered by the Portuguese was a part of this disinformation campaign.

Jaime Cortesão declares that:

There existed without any doubt a policy of secrecy regarding... caravels, navigational charts, regiments, routes, and route maps... the value of the terrestrial degree and certain coordinates... the economic objective... the system of trafficking... and experimental voyages.

Maps were, and are, a vital piece in the success of navigation, which makes a false map a powerful weapon against the enemy. Censoring and/or modifying maps is of the utmost military importance. It wasn’t too long ago that the Soviet Union censored maps for their own citizens and today Google must censor satellite images to protect sensitive information. Therefore it is not surprising that King João II implemented these same censoring techniques five centuries ago.

We would never have known of some of João II’s disinformation schemes, including false attribution to the size of the Equatorial degree, if his spy in Ethiopia, Pêro da Covilhã, had died prior to 1525 (SEE CHAPTER 12). “*The silence of the chroniclers about Covilhã is explicable: Covilhã’s mission was secret and his letters confidential.*”⁶⁸ Had Pêro da Covilhã died before other fellow Portuguese got to Ethiopia before the chance to tell his tale, as it had happened to all of João II’s other spies, most likely King João II’s ploys of deception would never be known and the search for the truth would be that much more difficult. Instead we know that:

*With absolute certainty... as well as through the testimony of Pêro da Covilhã... that João II falsely associated, in at least one case, a false value to the degree; in another case [intentional] excessiveness in his measurements; and he hid cautiously both his correct knowledge of the most practical way to India and the situational relationship of the location of those Empires of the Orient to Africa.*⁶⁹

Therefore it is not so unbelievable, just as Giuliano Macchi states, that King João II conscientiously presented to the rest of Europe false information that could bring him secret advantages, exactly as it did. “*It is a pity that neither João II nor Colón had the minimal interest in convoking scribes nor press wheels to declare what secrets they possessed about the Atlantic and why they possessed them... The law here is imposed by Colón and not by the historian: Colón must explain his inventions.*”⁷⁰

João II and his predecessors had accumulated immense knowledge over the centuries about the territories, currents, winds and heavenly bodies relative to the Atlantic regions. João II was the authority of his day on the geography and navigation on the Atlantic Ocean, both southwards and westwards. When this king affirmed something, the other kingdoms accepted it as coming from the top specialists. Because of this, João II could easily pass along false information intentionally since others could not sail to those areas of the Atlantic and verify the information.

This fact explains why Martin of Bohemia, one of João II's trusted experts, went to Germany to create a false globe in 1492. The globe depicts the same false information that Cristóbal Colón was presenting to Spain, thus confusing the world and helping Colón's lies of "India" survive until today. (SEE CHAPTER 12).

THE CAPE OF TORMENTS

Bartolomeu Dias baptized the Cape of Good Hope with the name *Cabo das Tormentas* (Cape of Torments) because of the severe storms he encountered during its 1488 discovery. Upon debriefing King João II, the king immediately renamed it *Cabo da Boa Esperança* (Cape of Good Hope). This name was an augury because now, after so many decades of struggle, the King of Portugal had *good hope* that he would soon reach India by sailing around Africa.

All the decades of effort, the pursuit of technology, the lost lives and lost ships had paid off. The end of Africa had been reached. What a glorious day in Portugal. What a hero was this Bartolomeu Dias whose name should have sounded all over the known world for such a heroic feat in 1488, a feat greater by far than Colón's 1492 voyage.

But, as is the case with most of the secret navigational accomplishments that Portugal was responsible for, the Portuguese kept this event so silent that the exact date of the discovery of the cape by Dias, as well as the date of his return home, is not known for certain. Most accept that Dias left Lisbon in August 1487, discovered the Cape early in 1488 and arrived in Lisbon in December 1488, having spent sixteen months at sea. Dias did not receive his due glory because King João II withheld Dias's glorious voyage from the public. Because of this censorship, Colón's voyage five years later had the awe-inspiring effect that it did.

For nearly a century, Portugal had been seeking the end of Africa. Dias finally accomplished this feat in 1488 after a sea voyage that lasted some 480 days. One would expect that the very next year, 1489, the Port of Lisbon would be abuzz with ships getting ready for the final leg of that dream voyage to reach India before Cristóbal Colón and the Spanish enemy got to India first. But no, that is not what happened. Instead of arduous and rambunctious preparations there was pause and silence in Portugal until after 1494: Portugal waited patiently for six years before sending its ships to India. What was the King of Portugal waiting for?

During Portugal's refrain of sailing to India, Cristóbal Colón sailed to the Americas, causing great excitement around the world and giving Queen Isabel's ships a place to go and keep busy.

More importantly, King João II forced Spain to sign the Treaty of Tordesillas with Portugal in 1494. The Treaty of Tordesillas was the turning point in Portugal's political game against Spain because it protected, in writing, sea access to the real India for Portugal. Spanish ships were forbidden to sail to India in this treaty. As soon as the Treaty of Tordesillas was signed by Spain and the route to the real India protected, Portugal was free to take the final step in that conquest. Therefore, King João II ordered Captain Vasco da Gama to prepare the ships for the ambitious voyage to the Indian Ocean. However, the death of King João II on October 25, 1495 delayed Gama's voyage, which only took place in 1497, as Garcia de Resende tells us:

Because of the great desire that the King always had for the discovery of India, of which much had been done, and discovered beyond the Cape of Good Hope, he had arranged, and ready, the fleet to go discover it with all regiments done, and as Captain Major of it Vasco da Gama, a nobleman of his household, and due to the King's death the fleet did not part.⁷¹

Vasco da Gama, who was a Knight of the same Portuguese Order of Santiago that Colón's wife belonged to (SEE CHAPTER 9), was handpicked by King João II to captain the fleet that finally left Lisbon for India July 8, 1497. The Portuguese fleet arrived at Calicut May 20, 1498 and returned home to Lisbon in September 1499 with shiploads of spices. India had finally been reached by sailing around Africa and the reports by Marco Polo and others were confirmed: the cities, spices, warriors, fleets, Muslims, Christians, and the epic civilization were all there – none of this had been found by Colón in his "West Indies".

All the exploration and secret technology, plus Portugal's refined navigation and espionage, gave King João II all the information that he needed to safeguard the sea route to India from his Spanish enemies.

In order to maintain control over the Atlantic routes, the African trade and the future route to India, Portugal implemented misleading political tactics to entrap its enemy. That 15th Century web of lies and deception is still being unraveled today. Those tactics included false maps circulated to lead foreigners away from protected places – they would ideally become so lost that they would never return home. In Spain they called these maps "*los mentirosos*" (the liars):

To hide the gold route, it was forbidden to sail to Guinea, even for those who held license from the king of Portugal... no maps were included... until it was made available to the curious the "liars maps" mentioned in the histories, blaming Portugal for putting them in circulation.⁷²

Among King João II's false information was the attribution of a false measurement to the Equatorial degree. It seems that Cristóbal Colón was doing the same by constantly promoting a small degree of only 56,66 miles. These tricks were not exclusive to King João II. In 1504, King Manuel I ordered that, anyone who drew a map of the west coast of Africa which had not been officially approved (thus duly censored) would lose all his belongings. He also forbade the construction of non-approved globes.⁷³ And an even more elaborate scheme was put together to protect Portugal's claim to the Molucas by creating false maps that moved the Cape of Good Hope in Africa and the Cape of Saint Augustine in Brazil far to the east of their true locations:

The Portuguese made a map moving the Cape of Good Hope five degrees [three hundred and forty six miles East] from its true location and moved the Cape of Saint Augustine [Brazil, the same distance [East], with which they tried to say justice was theirs, and because this was detrimental to navigation, they gave secret regiments to their ships to follow and not to go by the map, and even so many ships were lost.⁷⁴

Even at this time, in 1522, the Portuguese were able to pull off this lie because they were still the best sailors in the seas and still the holders of the major secrets of the Atlantic. They were the only ones who were sailing south and around the Cape of Good Hope.

Why was there so much secrecy and falsification by Portugal? We all know that the degree of secrecy is relative to the importance of the secret. In Portugal, the king had implemented a Penalty of Death to protect these secrets. This fact reveals what value the Atlantic Navigation held for the kingdom. It was truly a matter of life and death.

CHAPTER 4

TWO KINGDOMS: ONE WAR

It gave rise there to bad mouthing and contempt for the fledgling enterprise mainly because I had not immediately sent the ships back laden with gold.

DON CRISTÓBAL COLÓN

One must consider a very important fact of history: Prior to 1492, Spain, unlike Portugal, had never shown any interest in exploring new seas and new lands, nor any interest in sailing to India.

At the time that Cristóbal Colón went to Spain, end of 1484, the “Catholic Monarchs,” Isabel and Fernando, only had an interest in forcing themselves into the very lucrative Guinea Trade and taking that monopoly away from Portugal, its enemy. They were also quite busy with problems in their many kingdoms from Galicia to Sicily, including constant conflicts with the French and Italians, as well as unsettled issues with the Moors from Granada. Isabel and Fernando had a constant struggle to join together their many separate kingdoms to form the united Spain we know today, (SEE FIGURE 4.1.)

Unlike Portugal, outfitting a fleet to go on risky exploration in the Atlantic was the last thing on the minds of Isabel and Fernando.

Why then, was Spain so important that Cristóbal Colón insisted they support his proposition to sail west across the Atlantic in search of the lands of India?

Why would Colón tempt Spain with the same India that the enemy Portugal had been seeking for so many decades?

To understand Spain’s voyage to America and the life of Don Cristóbal Colón, one must examine the long sordid relationship between Portugal and Spain, especially during the 15th century. By failing to understand the state of affairs between Portugal and Spain in 1484, previous biographies have cast a dishonest shadow on much of the context around Colón’s “Big Adventure” as being merely self-aggrandizement instead of a planned subversive mission against Spain. Because the politics between these neighboring enemies are so central to Colón’s own story we must not divorce the man from his political surroundings. To do so would be to pretend that Colón had no connections at all to Portugal, which is contrary to the facts.

Why must we understand the political backdrop between Portugal and Spain in order to understand the life of Colón?

Firstly, the only wars that Portugal ever fought with another Christian kingdom since its independence were fought against Spanish Castile – it was 350 years of conflict. Portugal declared its independence from Castile in 1139 and was recognized by King Alfonso VII of Castile in 1143. However, Castile constantly attempted to reclaim the territory of Portugal for the next four centuries until it finally succeeded in taking over Portugal from 1580 until 1640.

During those first three and a half centuries there were constant Portuguese-Castilian battles with Portugal always fighting for its independence and Castile fighting to dominate it.

Secondly, the only place we know for certain where the man who became known in Spain as “Cristóbal Colón” lived, was the territory of Portugal. There is no proof that Cristóbal Colón lived in any other place except Portugal until 1484, and since late 1484 he lived in Spain. There were rumors he was a Colombo from Genoa, however those remain unsubstantiated rumors, as the reader will see later on.

Therefore the question should be asked, “How can anyone write a book about Cristóbal Colón without taking a very close look at the relationship between Portugal and Spain during his lifetime?”



Figure 4.1: The various kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula circa 1480 on the left: Portugal, Castile & Leon, Aragon, Navarra plus Muslim Granada. On the right is Portugal and today's unified Spain. Castile was the dominant force and most Spanish today speak Castilian. Note that the North African outcrop, opposite Gibraltar, that included the city of Tanger and Ceuta were Portuguese territories. Portugal's borders were established in 1297, making Portugal the oldest defined national territory in the world. All other nations settled their borders later.

Portugal was the most advanced naval power in the Atlantic – it was not only the leader, but was the pioneer of what we today call the Age of Discovery. On the other hand, Spanish seafaring explorers were nowhere to be found until Colón in the year 1492.

Cristóbal Colón was a man who possessed many guarded Portuguese secrets. Before going to Spain, Colón sailed for the king of Portugal and while in Spain he maintained secret contact with King João II.

Portugal was the only kingdom implicated in the systematic exploration of the seas, oceans currents, winds, new heavenly bodies as well as new lands and their coasts and rivers. Portugal's reward had been a great accumulation of knowledge plus the riches gained from the trade with West Africa, whose many names still in use today were baptized by the Portuguese: Sierra Leon, Casablanca, Mina, Lagos, Cabo Verde and Agulhas, to name a few. The way Portugal managed these secrets was crucial for its successful control of those seas.

All of this effort allowed Portugal's Order of Christ to continue its main Templar mission of confronting Islam and finding a sea route to India. In 1415, Portugal's securing of Ceuta, opposite Gibraltar, was the only Christian recovery of African territory since the Islamic Invasion of that continent in the 7th century.

In 1484, the year when Cristóbal Colón moved to Spain from Portugal, Spain was settling down from a 10-year-long civil war, yet another war with Portugal (1476-1480) as well as the problems of the succession to the throne that were resolved with the Treaty of Alcazovas/Toledo, 1479-1480.

This 1470s succession to the throne of Castile was the first of many issues in which Queen Isabel of Spain and King João II of Portugal faced off.

TWO QUEENS, ONE CROWN

The antagonistic atmosphere between Portugal and Castile cultivated over those three and a half centuries can be easily understood in the words of João II's aunt, Dona Filipa, daughter of Prince Pedro, Duke of Coimbra, as she gave her counsel for the impending war against Castile:

One Portuguese will always be worth twenty Castilians with the Grace and help of Our Lord God... As long as our people live, every hour they will fight Castilians, only after all of the Portuguese are dead and all their memory is lost and when they can no longer feel neither glory nor

*pain, only then will we be called truly beaten. Here and in the depths of the earth, as long as we are alive, Portuguese will for always live fighting the Castilians.*⁷⁵

The problem Portugal faced in 1475 with Castile had begun about 1468, when some rebel Castilians, unhappy with King Enrique IV, chose Princess Isabel, King Enrique IV's half-sister, as the rebels' leader and they counseled her to marry Don Fernando, King of Sicily. The King of Sicily, made his way secretly to Castile for the marriage in 1469. Since the King of Sicily knew that Enrique IV's loyalists would prevent Princess Isabel from marrying him, Fernando travelled disguised as a commoner.

The secret reunion between Princess Isabel of Castile and King Fernando of Sicily resulted in their marriage, consecrated not only in secret and against Enrique IV's wishes, but also fraudulently through a Papal consanguine dispensation that was forged by Archbishop Carrillo.

One of the Spanish nobles that greatly opposed this marriage between Isabel and Fernando was the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Enrique de Guzman y Menezes, the richest and most powerful nobleman in Spain titled as one of the *Greats of Castile* – a special class of nobleman – and a relative of the Portuguese Archbishop Don Pedro de Noronha and Portuguese Captain Pedro Correia da Cunha. Both of these noblemen were a part of Cristóbal Colón's extended Portuguese family, (SEE CHAPTER 9).

The Duke of Medina Sidonia not only helped Cristóbal Colón in Spain (including buying the Las Cuevas Monastery where Colón lived, stored all his documents and was later buried) but this Duke so hated King Fernando that when Queen Isabel died in 1504 he was responsible for preventing King Fernando from taking over as ruler of Castile.

Instead, Medina Sidonia supported Fernando's German-born son-in-law, Philip *The Handsome*, Juana *La Loca*'s husband. It was this antipathy between the house of Medina Sidonia and King Fernando that later caused King Fernando to ruin the Duke of Medina Sidonia's plans to marry his daughter, Mencía de Guzman, to Admiral Cristóbal Colón's son, the Portuguese-born Don Diego Colón: Second Admiral of the Indies. Instead, Admiral Cristóbal Colón's son was forced by King Fernando to marry King Fernando's cousin, because the House of the Dukes of Alba was part of King Fernando's clique.⁷⁶

Once Princess Isabel aligned herself with the rebels and married Fernando against King Enrique IV's wishes, the king changed his will. Enrique IV had previously arranged to leave the crown to Princess Isabel, but now that Isabel betrayed him, Enrique IV was leaving the crown to his 13-year-old daughter, Dona Juana and to her future husband, King Afonso V of Portugal:

*In 1472 there were many messages and embassies between King Don Afonso of Portugal and King Don Enrique of Castile regarding the marriage of the Princess Dona Juana, that the mentioned King Enrique desired to marry to King Afonso.*⁷⁷

This Dona Juana, daughter of Enrique IV, was the true Queen of Castile by her father's Last Will. However, as soon as Enrique IV died, Juana's aunt and uncle, Isabel and Fernando, proclaimed themselves king and queen and were supported by the rebels. This initiated a four-year *War of Succession*. In the end, Queen Dona Juana ended up exiled to Portugal in 1479 and is known in Spain as "*la Beltraneja*" because the partisans of Isabel and Fernando insisted she was an illegitimate child of Enrique IV's wife. They spread the rumor that Queen Dona Juana (sister of Afonso V of Portugal) had an affair with the nobleman Beltrán de la Cueva, so that "*la Beltraneja*" could not inherit the throne.

In Portugal, this Queen Dona Juana is always referred to as "*Excelente Senhora*" (Her Excellency) due to being seen as the true heir to the crown of Castile. Isabel herself had sworn allegiance to Dona Juana as her queen and heir to the crown of Castile during Enrique IV's reign. Yet, as soon as Enrique IV died in December 1474, Isabel immediately demanded "*que fizessem de maneira, que ha Infante donna Ioanna nam ficasse por Rainha de Castella*," (that all should be done so that the Princess Dona Juana not remain as Queen of Castile), as she attempted to steal the crown for herself.^{78,79}

King Afonso V of Portugal and Queen Dona Juana "Her Excellency" of Castile were married on May 30, 1475 in the town of Plasencia in Castile. They were sworn King and Queen of Castile and Leon by the loyalists of Enrique IV.

Isabel, however, had already proclaimed herself Queen of Castile and Leon in December of 1474, as soon as her half-brother Enrique IV died. The split within the Castilian kingdom, between the loyalists and the rebels, led to the “War of Succession,” yet another war between Portugal and Castile, because the King of Portugal was now married to the true heir of the crown of Castile.

Not only did Princess Isabel unjustly claim for herself the crown to the kingdoms of Castile and Leon, ignoring the king’s Last Will and its living heir, but Isabel went so far as to claim she was also “Queen of Portugal.” This was quite irrational since the King of Portugal was alive and well and had a legitimate heir in his son Prince João II. Therefore one can see Isabel’s audacity when, as Queen consort of Sicily they “*called themselves also Kings of Castile, of Leon and of Portugal, and would write it this way in their letters, and in their seals they would put the arms of these three kingdoms.*”⁸⁰

This is the same Queen Isabel that in 1483 would try to annex Portugal’s African trade by attempting to kill King João II of Portugal utilizing Cristóbal Colón’s Portuguese nephews (SEE CHAPTER 5) and who would be pressured to finance Colón’s epic voyage in 1492.

In 1475, Isabel was not only stealing her niece’s crown but calling herself Queen of Portugal and straightaway ordering that her ships take away from Portugal the African Trade by force of arms, thus showing how important the Portuguese Atlantic Monopoly was to her:

*Dona Isabel, by the Grace of God queen of Castile, of Portugal etc.,... order to take and reduce the said conquest [of Guinea], and alienate it from the said adversary of Portugal, and to make, and order made war, and all the harm and damage as to an adversary, by all ways and means possible... August 19, 1475.*⁸¹

Long before Queen Isabel was implicated in the treasons against King João II in 1483-1484 to gain access to the African Trade, she had already attempted to confiscate that trade by force from Portugal as early as 1475, as the above quote shows.

Many Castilians helped Portugal and the cause of the Queen heir, Dona Juana. The above-mentioned Duke of Medina Sidonia, Don Enrique de Guzmán y Meneses, was not a loyal subject of Isabel and Fernando.

Medina Sidonia’s brother, Don Juan de Guzman, moved to Portugal in support of Queen Juana and this loyalist brought with him a Portuguese servant named Pêro da Covilhã. Pêro da Covilhã became one of King João II’s greatest spies, as already mentioned, because Pêro was not only able to speak Portuguese and Spanish but was also fluent in Arabic. Pêro da Covilhã, travelled as a spy through Muslim territories and on Muslim ships in 1487. He was the first Portuguese to make it to India, reaching Calicut in 1488. The information gathered during Covilhã’s spy mission included maps, routes as well as where to hire experienced Indian Ocean pilots and was used to guide Vasco da Gama’s voyage to India (SEE CHAPTER 12).

The Duke of Medina Sidonia, along with the Marquis of Cadiz, Don Rodrigo Ponce de León, and Pedro de Estuñiga, Count of Miranda, sabotaged Queen Isabel and King Fernando’s war plans against Portugal during the War of Succession. Secretly aligned with Portugal, they refused to comply with Isabel’s orders to prepare the war fleet against Portugal. The Marquis of Cadiz even sent his own Spanish ships to aid the Portuguese fleet along the African coast:

*On his behalf, Don Rodrigo Ponce de León, Marquis of Cadiz, had managed to alert the Portuguese captain, Fernão Gomes, of the preparations [for war], including sending him two of his ships so that “they may be used in the naval combat or, if by chance they do not end up facing our [Isabel’s] armada, he [Captain Fernão Gomes] should use them for in his own undertakings.”*⁸²

According to the Papal decrees, only Portugal had rights to sail and trade south of Africa’s Cape Bojador (26,1° N). The War of Succession was the first time this Portuguese Atlantic monopoly came under systematic attacks by Spain. The constant fleets sent by Queen Isabel threatened to expose all of Portugal’s tightly held secrets and its established privileged of “*mare clausum*” (closed sea) put in place in 1443. All the secrets that the Portuguese crown, the Portuguese Order of Christ, the Portuguese Admirals, and the Portuguese sailors had managed to maintain since 1317 were now under threat of exposure.

The usurping Queen Isabel ordered constant raids on those Portuguese routes as she outfitted her own ships to go trade in Mina and other profitable locations in Western Africa. Isabel and Fernando spared no effort in the attempt to wrestle away this Portuguese monopoly. In one instance alone, the Portuguese patrol ships captured a fleet of 35 Spanish ships at the waters of Mina in today's Ghana:

In this year [1480] they, King Afonso and the Prince João II, ordered George Correa commander of Pinheiro, and Mem Palha, good, and valiant knights to go patrol the coasts of Guinea, each one in his own captaincy, the two meeting at the location of Mina destroyed thirty-five carracks and ships of Castile, of which were captains Pedro de Covides... that went there to trade per orders of King Fernando, and of Queen Isabel.⁸³

As one can clearly see, even as Isabel was signing a peace treaty with Portugal, the Treaty of Alcazovas, she was at the same time sending her ships to raid in the Portuguese-controlled waters, locations specifically prohibited in that same treaty.

The Atlantic secrets had been jealously guarded for decades – this war was an eye-opener for Portugal, which made Portugal try even harder to keep control in future decades. When the Portuguese court was in session, a common complaint from the Portuguese people to King João II was that all foreigners be expelled from the kingdom since they were there “only to discover our secrets of Guinea.”

King João II not only hid geographical secrets of those Atlantic territories; he also hid the secrets of how gold trading was done at Mina, in Ghana. Portuguese ships sailed south of Ghana to trade their Portuguese goods for African slaves. They then sailed north to Mina, exchanging those African slaves for gold and then returned home with the gold to Lisbon. Queen Isabel had managed to learn some of these secret maneuvers during those five years of war.

Early in 1475, King Afonso V entrusted the kingdom of Portugal to his son, João II, and moved to Castile to marry and defend his 13-year-old bride's claim against the 24-year old Isabel. What were João II's priorities during those years as regent while his father was absent from Portugal?

The principal worry was keeping the kingdom safe from Castilian raids because “*he received on the boundaries of the kingdom many assaults, in the which he combated as an extraordinary and fearless captain.*” João II, as a 20-year-old regent, proved not only his mettle and valor but also his leadership capacities as a man of cunning, courage and intelligence.

The most important battle that took place in this War of Succession was at Toro, Spain in 1476. Prince João II faced off against King Fernando's much larger contingent and defeated it with a battalion so small that João II's father, Afonso V, leading a larger battalion that was defeated by the Castilians, presumed João II had also lost. King Fernando did not even fight, but instead kept watch atop a hill with a small militia ready to run if needed.

This act of bravery on João II's part was the only thing that stood between victory and defeat for both sides. While the Castilians defeated the King, championing Queen Juana's cause, the Portuguese, led by João II, defeated in turn the opposing King who was championing Queen Isabel's cause. Therefore the crown remained contested by both queens after this draw.

Queen Isabel saw in her cousin, João II, a formidable opponent and referred to him as “*el Hombre*” (the Man). She both admired and feared him, showing much more reverence for the “*intellect and vigilance of Prince João II than for that of his father Don Afonso.*”⁸⁴ When Isabel learned of João II's death in 1495 she exclaimed *the Man Died* - “*Murió el Hombre.*”

All the chroniclers of the day say João II was in full control of Portugal and could do “*tudo o que bem lhe parecesse*” (all the he saw fit to do) during his father's absence. For all intents and purposes, Prince João II was King of Portugal from 1475 until 1478, for he was a stand-in for his father who was in Spain and then in France. For this reason, it was João II, and not Afonso V, who was responsible for the secret Atlantic voyages that took place during those years, including the Luso-Danish expedition to Canada in 1477 in which Cristóbal Colón took part.

Historians typically say this voyage was organized by “Afonso V of Portugal and Christian I of Denmark,” but since Afonso V was not reigning Portugal at that time, it was his son, the Regent, who organized the Luso-Danish expedition.

Putting these tidbits of information in its proper context is helpful when trying to understand what really happened. João II was at the helm of the Portuguese discoveries and it was João II who, planning the Luso-Danish expedition, sent Cristóbal Colón to sail the Northwest Atlantic and the shores of Canada in February 1477 (SEE CHAPTER 11).

The noble knights of the Portuguese Christian military orders did not stop their ideological mission to defeat Islam and re-conquer Jerusalem just because they were involved in another war with Castile. Marine exploration continued and Portuguese ships kept making voyages of trade, reconnaissance and patrol.

BETTING ON PEACE

João II was truly the force behind the Portuguese politics in the 1470s. An example of how far he would go to protect the secrets of the Atlantic and Portugal’s mission to reach India can be seen in his Treaty of Alcazovas. This treaty was written in Alcáçovas, Portugal, in 1479 and signed in Toledo, Spain, in 1480. Its successful crafting illustrates the prince’s political savvy for he masterminded it:

The arrangements of this peace... the heartbreaking change of the Queen Dona Juana—Her Excellency, from her royal state, to that of professed nun in the monastery of Santa Clara of Coimbra, a life which she accepted with much resignation, how big was the sorrow felt by King Afonso V, her husband, to see her forced into such a state, the author of all of which was the Prince João II... forcing the King Afonso V to accept it.

The professing of Queen Dona Juana was done on November of the year 1480... however, after the Prince became King he allowed her to live outside of the convent and she had in this kingdom, until she died, house and state of Queen.⁸⁵

João II orchestrated this new treaty between Portugal and Castile and was able to force his father, Afonso V, and their enemies Isabel and Fernando to consent by controlling the trump card - Queen Juana.

Reading the text of this treaty, one will find that its main objective was not ending the War of Succession over the crown of Castile, but instead, keeping Spanish ships out of Portuguese-controlled waters forever. João II’s main concern was the maintenance of Portuguese secrets – the treaty prohibited Spanish ships from those waters just as Portugal had managed to do up to this war. Keeping Spain out would preserve the knowledge of those trading ports, the best routes to get there as well as the best routes to get home.

Secrecy had been Portugal’s secret weapon for over a century and it had worked marvelously up to this point. João II saw clearly, unlike his father Afonso V, how winning the crown of Castile would not compensate for the loss of those secrets to the Castilians. João II was careful in creating this treaty to safeguard his future kingdom. In the words of Jaime Cortesão, the treaty came to be:

By the prompting of the Perfect Prince, the great organizer of the geographic secrets and the defender of the royal power... [this treaty was] mainly to better hide the national objective of discovering the sea route to India.⁸⁶

King João II, the “Perfect Prince” as he is known, understood that he had no manpower to protect anything outside of Portugal’s mainland, if it really came to a showdown, and decades later Portugal lost many of its overseas possessions to other European crowns precisely because the secrets were discovered and there was a lack of Portuguese manpower to secure those places.

In 1479 João II held two trumps to force Spain to give up its attempts to sail to those highly valued targets, although the fix proved to be temporary. The first trump card was allowing Princess Isabel to become Queen of Castile and offering to turn her niece, Queen Juana, into a nun housed in Portugal.

The other trump card was the 140-year-conflict over the Canary Islands, allowing Castile to have the right to the conquest of the Canaries. At the same time, the sly João II requested that those same Canary Islands be given to Portugal as the dowry when Queen Isabel's daughter's married João II's son.

This contract presented by João II to Isabel and Fernando seemed to answer all Prince João's concerns and would have done so, if the Spanish Monarchs had not insisted, later on, in trying to nullify the treaty by attempting to have João II killed.

The Treaty of Alcazovas had as its main goal reestablishing the Portuguese policy of *mare clausum* south of the Canaries. This short extract from the text of the treaty shows how João II used the two trumps to impose his policies on Castile. He made his father give up the fight for the Castilian crown, thus handing the crown to Isabel and in exchange:

The aforesaid King and Queen of Castile, Aragon, Sicily, etc., promised, henceforth and forever, that neither of themselves nor by another, publicly or secretly, or by their heirs and successors, will they disturb, trouble, or molest, in fact or in law, in court or out of court, the said King and Prince of Portugal or the future sovereigns of Portugal or their kingdoms, in their possession or quasi possession of all the trade, lands, and trade in Guinea, with its gold mines, or in any other islands, coasts, or continents, discovered or to be discovered, found or to be found, or in the islands of Madeira, Porto Santo, and Desertas, or in all the islands of the Azores, as well as the islands of Cabo Verde, or in all the islands up to now discovered, or in all other islands which shall be found or acquired by conquest from the Canary Islands south in the direction of Guinea. For whatever has been found or shall be found... belongs to the said King and Prince of Portugal and to their kingdoms, excepting only the Canary Islands... which belong to the kingdoms of Castile. And in like manner, they promised not to disturb, trouble, or molest any persons whomsoever, who, under any title or in any way or manner whatsoever, shall trade or traffic in or acquire by conquest the said trade of Guinea... they do promise and assure, in good faith and without deceit, the said king and prince and their successors, that they will not, of themselves or through others, order or consent, but rather forbid, that any of their people, native or subject, in any place or at any time, or in any case, specified or not specified, or any other foreign people who might be within their kingdoms and dominions... Neither will they give any occasion, favor, opportunity, aid, or consent, direct or indirect, for such trade, nor consent to equip or freight for those regions in any manner.... the guilty party shall incur a fine of 300,000 gold doblas of the grade of good gold and of just weight paid to the other party.

Everything belonged to Portugal except the Canaries at 28° N. Cautiously, João II kept Castile north of the Cabo Bojador line that the Popes had previously granted to Portugal: 26,1°N. For his time, when the sword settled these types of issues, this contract was truly a marvel. Through it João II was legally keeping Portugal's only enemy out of those coveted places and putting Portugal in a position to collect 300,000 gold coins, since Portugal could in no way break these clauses. Only Castile could break the contract by sailing within Portuguese territory.

João II's contract blessed Isabel as uncontested Queen of Castile and left the other queen, Dona Juana, under João II's control in Portugal. After the contract was signed in 1480, João II (even though he was still only Prince) published a new law that ordered "*morte a todos os castelhanos encontrados em qualquer parte da Guiné*" (death to all Castilians found in any part of Guinea) - south of the Canaries.⁸⁷

Because João II held much more knowledge about the geography of his world than did the Catholic Monarchs, he used it to his advantage and thus secured the eventual sea route to India that Portugal had so assiduously sought for so long.

The Treaty of Alcazovas/Toledo was not written to resolve the succession to the throne of Castile as many have insinuated. To do that there was no need for a treaty but simply for Afonso V to abandon his pretensions to the Castilian throne and allow Isabel to keep it.

The treaty was, instead, a concerted attempt to maintain Portugal's control, "having as its objective the safeguarding of all its privileges relative to the new territories" (*Dum Diversas*, 1452 and *Romanus Pontifex*, 1455, from Nicholas V; *Inter Cetera*, from his successor Callistus III in 1456; *Aeterni Regis Clementia*, from Sixtus IV in 1481.)^{88, 89}

By considering his actions as Prince, one can get an idea of what type of king João II would be. This cunning is something he exhibited continuously, long before his secret agent, Cristóbal Colón, arrived in Castile.

João II knew it was impossible for his small kingdom to win an all out war against the combined kingdoms of Castile and Aragon - the two major players that united to form today's Spain. Therefore he had to beat them with cunning, exactly the way that he managed to do many times during that five-year-long *War of Succession*. During this war many people said of João II that they "*were astounded to find such mind in him, and knowledge of the things of war, and the same [Spanish] monarchs, Fernando and Isabel, affirmed this many times in speech.*"⁹⁰

The Atlantic discoveries and the sea route to India were vital pieces for the vitality and survival of King João II's kingdom. The high value of those territories was such that he guarded them jealously against all possible threats. His influence extended far outside Portugal's borders where his friends and spies worked tirelessly in deceptions and even assassinations (SEE CHAPTER 6) in order to guarantee that the rest of Europe stayed away from that Portuguese monopoly in the Atlantic.

It was this same João II, Master of the Portuguese Military Order of Santiago where Colón's wife was a member (SEE CHAPTER 9), who was Cristóbal Colón's boss while the discoverer lived in Portugal and sailed to the Azores, to Madeira, the secret routes of the Guinea Trade, to the highly protected location of the gold trade in Ghana known as *Mina de Ouro* (the gold Mine) and even to the coast of Canada. All of this sailing experience would come to serve Colón well in Spain.

CHAPTER 5

A PERFECT PRINCE IS A READY KING

*Seven years was I in your royal court and to
as many as were told about this enterprise
all at once said that it was a ruse.*

DON CRISTÓBAL COLÓN

Before entering into Part Two of this book where our main subject, Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón, is directly dealt with, this final chapter in Part I reviews several important events. These events help to further put into perspective the political climate in Portugal during the year 1484 when Colón moved to Spain along with his traitor nephew. Namely, the dynamics between King João II of Portugal and Queen Isabel I of Spain and how Cristóbal Colón fits into the political game between these two crowns.

When João II became king of Portugal he chose as his motto “*pela ley e pela grey*” (from the Latin *Pro Lege et Pro Grege* meaning *by the law and by the people*) and, unlike his pushover father, he became in the words of Rui de Pina, “Lord to Lords and non-servant to servants.” Lord Scales from England, Sir Woodville*, identified by Rui de Pina as the brother of the Queen of England, boasted that the most marvelous thing he had seen was King João II of Portugal, “a king that took orders from no one and whom all obeyed.”

João II, like any other king, had his spies and agents in many kingdoms and Rui de Pina, himself one of João II’s agents, wrote that when Lord Scales was killed in 1488, João II felt great sadness because he had lost one of his “great and good servants.”⁹¹

Just hearing that João II was planning to personally battle in North Africa was enough for several Moroccan kings to capitulate and pledge allegiance to him as his vassals.

Titled the “Perfect Prince” because João II epithelized Machiavelli’s *Il Principe*, he was fiercely cunning and a great leader whose Atlantic policies – for better or worse – benefited not only Portugal but the entire western world.

Had João II not been the leader he was, it is highly possible that the Indian Ocean would have remained solely under control of the Muslims for many more centuries. It is also certain that had João II done things differently, Cristóbal Colón would never have moved to Spain to peddle his now famous “dream” at that court, nor would Colón have been credited with the “discovery” of lands already known to exist by both Colón and João II.

Who knows what the world would be like today if João II had not made the strides he did in fulfilling Portugal’s old Templar mission during his short, 14-year rule. It is even possible that the Americas could have become a Muslim conquest and the western world, instead of becoming the force of freedom it is, have been reduced to just a few outposts, if any at all.

By the age of 15, João II had shown himself to be a force to reckon with. In 1470 King Afonso V was planning the Christian reconquest of Arzila, in today’s Morocco, and João II wanted to go fight alongside his father. King Afonso V refused because João II was very young, recently married and, above all, Afonso’s only heir to the throne of Portugal. The king did not want to risk both their necks on the retaking of Arzila. He was quite aware of the dangers the small Portuguese contingents

* Anthony Woodville, 2nd earl of Rivers, (brother of Elizabeth Woodville wife of Edward IV) married Elizabeth Scales, baroness Scales, daughter of Thomas Scales, Lord Scales.

had encountered in the past, heavily outnumbered by the Moors who had previously defeated and held his uncle, Prince Saint Fernando, Master of the Military Order of Avis, captive until death.

But João II had already decided that he would go and how he confronted his father shows both his mettle as well as his determination. He told his father, "Either you take me alongside you as a Prince or else you will find me there as a common soldier." Of course João II went alongside his father as he intended. Arzila was conquered and the Prince was knighted in this same city where, in 1502, Cristóbal Colón would make a special detour to go rescue the Portuguese soldiers from the Moors (SEE CHAPTER 14).

João II was, on May 4, 1471, put in charge of the Portuguese Atlantic discovery enterprise and the African commerce:

In all of these parts, all of which we call Guinea even though they have other names, nobody go trade, do business, or fish unless he is ordered or has license from the said my son.⁹²

The royal chronicler, Damião de Góis, confirms that before the conquest of Arzila, the Prince was already in charge of some African matters:

It is important to know that the king [João II], being still Prince, received through royal donation from his father, the governance of the places of Africa, and as well the rents and trade of Mina and all Guinea.⁹³

This signifies that, in 1470, after the death of his father-in-law, Prince Fernando, Second Duke of Viseu and Master of the Templar Order of Christ, João II was put in charge of the Discoveries. (The Second Duke of Viseu, Prince Fernando, Afonso V's brother, succeeded of Henry the Navigator to Master of the Order of Christ and was also Master of the Order of Santiago, thus becoming the richest person in Portugal.)

Prince João II managed, guarded and protected his privileges over these Atlantic territories so thoroughly that he had a standing order that whoever "to the said parts and lands and seas of Guinea go or order others to trade there shall die for it."⁹⁴

King João II's personal secretary, García de Resende, confirmed in his chronicle that during João II's regency, throughout Spanish War of Succession with Queen Isabel, João II was in fact in charge of everything in the kingdom of Portugal:

The Prince with so few people, as that which he had to defend the Kingdoms, and yet with those few he battled often with the enemy, they feared him immensely... he did all with such knowhow and effort, and valor, that to do more would be impossible... so much exertion, knowledge, caution, diligence, being he so young, yet acting as an extraordinary and expert captain with a lifetime of experience in war would have.

One thing that João II was never tolerant of was treachery. Loyalty was in his eyes the most important gift a subject could give to a king. He rewarded loyalty and punished the lack of it severely with coldblooded calculation:

*Lopo Vaz de Castelbranco, nicknamed Torrão, a high nobleman... governor of Moura... rebelled in favor of King Fernando [of Spain] in the year of 1478... Prince João II, who always hated these types of dealings... would penalize him as an example for others, he ordered that he be killed entrusting the execution of this endeavor to Joam Palha, Mem Palha, Pero Palha, and Bras Palha, all brothers, and to Diogo Gil [Moniz] and Rui Gil [Moniz] also brothers, nicknamed Magros naturals from Evora, all of them cousins and Knights of his household. He declared to them in **high secrecy** his intentions encouraging them greatly to make it work, because for it he would do for them many favors. Thus motivated, they arranged after a few days, a make-believe brawl between themselves, from which, as if fearing the authorities, they sought refuge in the town of Moura where they were received and sheltered by Lopo Vaz, to whom they repaid with the worst reward they could, killing him during one of many days that they went with him outside the town for hunting and enjoyment.⁹⁵*

This is how João II, in 1478, secretly arranged for the death of King Afonso V's *monteiro-mor* (Royal Falconer), Lopo Vaz de Castelo-Branco, an important son of the Admiral of Portugal and a powerful nobleman who descended from all the great kings of Europe and whose cousin, Catarina de Ataíde, married the famous Vasco da Gama. He is also connected to our subject because his son, Nuno Vaz de Castelo-Branco, married Dona Isabel de Noronha, a great-niece of Cristóbal Colón. This Dona Isabel de Noronha was the daughter of another traitor, the Count of Penamacor, a nephew of Cristóbal Colón, covered in this chapter and whose familial ties are explained in the genealogy tables in Chapter 9.

Note that the brothers *Magros*, Rui and Diogo were brothers of Colón's mother-in-law attesting to how closely tied Colón's family was to King João II.

João II was only Prince at that time, but one can see his *modus operandi* presented in the scenario above: He planned well his deceptions to ensure the proper outcome. He publicized false events to cover-up and protect his spies. And he chose those spies carefully, brothers when possible, to ensure they were the best matched for the mission. He then rewarded the success of his spies accordingly.

After the death of Afonso V on August 28, 1481, João II was crowned king of Portugal. Yet again he revealed his great concern and motivation in protecting the secrets of Atlantic navigation as well as the search for a sea route to India. He immediately implemented a policy to make sure his physical and legal rights over those territories were never again questioned by Spain. "*And as soon as the King ruled*" says Garcia de Resende, "*he ordered the construction of a castle, called S. Jorge, at Mina, for the which he ordered prepared all the building materials which he sent by ships along the African coast with 600 men.*"

This is the event for which Resende explains that all was done under the "strictest secrecy and with grave sworn oaths." The king had ordered that all square rigged ships be burned in Ghana so that no foreigner could see them returning to the kingdom, thus propagating the lie that it was impossible to return from Guinea in such ships. The lie that only the Portuguese lateen caravel could return from beyond the appropriately titled *Cabo Nam*, (Cape of No Return), was maintained by João II under the *strictest secrecy and grave sworn oaths*.

This proved to be genius. The news that none of those ships returned frightened foreigners - only Portugal held the secret of the proper construction for the lateen caravel, which apparently was not that easy to duplicate. (In 1940, modern Portuguese builders constructed the replica *Portugal* that turned on its side and sank minutes after it was launched into the Tagus. The same happened in Huelva in 1991 with the newly built replica *Victoria*.)

João II even threatened Pero d'Allenquer, a pilot, for contradicting the king publicly by saying that he could return from Guinea in any kind of square-rigged ship. Afterwards João II called Pero d'Allenquer privately and explained to him why the secret over the square-rigged ships needed to be maintained.⁹⁶

The other kingdoms would certainly take note that if the most experienced pilots in the Atlantic Sea could not sail home on a square-rigged ship, how could they ever hope to do so, having less sailing experience and lacking the knowledge of those winds and currents that the Portuguese held?

TRUST AND TREASON

João II's father had been spendthrift in conceding posts, lands, money and favors to all, even in cases when the recipients did not deserve it. It was he who, in 1478, made a Marquis of Cristóbal Colón's nephew, Don João de Bragança and had already in 1475 made Count of Penamacor out of Colón's other nephew, Don Lopo de Albuquerque. This last nobleman was the adoptive father of Colón's lifetime secretary Diego Méndez de Segura (SEE CHAPTER 9).

When João II took over the throne he griped, "my father left me only as king of the streets of Portugal" – his father had awarded most of the cities and towns to the noblemen. João II fought to recoup royal power from the nobles and to remove favors from those who were undeserving.

João II was also known to possess strict ideals of chivalry and justice, as seen in many vignettes during his reign. For instance, while many kings had to contend with unruly heirs, some even in out-

right wars for the throne, João II abdicated the throne in his father's favor after having been crowned King in 1477. King Afonso V wrote to João II a letter from France saying that João II should be crowned King. Disillusioned, Afonso V was not ever returning to Portugal and was leaving France to go serve God in the Holy Land. However, after a change of events, Afonso V returned to Portugal and while his counselors advised him to find a secure place to station himself to enter into negotiations with his son, who may not have been willing to abdicate, Afonso V replied instead: "*Oh! That it please God to grant me such grace as to allow me the favor of being ruled by my son.*"

There was no need for negotiations. As soon as João II received the news that his father had returned to Portugal, it was King João II who insisted that Afonso V return to his rightful place on the throne. Even after Afonso V had proposed they split the kingdom and each become king of half, João II retook his title as Prince.

João II was a well-informed king who not only implemented deceptive practices to achieve his goals but also kept himself up to date on everything, not only openly but covertly by the use of many well-placed spies.

The Kings of Portugal, with control over the national Religious Military Orders as already mentioned and aided by the monastic orders of the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carthusians, Cistercians and even the Knights of Saint Catherine, had a ready, willing and able force at their disposal all over Europe. Portugal's ties went as far as Ethiopia. The Ethiopian ambassador, Lucas Marcos, while in Portugal wrote letters to Prester John by request of King João II.⁹⁷

These wide-ranging connections and secret alliances, plus the common objective of recuperating Jerusalem, allowed the Portuguese monarchs to solicit favors and receive covert help that aided in the achievement of mutual goals.

Portugal's military knights had sworn a vow of obedience to their respective Masters and were prepared to die for their cause. João II was Master of the Order Santiago and the Order of Avis. The Duke of Viseu was Master of the Order of Christ. Don Diogo Fernandes de Almeida was the Prior of the Order of Crato [Order of St. John, today the Order of Malta]. This is the same "Prior of Crato" that hosted Don Cristóbal Colón in Portugal, March 1493, while Colón visited with King João II at Vale do Paraíso upon returning victoriously to Lisbon from his First Voyage (SEE CHAPTER 6).

Not only was Don Diogo Fernandes de Almeida the leader of the Order of St. John in Portugal, a top confidant of King João II and guardian of King João II's son, D. Jorge, but his brother, the Count of Abrantes, was married to a niece of Cristóbal Colón (SEE CHAPTER 9).

King João II so trusted this Diogo Fernandes de Almeida that he was among the eleven chosen to be at the side of João II's deathbed. After the king's death, this Prior of Crato and the Bishop Don Diogo Ortiz de Calçadilha worked secretly to conceal the "little box that João II always carried under lock and key," thought to contain poison that João II used on his enemies. Their plan was to secretly throw the box of poison into the sea to protect the king's memory. However, they would never have told the truth and therefore, upon opening it, they found only "religious books and a cilice" inside.

The Castilian, Don Diogo Ortiz de Vilhegas Calçadilha (the Calzadilla mentioned by Las Casas), was the Bishop of Ceuta, confessor to Queen Juana "la Beltraneja," Chaplain Major to João II, plus an expert Cosmographer, and the chief of João II's *Junta dos Matemáticos* – also sometimes called *Junta dos Cosmógrafos* (Assembly of Cosmographers). These people who continuously interacted with Cristóbal Colón were not powerless simpletons in the kingdom; they were part of the top tier of power and were involved in daily policymaking with King João II.

Like in any other kingdom, João II also had his share of enemies. His greatest enemy in Portugal was not just any noble but was yet another of those married to a niece of Cristóbal Colón. His name was Don João de Bragança, the Marquis of Montemor and Portugal's Supreme Military Leader, brother of the powerful Duke of Bragança.

The ball of treason started to roll right at the beginning of João II's reign while the kingdom was still mourning King Afonso V's death. King João II visited the Marquis's town of Montemor and

confronted the Marquis who, instead of being dressed in the typical mourning attire, was dressed in lively and luxurious silk clothes as if the kingdom was in a time of celebration. This lack of respect for João II's deceased father so affected the king that he admonished the Marquis harshly:

*Did he not recall that the King, for whom the Marquis so disrespected by refusing to wear clothes of mourning, had made him a Marquis and had given him the town of Montemor and had always awarded him honors and favors during his lifetime?*⁹⁸

The Marquis, unrepentant, provoked even more anger from the king with “injurious and ugly words” directed at the Archbishop of Braga, João Galvam. João II held an impromptu counsel to decide what should be done and ordered “that the Marquis, in that very day leave Montemor and within five days he should make his way to the opposite side of the Tagus River and remain there for as long as the king desire it.”

This was the final drop that overfilled the bitter cup of malcontent for João II's enemies. The insolent Marquis, furious and rash, wanted to kill the king. To do this he sought the aid of his cousin, Queen Isabel of Spain. The Marquis of Montemor entered into “secret negotiations and dealings with the Queen of Castile.”⁹⁹ This nephew of Cristóbal Colón was the spark that ignited a fuse of treason that would soon blow-up in his face:

*João de Bragança, Marquis of Montemor, incited the rebellion. It appeared as if at any moment the civil war would begin.*¹⁰⁰ *The Marquis continued requesting the four thousand mounted Castilian lances with the help of which he hoped to kill the King and the Prince heir.*¹⁰¹

Working with his brothers Don Fernando de Bragança, (Third Duke of Bragança), Don Álvaro de Bragança (Chancellor of the Kingdom), Don Afonso de Bragança (Count of Faro) and many other powerful nobles, the traitors devised a strategy to kill João II with the aid of Queen Isabel of Spain.

Some may wonder what would be Queen Isabel's reward for aiding in this treason. It is easy to see that she required the nullification of the recently signed Treaty of Alcazovas and the return to Castile of her menace, Queen Juana “Beltraneja.” Again, in Isabel's desire to help the traitors so they could nullify the Treaty of Alcazovas, shows how João II's treaty was only beneficial to Portugal.

João II's traitors counseled Queen Isabel to keep breaking the terms of the treaty knowing this would cause another Portuguese-Castilian war. The traitors would then fight alongside Queen Isabel's soldiers against King João II. Already in the middle to the treaty negotiations, in 1480, Queen Isabel had sent 35 ships captained by Pedro de Covides to those Portuguese territories of Guinea. She continuously turned a blind eye to her sailors going south of the Canaries and welcomed and sheltered those Portuguese who made their way to her court with Atlantic navigational secrets.¹⁰² Therefore it is not out of character for Queen Isabel to aid Portuguese traitors in a plot to kill João II over this treaty:

*Although in the treaty of peace it was forbidden, with grave penalties, for the Castilians to go trade in those parts of Guinea, Queen Isabel should insist that the King of Portugal not deny her naturals access to those parts. And the disloyal foundation of this was, and they admitted it: “that although the concession of these things seemed to be very reasonable, because of their high value the King [João II] would never grant them but rather, was willing to die before he allowed this, and therefore the Monarchs [Fernando and Isabel] would have a reason to break out in war with Portugal and that the Duke and his brothers would instead serve them [Fernando and Isabel] and would give their armies unhindered access through their lands.*¹⁰³

We should recall that the Treaty of Alcazovas gave nothing to Castile. It allowed Queen Isabel to usurp Queen Juana's crown, gave Spain temporary conquest of the Canary Islands plus a fine of 300,000 coins “of good gold and just weight” in case Isabel broke any part of the treaty. That was it.

It's understandable why Isabel was so eager to nullify such a one-sided treaty.

While King João II was being pushed by an ebbing tide of economic and religious Templar dreams, dreams that hinged on reaching India and then retaking Jerusalem, Queen Isabel was mired in a slew of internal problems such as getting the good graces of those supporters of “Her Excellency” Dona Juana, whose crown Isabel had stolen.

The War of Succession between Queen Isabel and Queen Juana over the Castilian crown lasted five years. João II used the crown of Castile as leverage to craft the Treaty of Alcazovas, and it was João II who “blessed” Princess Isabel as Queen Isabel I of Castile and Leon by putting an end to his father’s support of Queen Juana’s cause.

To remove this obstacle to the throne, Queen Isabel was ready to accept the proposals made by João II such as Portugal’s control of all the lands and islands of the Atlantic “discovered or to be discovered,” as well as João II’s control over Queen Juana. The “glue” that kept this treaty together was the contract of marriage between João II’s young son, heir Prince Afonso, and Isabel’s young daughter, Princess Isabel, who were to be held hostage together at the border town of Moura in Portugal as a gesture of “Good Faith” between both untrusting enemies.

Prince João II sent his son to Moura as agreed, but Queen Isabel kept making excuses to not send her daughter. João II, fed up with the situation, took two pieces of paper and on one he wrote *WAR* and on the other *PEACE*. He handed the papers to Isabel’s ambassadors saying, “At the next counsel meeting have Her Highness choose one of these. If she chooses war, I will be happy to fight for peace rather than to have this peace that brings me only war.” The matter was quickly settled and the Spanish Princess was delivered to the children’s keeper, Dona Beatriz, at the town of Moura.

One can understand how Queen Isabel would jump at the opportunity to turn the tables on João II, to nullify the treaty, to gain unhindered access to the African trade, to get her hands on Queen Juana, as well as to get her daughter back home under her wing. All of this made Queen Isabel ready to aid the Portuguese nobles in the murder of João II.

Queen Isabel was aware that Portugal brought home from Mina around 1,500 pounds of gold a year, an enormous quantity, and the sly João II tried to secretly marry Queen Juana to King Francisco de Foix, King of Navarra, which would have made Francisco de Foix a new contender against Isabel for the crown. The secret marriage plan was discovered, however, when the Spanish captured the Portuguese messenger as he crossed Isabel’s territory heading to Navarra. Álvaro de Bragança was the suspected traitor who alerted Queen Isabel about this messenger.

These types of secret dealings show that João II never rested. He constantly moved the chess pieces around to aid his position.

As long as Dona Juana, *de jure* Queen of Castile, was alive she would remain a threat to Isabel’s crown. The same way that João II used her as a bargaining chip so did the traitors by offering to hand Queen Juana over to Queen Isabel once King João II was dead, as we can gather from Rui de Pina’s account:

*Don Álvaro de Ataíde was in Santarem to capture and take to the castle Her Excellency Dona Juana, that was then in the Monastery of Santa Clara of that town because by getting this Lady they expected the help and favor of the Kings of Castile, to whom, as it is known, all this was disclosed.*¹⁰⁴

Did deposed Queen Dona Juana truly remain such a threat to Queen Isabel? Here are a few extracts from Her Excellency’s letters:

And then Princess Dona Isabel, his sister, Queen of Sicily, that is now so shamelessly, with great offense and even with less respect to the person and dignity of the said King, my Lord [and father] willed by force to call herself Queen of these my kingdoms [of Castile and Leon].

And even 45 years later, in 1522, Juana continued the fight against Queen Isabel’s grandson, King Carlos V over the crown of Castile and Leon:

*Her Most Serene Lady, the Lady Dona Juana by grace of God Queen of Castile and Leon, of Toledo, of Galicia, of Seville, of Cordoba... Seeing as Carlos, elected Emperor, unduly having said Kingdoms and Lordships against right and by force occupied, is not legitimate King of said Kingdoms, nor can any other be, being I, the said Lady, alive whose said Kingdoms and Lordships belong to, and to whom duly by legitimate succession, and inheritance they belong because I am the only legitimate daughter, heir and successor to King Don Enrique, the fourth of Castile and Leon... Given at the City of Lisbon signed and sealed with the Royal Seal of our arms... I the Queen.*¹⁰⁵

Yes, Her Excellency, the nemesis whom Queen Isabel labeled *Beltraneja*, continued being a threat and although Queen Juana no longer had an army to rely on, Isabel did not like having her out from under her control and Queen Isabel feared for the loss of her crown right up to her death in 1504.¹⁰⁶

Thus Queen Isabel, who had gone to all extremes to steal the crown from her niece, was not beyond aiding and abetting in the plot to kill King João II. Isabel was also supportive of the kidnapping of the heir to the very throne that Isabel was now sitting on.

It didn't phase Isabel that only two years prior, she had signed her name on the Treaty of Alcazovas, where it is clearly spelled out "*neither her directly, nor through other persons, publicly nor secretly molest, hinder, or impede the Princes and the Kings of Portugal.*" Isabel was now doing exactly what she had agreed not to.

Once these actions were set in motion, the Marquis's brother, Don Fernando, Third Duke of Bragança, took the lead as the organizer of the traitors and became the main contact between Queen Isabel, and the traitors in Portugal.

João II's spies alerted him and the king pretended he knew nothing until he could maneuver politically to remove his hostage son from Moura. He tricked Queen Isabel into agreeing to modify this part of the treaty, which Isabel was eager to do in order to get her daughter back home.

Once the Prince Heir was freed, João II arrested the Duke, who was tried sentenced and beheaded, but not before he told his confessor, Paulo de Santa Maria:

*Never had I known God, or King, or a superior until I was brought here, and at the moment that I was put here I even discovered myself, whom I previously did not know... nor had I the slightest inkling that the King knew so many things, that not only those written, and spoken, but even those that are thought, he knows all... I lived so terrified that he would eventually destroy and kill me, that my fear brought me exactly to that which I had dreaded.*¹⁰⁷

On June 20, 1483, the Duke of Bragança was publicly beheaded for treason, but what happened to his brother João de Bragança, Marquis of Montemor, and the other traitors? As soon as the Duke of Bragança was arrested, the Marquis of Montemor ran away with his family to the safety of Queen Isabel's court where he continued instigating the treason.

João II ordered that an effigy of the Marquis be made at the City of Abrantes, which was beheaded after a public pronouncement of the Marquis's guilt. Rui de Pina says the Marquis's disloyalty was more severe since he was also the *Condestável* (Supreme Military Leader) invested with the duty to protect the King and the kingdom.

From the beheaded statue, which was dressed in the Marquis's arms, spilled real blood that had been artfully prepared as to represent a real person, to the amazement of the onlookers. The Marquis hearing of this in Spain, became so "ill with worry that he died shortly afterwards." (One could infer he was poisoned by one of João II's agents at Isabel's court.) The Marquis's wife, Cristóbal Colón's niece, remained in Spain and is mentioned in the Last Will made by Cristóbal Colón's son, Diego Colón.

There were many Portuguese nobles involved in this treason with Queen Isabel but King João II attempted to handle the situation in a just, calculated and disciplined way: He held a trial for the Duke of Bragança where witnesses and evidence was presented and a sentence passed. He did the same for the Marquis of Montemor who was also sentenced to death, however with the third treasonous brother, Don Alvaro de Bragança, Chancellor of the Kingdom, João II did not have him arrested or tried.

Clearly João II understood how deep was the treason within each noble's heart because with Don Alvaro:

*The King decided that, for the meantime, he live outside of Portugal, and not to remain in Castile, nor to remain in Rome, for as long as the king wished... and he could receive all the rents and dues that he owned in the Kingdom... which he did not fulfill, because as he arrived at the court of Castile, he was so favored by King Fernando and Queen Isabel that they made him the Chief Justice of their court.*¹⁰⁸

The last place King João II wanted the traitor Don Alvaro to be living at was at the enemy's court, but that is exactly where Alvaro went, taking his wife and children, and there Queen Isabel awarded him great honors, posts and titles.

This is the same "Don Alvaro de *Portugal*" that ten years later would help our subject, Cristóbal Colón, in Spain by standing up for Colón's rights against King Fernando. Don Alvaro's son would go on to marry Colón's granddaughter, Isabel Colón, and from that union descended the Dukes of Veragua, who ruled that noble Spanish house of Colón for some 300 years.

To not shame so many noble families, from which just a few members were lead astray, João II censored the list of those nobles involved in the treason to those that were key players. If he had made all their names known he would have been forced to follow through with severe punishment. He wished to avoid too much death, and for this reason he killed the shepherds and not the flock.

Queen Isabel, however, did not stop there. In August 1484 she aided a second attempt to kill João II and again another nephew of Cristóbal Colón was involved. A small army of traitors had gathered just south of Lisbon, at the city of Setúbal, to kill the king as he returned unsuspecting from an outing into the countryside as related by Rui de Pina:

*The king was informed of all: their final determination was to kill him by steel and take the Prince by sea to Sesimbra... And being the King at Alcácer do Sal, the Duke [of Viseu] and his traitors, knowing the King would return by sea, determined to wait for him on the beach, and there as he exited the pontoon, kill him.*¹⁰⁹

Again João II's agents managed to alert the king, who dealt with matters not much different than the year before; killing and exiling some, pardoning others. They tell us João II killed the Duke of Viseu – brother to João II's wife Queen Leonor – by personally stabbing him to death. João II even threatened to charge his own wife, Queen Leonor, with treason for crying over her dead brother.

Yet again the Spanish Queen Isabel's court was the preferred hideout for many traitors, including another nephew of Cristóbal Colón, Don Lopo de Albuquerque, Count of Penamacor and former Master of Afonso V's household and Captain of his Royal Guard. João II exiled Don Lopo de Albuquerque, because Don Lopo refused João II's proposed compromise for staying in Portugal.

Being that the treason was terminated at the end of August of 1484, the King and the Count of Penamacor would have spent some months negotiating a pardon, after which the Count would have left for Spain taking his whole family. Aside from Diego Méndez de Segura, who was Penamacor's adopted son and became secretary of Cristóbal Colón, Don Lopo also took his wife, Dona Catarina de Noronha, daughter of Cristóbal Colón's sister-in-law, Branca Dias Perestrelo. Dona Catarina de Noronha was the Countess of Penamacor and is the until-now unidentified and misnamed Countess of "*Benanico*" mentioned in Don Diego Colón's *Last Will*.¹¹⁰

This timeline has the Count of Penamacor and his family leaving Portugal at the end of 1484, the same exact time that his uncle Cristóbal Colón also went into Spain taking his young son Diego with him.

The case of Cristóbal Colón's nephew, Don Lopo de Albuquerque, is of extreme importance due to its similarities to the life of Colón. The two ran away to Spain at the same time, Queen Isabel sheltered both and both assumed false identities. The future discoverer assumed the name *Cristóbal Colón* and his nephew Don Lopo de Albuquerque assumed the name *Pedro Nunes*.

In 1488 Lopo de Albuquerque, using the false name of Pedro Nunes, was in England buying supplies to outfit a ship to go trade in Guinea, a place prohibited to anyone without license from João II, as already explained. This traitor, a high noble whom João II had spared and allowed to leave the kingdom, had moved to Spain and changed his name. Four years later he was in England trying to take a British ship to Portugal's secret routes, not only threatening João II's territories but continuing with his treasonous ways. Again João II's spies came to his rescue as Rui de Pina explains:

The King being alerted that the Count of Penamacor... had made his way to Flanders and England, having changed his name for that of Pedro Nunes, was buying goods and things for the trade and commerce of Guinea... to prevent this affair so detrimental to his service and that could be

the beginning of so many losses, João II ordered to go to England, in a ship very well armed, Alvaro de Caminha... to, either by trick or treachery, arrest the said Count and bring him to these Kingdoms or to kill him... Alvaro de Caminha was unable to accomplish it and it was decided, in that case, that the King again send Jan'Álvares Rangel, his Knight, with letters and instructions to the King of England [Henry VII]... the King of England ordered the said Count arrested [in 1488] and held in the Tower of London... he was set free from said prison [in 1492 by request of Queen Isabel of Spain] and he came to Barcelona, where the Kings of Spain were - and no doubt witnessed the glorious meeting of his uncle Cristóbal Colón with the Monarchs in that city mid-April 1493 where Penamacor was finally assassinated in 1494.¹¹¹

The Count of Penamacor, exiled in 1484 for treason and using the false identity of Pedro Nunes, was far away in London attempting to organize an expedition to the Portuguese reserved territories of Guinea. João II's agents pursued him and in 1488 he was imprisoned in London at João II's request and finally killed in Spain ten years after the treason.¹¹²

García de Resende tells us that the minute the Count, using the false name of Pedro Nunes, was arrested by Henry VII, João II quickly sent his agent, Ayres Dalmada, with many arguments in favor of João II's rights. He felt that due to their ties [blood relatives and the longest standing treaty of peace], Henry VII should let the Count return to Portugal in Ayres Dalmada's custody. However, Henry VII, after holding counsel, refused to let the Count leave the Tower of London for he knew that João II would have him killed.

João II pursued Lopo de Albuquerque for attempting to charter a ship in a friendly kingdom to sail to Portuguese-protected territories. Yet his uncle, Cristóbal Colón, who was doing the same exact thing next door by attempting to take ships of the enemy Spain to India, another Portuguese-protected target, was not pursued but, instead, was actually helped by João II and his agents. Why?

The answer to this question, if not yet obvious, becomes clearer in later chapters.

The Count of Penamacor was finally released from the Tower of London in 1492 by Queen Isabel's intervention with the English court because his adopted son, Diego Méndez de Segura, was negotiating at the court of Spain on the Count's behalf. After Penamacor was killed, Diego Méndez de Segura was enlisted into the service of Penamacor's uncle, Cristóbal Colón, whom he served until the Admiral died. He then served the Second Admiral, Don Diego Colón, until he too died, remaining at the service of Don Diego Colón's wife. Diego Méndez even saved Cristóbal Colón's life in 1504 at Jamaica by crossing some 190 kilometers from Jamaica to Haiti in a dugout canoe.¹¹³

It is a known fact that the name "**Cristóbal Colón**" was not the birth name of the navigator. The same way that the name *Pedro Nunes* was the false identity of the Count of Penamacor, Lopo de Albuquerque, the name *Cristóbal Colón* was a false identity assumed by *Pedro Nunes*'s uncle.

Both of these noblemen left Portugal at the same time, both went to Queen Isabel's court, both assumed false identities and both were acting in a similar way. They were attempting to take foreign ships into territories that Portugal saw as reserved for its own conquest. However, one of the two was pursued, prosecuted, arrested and finally killed while the other was aided, given Portuguese secrets, received letters directly from King João II, was invited three times, in 1485, 1488 and in 1493, to come talk to the King of Portugal, and was helped in returning to Spain safely and unharmed. Why?

Why did Cristóbal Colón leave Portugal in 1484 and "runaway" to Spain at the same time that his traitor nephew, the Count of Penamacor, was exiled from the kingdom?

Was Cristóbal Colón also a traitor of João II?

Or was he only pretending to be a traitor to infiltrate himself into Queen Isabel's court?

If King João II exiled Colón, as he did with Penamacor, then the future discoverer had no need to change his name. Was he trying to hide his actions from João II, or only pretending to hide in order to fool Queen Isabel instead.

If Colón had been exiled, then he needed not “*salir secretamente con miedo de ser detenido*” (leave secretly with fear of being detained) by João II, as Colón’s son would later write. Colón could have simply gone into exile with the king’s blessing, as did the other nobles sympathetic to the assassination plot: such as Penamacor and Alvaro de Bragança.

Remarkably, these treasons that took place in Portugal in 1483-1484 are so connected to Queen Isabel and to Cristóbal Colón, yet the Portuguese historians never linked them to Colón’s biography. One must, at a minimum, question if Cristóbal Colón was or was not in the same boat as his two treasonous nephews during these tempestuous times. Was he sailing in the ship of loyalty or in the ship of treason?

After the treasons, King João II changed his titles to include *Senhor de Guiné*, (Lord of Guinea) and sent his Ambassadors around to the European courts “*to show his rights and title that the king had in the Lordship of Guinea so that, once seen, the king of England defended it and not allow that in his kingdom fleets be outfitted, nor favored, nor allowed any persons to arm ships for Guinea.*”¹¹⁴

João II asked other Christian kings to help him defend his rights, titles and territories of Guinea against interlopers – clearly Queen Isabel. This act of sending his ambassadors with the specific task of showing his right to title himself *Dom João por graça de Deus, Rei de Portugal e dos Algarves, d’aquém e d’além mar, em África e Senhor de Guiné*, and asking for other kings’ help in protecting his titles and territories shows that King João II did not expect Spain’s Queen Isabel to relinquish interest in Portugal’s Atlantic monopoly.

Maintaining his rights over the Atlantic monopoly was João II’s main worry in late 1484. How could he maintain the secret of Portugal’s decades-long mission and plot of reaching India? How would he ever keep the route safe from Spain if the threat of war and a signed treaty were not sufficient to keep the enemy Queen’s ships far away? If Spain so coveted commerce with the Portuguese African conquests: the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and even the reserved African fisheries, how could Portugal keep Spain from India?

If every time Portugal found new trading ports in their voyages there was the threat that Queen Isabel’s ships would not be far behind, how could Portugal ever hope to keep the Spanish out of the Indian Ocean and its coveted spice trade, once his ships opened up that route to Europeans?

João II realized that Portugal faced an even bigger threat, now that Isabel and Fernando’s kingdoms, Castile and Aragon, would soon be united under one kingdom of Spain. The enemy at the gate would soon be twice as dangerous, and the king desperately needed to consolidate his defenses. João II needed to find a way to keep the Spanish from interfering again in his kingdom as well as in his Atlantic monopoly. But how?

João II’s preoccupation with maintaining control over his Atlantic monopoly was such that he ordered large carved stone pillars, “*padrões*,” to be installed as markers, all along visible outcrops that Portugal discovered. Many places along the coast of Africa, and others bathed by the Indian Ocean, got their names from these pillars, a famous one being Cape Cross in Namibia, (SEE FIGURES 5.1, 5.2).

By 1488 Dias had placed one of these pillars many miles east of the Cape of Good Hope. Vasco da Gama did the same, leaving behind several pillars along Eastern Africa to Western India, on his first voyage in 1497, marking Portugal’s claims. Each pillar was about 10 feet tall and topped by a cross over a four-sided section, one side bearing Portugal’s coat of arms, the other three sides carrying a message in three languages, Portuguese, Latin and Arabic that read:

Age of the Creation of the World, 6685 years, of the birth of Our Lord Jesus, 1482 years, the very high and very excellent Powerful Prince King Don João second of Portugal ordered these lands discovered and to put these markers by Diogo Cão, Squire of His household.

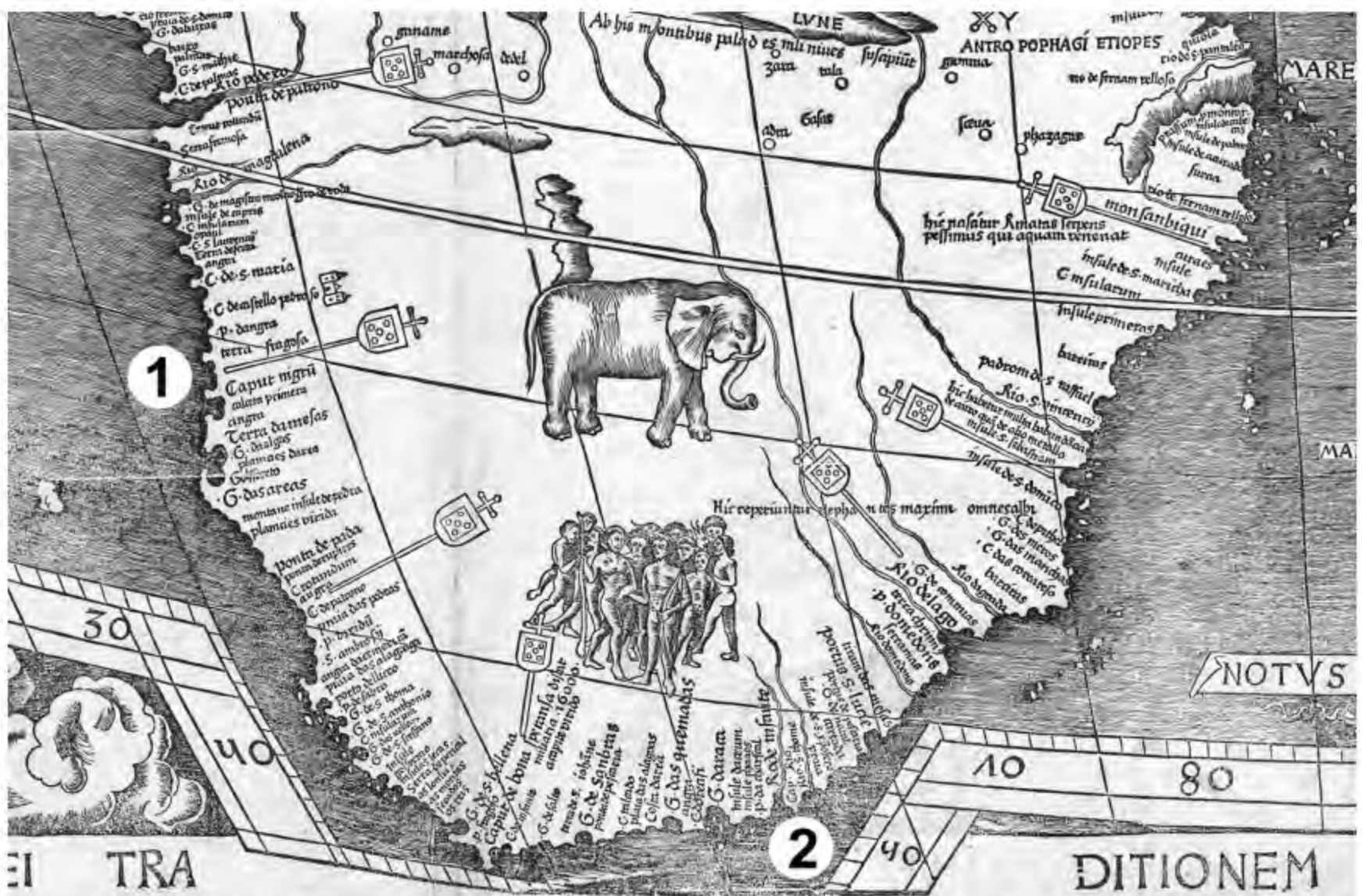


Figure 5.1: In this 1507 map created by Martin Waldseemüller there are seven crossed pillars with the Portuguese coat of arms. Number 1 shows the pillar erected in 1484 by Diogo Cão at today's Cape Cross. The number 2 represents Rio do Infante where Bartolomeu Dias arrived in 1488 (today's Great Fish River), 400 miles into the Indian Ocean.



Figure 5.2: The Pillar. This painting at the Lisbon Maritime Museum depicts a pillar being erected into place by a Portuguese crew of explorers.

That João II felt it necessary to mark these new lands demonstrated his high regard for those territories as well as his worries that some other kingdom would try to claim them – mainly Spain, Portugal's only European enemy. The King of Portugal did not want to run the risk of losing his claim to those lands. Therefore, beginning with Diogo Cão's first voyage in 1482, João II had these markers carved in Portugal and carried for thousands of miles in the ships, "ordered placed by decree of the king" as a way to claim the land in the name of Portugal and Christendom.¹¹⁵

With king João II, a philosophical change occurred in Portugal; they were no longer simple voyages of exploration, to acquire knowledge, make alliances and find new trade opportunities. They were now also missions of acquirement aimed at claiming territories for Portugal and Christendom. João II had African Kings brought to Portugal to be baptized, their subjects taught to hold mass, and Portuguese subjects sent to their lands to teach them European ways such as baking and sewing. Alliances were forged between Portugal and native Lords in Equatorial Africa, Portuguese explorers were put ashore to investigate deep into Africa's interior and Portuguese scientists worked on learning and studying those places and heavens.

In August 1484, the political situation between Portugal and Spain had reached another breaking point. The events surrounding the treason against João II involved high nobles very close to Cristóbal Colón and implicated the court of Queen Isabel. It follows that these events are an essential part to understanding the historical truth around Cristóbal Colón's life and deeds since it was at this exact time that Colón moved to Spain.

King João II's struggle to save his life and his territories against Queen Isabel's desire to claim for herself the riches of Portugal's African Trade as well as her wish to neutralize Queen Juana's threat to her throne, became the incubator in which was cooked the ruse of an "India by West."

Thus, the future discoverer, who assumed the false name of Cristóbal Colón, appears in Isabel's Court at the same time as his nephew and the other runaway nobles. However, he was never persecuted by João II as the others were. Instead, João II referred to Cristóbal Colón in his letters as "*nosso especial amigo en Sevilla*" (our special friend in Seville) and described Colón as very *ingenious* and *necessary* to the king, (SEE CHAPTER 11).

It becomes apparent that King João II put into play a well-organized game of political chess that he would not loose. He had to control all the key players, from the pawns all the way to the rival king and queen.

João II was truly the King of this game. During the last ten years of his life, 1485-1495, once he put an end to the treason, João II became the Great Lord of his kingdom and his policies were effectively and diligently pursued.

João II had the power to influence actions way beyond the borders of his kingdom. His spies pursued and even killed traitors hiding in far away places such as England and France. Those most disloyal to the king became the main targets. In 1488, while Penamacor was being locked up in London, the traitor *Fernão da Silveira* "*foi morto a ferro em França*" (was killed by steel in France).¹¹⁶

Fernão da Silveira, who had runaway in 1484, was found and killed four years after the treason had taken place. Fernão da Silveira was living in hiding very far from Portugal. João II was persistent and always on guard, especially when his Atlantic monopoly was threatened.

João II's executioner in France was Hugo Roger III de Mataplana, Count of Pallars, whom King Fernando of Spain had just expelled from Pallars into France. Hugo Roger continued attacking Catalonia aided by the King of France. The connection is that Hugo Roger's sister was married to the Portuguese D. João de Abranches, son of the Count of Abranches mentioned in Chapter 2. Eventually, after interventions in France and Italy, Hugo Roger would be caught and imprisoned by King Fernando at the Prison Castle of Xativa, Valencia, where he later died.

At the exact moment of the Portuguese treason, we have Cristóbal Colón "leaving the kingdom secretly" and making his way to Andalusia, the territory of the great Duke of Medina Sidonia, as his son Don Fernando Colón stated:

*Returning to the Admiral, the which, at the end of 1484, with his little son Don Diego, parted secretly from Portugal, for fear of the king detaining him.*¹¹⁷

The end of 1484 is the crucial date during the reign of King João II as it applies to Colón's mysterious biography. It was at this time that Colón left Portugal secretly for Spain, changed his name and covered up his past identity in such a mysterious cloud of secrecy that it has remained mostly impermeable until today.

The success of the cover-up has a lot to do with many of his familial ties in Portugal, which are shown for the first time in this book. These family connections had never been taken seriously nor investigated by Portuguese historians before.

This date of 1484 is even more important because it coincides with the treason of Cristóbal Colón's nephews against King João II, aided by Queen Isabel of Spain. Queen Isabel had raised the stakes over Portugal's Atlantic monopoly to the highest level – life and death.

It took Cristóbal Colón seven long years of applying constant pressure upon Queen Isabel before he finally convinced her to support his "Enterprise of India" by West. By taking the Spanish west, King João II was free to seek the real India to the East.

It was a plan that worked better than expected. Not only did Spain get fooled in 1493 into accepting that Cristóbal Colón had found India 180° from its true location, but historians were also fooled for 500 years into accepting that Cristóbal Colón actually believed that he had reached India while in the Caribbean.

In reality, Admiral Colón knew exactly where he had sailed to but was instead deceiving his patrons, Isabel and Fernando, as will become clear from Colón's own pen in the following chapters.

Now that we have situated the cardinal points in these first five chapters, they will serve as a compass to delving deeper into what is history and what is fable in the life of the great First Admiral, Governor and Viceroy of the Indies who had renamed himself Don Cristóbal Colón in Spain.

PART II

ALIGNING THE HORIZON



KING D. JOÃO II WITH HIS
PELICANUS EMBLEM

CHAPTER 6

THE MYTH OF AN ITALIAN COLOMBO

And upon arriving there, they talked about me worse than a Moor without having any reason for it, and they raised a thousand false testimonies. And still this lasts until today.¹¹⁸

DON CRISTÓBAL COLÓN

Admiral Don Cristóbal Colón, continuously described as “a foreigner”¹¹⁹ in Spain, possessed many secrets and expert knowledge. For an important reason, he assumed a clandestine identity and never publicly referenced his place of birth or the true name of his family, nor his real lineage. Even with all of the precautions he took to hide himself, how did so many come to accept that he was some Colombo wool weaver from Genoa, Italy? The fact is that so much confusion existed around his nationality that, during his lifetime, he was said to be Portuguese, Italian, Ligurian, Milanese, Lombardian, and Genoese, or possibly from Savona, Plasencia, or some uncertain location in the vicinity of Genoa. Furthermore, many began erroneously calling him “Colombo” after the 1493 “Press Release,” though his correct name was Colón.

Following this doubtful information, historians have spent the last 500 years looking for a Colombo in the documents archived in Genoa, Italy. Based on some documents in the Genoese archives, where several Cristoforo Colombos are named, historians identified one man who seemed to fit the bill. The confusing and deceiving documentation in Spain allowed history books to take a lowly wool weaver named Colombo from Italy and present him to the world as Don Cristóbal Colón, the Discoverer of America.

For centuries Genoa has been touted as the most likely place of Admiral Colón’s birth, mainly based on Colón’s alleged *Last Will* from 1498, one can read, “*siendo yo nacido en Génoba... de ahí salí y en ella nací*” (being I born in Genoa... from there I left and there was born). To further shore up this Genoese origin story, between 1892 and 1896, the Italian Commissione Colombiana (Columbus Commission) published an enormous set of books, known as *Raccolta Colombiana*,¹²⁰ meant to put an end to the nationality controversy once and for all. Through these books the City of Genoa attempted to prove that their wool-weaving Colombos of Genoa were in fact the same Don Colóns of Spain. In one of the *Raccolta*’s documents with a date of 1472, that Genoese Cristoforo Colombo is clearly called *lanerio de Janua* “weaver from Genoa.” However, Admiral Colón himself wrote several times that he was a sailor from a very young age,¹²¹ thus not a weaver. Furthermore, Colón’s son wrote that the Admiral never worked as a manual laborer, but instead had attended school from a young age.¹²² Who should we believe, the person and his son, or others who never met him?

The *Raccolta*’s documents further show that the weaver Colombo family was so poor that, between the whole lot of them, they could not collect 15 *libras* (the equivalent of \$101 USD in 2010) to pay a debt in 1464. Again in 1470, they could not pay the equivalent of \$230 USD, which also happened in 1472 and in 1474. In fact, the majority of the Colombo documents presented in the *Raccolta* are notary deeds showing the lowly weaver’s inability to pay meager debts to others of their ilk, hardly the rank of a proper husband for a noble lady in any kingdom.

This Genoese peasant, Cristoforo Colombo, had a younger brother, Giacomo, who was also a lowly wool-weaving apprentice. This information comes from a notarized deed from September 10,

1484, when Giacomo was sixteen years old. This Giacomo Colombo, apprentice weaver, became, in most history books, Admiral Cristóbal Colón's brother, Don Diego Colón. Could this lowly peasant and apprentice wool weaver, arriving in Spain only in 1493, suddenly become a learned nobleman with the title of *Don* who, in 1494, was put in charge of the new colony of Isabella, in Haiti, and who could even read and wrote in Spanish?

For decades historians continued to see a discrepancy between the Colón and Colombo personalities with no way to bridge the gap, since not a single *Raccolta* document ties the two families together.¹²³

All the *Raccolta* evidence is circumstantial and, furthermore, many documents referenced in the *Raccolta* don't exist but are mere texts, reportedly from much later times.

Confronted with much academic skepticism, the City of Genoa weighed in again with another huge book in 1932, titled *Colombo, Documentos e Provas de su origen genovés* (Colombo, Documents and Proof of His Genoese Origins), which, unfortunately left the same doubts in connecting the documents of the weaver Cristoforo Colombo in Italy to the documents of the noble Don Cristóbal Colón in Spain.¹²⁴

In fact, the *Raccolta* serves as the best proof of the fabricated history. The *Raccolta*'s documents prove beyond a doubt the low-class birth of the humble weaver Cristoforo Colombo from Genoa. It becomes apparent that this weaver was not that nobleman named Don Cristóbal Colón. Because Colombo was a peasant weaver, he could never have married the noble Filipa Moniz in 1479. Fifteen years before Colón became Admiral, Governor, and Viceroy of the New World he was already of such noble standing that he could marry a Portuguese noble dame.

But the Genoese were not about to give up. In 1904, they brought a new document to light, the "Assereto Document," which is supposed to place the date of birth of some unknown Cristoforo Colombo in the year 1451. Finally, all of the loose ends seemed to be neatly tied up, although none were confirmed by any documents in Spain.

Though most academics had never seen the Genoese documents and did not know the social status of Filipa Moniz in Portugal, this weaver Colombo was accepted and sold as the "history" for over 100 years.

The majority of academics accepted the lowly weaver Cristoforo Colombo from Genoa as the same man who used the name Don Cristóbal Colón in Spain. Many historians continued doubting this "official version," but without anyone else to point the finger at, the imposter Colombo remained their only alternative for Colón.

This story of the peasant who became a Viceroy is one of the most supreme of all "Rags to Riches" stories ever sold. But it is all fantasy.

THE TALL TALE OF CRISTOFORO COLOMBO

Born of poor peasant parents and grandparents, all of them weavers and carders of wool, they claimed Colombo managed to transform himself into the most famous of all navigators, supposedly discovering America by accident as he searched for India. As the story goes, in the summer of 1476, the twenty-five-year-old wool-weaver Colombo was sailing with his famous relative, a corsair called *Colombo the Younger*, when they attacked a fleet of Genoese ships near the southern tip of Portugal. In the heat of battle, the ships caught fire and Cristoforo Colombo jumped into the sea to save himself, swimming eight miles to Portugal's shore. This great swimming feat brought the weaver to Portugal for the first time in August 1476, with only the clothes on his back.

The weaver then headed for Lisbon, where it so happened his wool-weaving brother, Bartolomeo, was already working, not in his family trade of wool weaving, but as a highly skilled cartographer making navigation maps. Five months later, in February 1477, the king of Portugal recruited the newcomer to take part in a highly secretive Luso-Danish expedition to the Northwest Atlantic, which many claim never even reached Iceland.

Come 1478, the peasant Colombo was already important enough amongst the Portuguese nobles to be attending Mass inside the elite Monastery of "*Todos-os-Santos*" (All-Saints) in Lisbon and court-

ing the noble dame, Filipa Moniz Perestrelo. Supporters of this fairytale declare that Filipa Moniz fell in love with him because, even though Colombo was a lowly peasant with no home, no money, nor even a post in Portugal, “he was polite and well behaved,”¹²⁵ and so she married him in 1479.

While some historians argue that the *peasant* Colombo wanted to hide his “low birth” from the kings, others insist that he wanted to hide his “Jewish roots” from the Inquisition.^{126,127} Therefore, he formulated a genius plan to throw everyone off his lowly peasant genealogical trail by changing his name and assuming a new identity. The mastermind weaver hid his true identity of Jew/peasant by changing his name from *Cristoforo Colombo* to *Cristoforo Colón*.

Then, to make this new identity more believable, they say the peasant lied to the court, telling them that he bore a coat of arms, thus passing himself off as a true “blue blood.” By merely claiming that he was a nobleman, without presenting any noble genealogy, the King of Portugal and the Queen of Spain, along with their respective courts and councils, were so fooled that not only did they provide the peasant regular court audiences, but even paid him stipends, approved his marriage into nobility, made his children Royal Pages and awarded him the high nobility title of *Don* – all months, years, and even decades before the discoverer set foot on the *Santa Maria* to sail that famous First Voyage.

In other words, the peasant weaver had done absolutely nothing to deserve any such high rewards and honors, except swim eight miles from a shipwreck.

The history books insist that by merely changing his name from *Cristoforo Colombo* to *Cristoforo Colón*, the peasant managed to hide his Genoese origins, his low-class birth, even his supposed Jewish blood and the identity of his peasant parents so well that there are still serious doubts about his true identity and nationality today.

This version of the story claims that Colombo the wool weaver not only managed to become an uncle, by marriage, to members of Portuguese high nobility and achieve direct access to kings, it also asserts that he only began to study in Portugal at age twenty-five, when he taught himself how to speak, read, and write in Latin, Portuguese, and Castilian-Spanish. All of this when he was already twenty-five, flat broke, and in a new kingdom where he had nothing to his name.

Yet, because Colombo was a poor wool weaver, he had never attended school in Genoa, which supposedly explains why Colón could not write a single phrase in Italian or Genoese, the mother tongue he had presumably used for the first twenty-five years of his life. Despite how unlikely this trajectory is, this story has never really struck any one as odd, at least not odd enough to dig deeper into the facts.

Antonio Gallo, a Genoese chronicler, wrote that he knew the wool-weaving Colombos from Genoa well, and portrays them as nothing more than mere manual laborers, just like their father Domenico Colombo and their grandfather Giovanni Colombo.¹²⁸ However, as soon as the three weaver brothers entered Portugal and Spain, they lost all traces of their previous wool-weaving life and Genoese language:

Cristoforo Colombo was suddenly a scholar who captained ships, married into nobility, had access to the courts, bore a coat of arms, and was King João II's special confidant. Not only did Cristoforo make this transformation, but so did his brother Bartolomeo Colombo, who metamorphosed into a cartographer, a warrior, and a navigator who was fluent in Latin and Spanish. Without a single document of proof, history books disseminated that the youngest brother, Giacomo Colombo, had changed his name to Diego Colón: who also used the title “Don” in Spain, indicating high nobility. Therefore, in the official history, although Giacomo Colombo was contracted in Genoa as an apprentice wool weaver just ten years earlier, he was suddenly able to speak and write Castilian with such fluidity that he stayed behind to be the Governor of the new colony of Isabella on Haiti, in 1494, ruling over Spanish nobleman.

In fact, those three brothers who lived in Spain (Cristóbal, Bartolomé, and Diego) were so fluent in Spanish that they never exchanged between themselves, nor with their supposed “homeland of Genoa,” a single letter in Italian. All of Cristóbal's letters are in Spanish intermixed with Portuguese. In reality, as incredible as it seems, it is as if the three adult “Genoese” citizens had completely for-

gotten their mother tongue. A look at the primary sources (the Colóns' own letters) shows that they wrote to everyone in a Portuguese-inflected Spanish language.¹²⁹

Even all of Cristóbal Colón's letters to the Genoese Gaspar Gorricio, a friar who arrived in Spain in 1490, are written in Portuguese-inflected Spanish and not in Genoese.

The "official history" also claims that Colón's mother-in-law, Isabel Moniz, having learned of the weaver's interest in navigation, gifted him all the maps and books that belonged to her dead husband, Bartolomeu Perestrelo I, First Captain of Porto Santo Island in Madeira.

Since Portuguese navigators were at the time considered experts in seafairing and in geography, these papers would have been a magnificent gift for a wool weaver who had never seen anything like them. After receiving these maps, the wool weaver suddenly became an accredited navigator and intimate with his Portuguese counterparts, with whom he discussed and debated the details of the Portuguese secret missions to distant lands: Colón says he sailed the Portuguese Guinea routes and even to secret *Mina* in Ghana.¹³⁰

History books lead us to believe, incorrectly, that a weaver could become such expert that, before moving to Spain in 1484, King João II had commissioned him countless times to sail the Portuguese routes of the Guinea coast, the Azores, and Madeira – which Colón did. This further accepts that the weaver could have sailed to the hidden and protected castle of St. Jorge da Mina, Portugal's first Tropical African outpost where the secret Portuguese gold trade took place.

The "Genoese weaver" became so well known for his expertise that not only did loose-lipped sailors divulge Portuguese secrets of navigation to him, but Pedro Correia, who was Colón's brother-in-law and a personal bodyguard of King João II, saw him a fit confidant as well. Pedro Correia (Second Captain of Porto Santo from 1457 to 1473), for example, showed Colón carved wooden objects that had been carried east on the waves as solid proof of lands to the west. Apparently, the Portuguese navigators had no idea what to make of those things. If we accept the tale, so expert had the wool-weaver become in matters of navigation in so few years, that even King João II of Portugal would take the time to confer with him and show him enormous bamboos and pine branches as more proof of lands to the west.

According to Don Fernando, Colón's son, "the King of Portugal confirmed the same thing, and while talking with him of these things he [the King] showed them to him [Colón]; and not having any locations in these parts where such bamboo grows, it was certain that the [western] winds had brought them from some lands."

For some reason, the most expert king in these matters, a king who had thousands of navigators, pilots, and a *Junta de Matemáticos* working for him specifically on issues of Atlantic navigation, could not make heads or tails of such objects without consulting a recently arrived wool weaver from the Mediterranean. Don Fernando Colón further tells us, "when the wind blew for a long time from the West, the sea would throw upon the shore, especially on the Islands of Graciosa and Faial, some pines, and it was known that there they didn't have any, nor in those places, grew such trees." Therefore, even the residents of the Azores Islands sought out this wool-weaver prodigy to tell the foreigner all about the evidence of lands to the west, and running the risk of receiving João II's standing "Penalty of Death" for exposing Portuguese secrets of navigation.¹³¹

Additionally, the arrival of a kayak containing the bodies of dead Eskimos to the Azorean Island of Flores proved to Colón that China was indeed in that direction, indicating that it was the route to India. The story suggests that the dumb Portuguese and their ill-informed king were incapable of deducing any of this. They could not understand that this was all proof of land to the west, but he, a weaver, clearly understood all of it.

Even though Colombo had spent the previous twenty-five years as a manual laborer and had only been in Portugal for just a few months, the king made it a point to listen to his "highly regarded" opinion because, just like in a fairytale, the insightful King João II must have understood that a wool-weaver, who had never captained a ship before his arrival in Portugal, knew more than his Assembly of Scientists put together, and that in just a few years the weaver would turn out to be the greatest of all discoverers.

Thus, the weaver conjectured that he could teach the Portuguese a few things and, since he knew that the world was round, it would be simple to sail to the West and hit India in the East. The weaver, they say, had written to a wise Italian scientist, Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli, who had explained to him that India was, indeed, just on the other side of the Atlantic, on the same latitude as Lisbon. Apparently, Toscanelli had no idea that he was writing to another Italian and, writing in Latin, says, “I am not surprised that you who have great courage and the whole Portuguese nation, who have always been generous men in all big enterprises, sees you with burning heart and big desire to put into action the said voyage,”¹³² thus insinuating that the person he was writing to was Portuguese like his *whole nation*.

For the previous fifty years, Portugal had been attempting to reach India by sailing east around Africa, but without success. The weaver Colombo, now more convinced by Toscanelli’s letter, took the opportunity to present the Portuguese king with his brilliant plan of reaching India by heading west. King João II supposedly listened to the proposition, which he had already received from the same Toscanelli letter in 1474 (SEE CHAPTER 12), but when the wool weaver proposed it, somehow it seemed more credible. The problem with the proposition, say the historians, was that the peasant demanded high compensation for his efforts. Specifically, he wanted to be made a Knight of the Golden Spur, to be titled *Don*, to become an Admiral and Governor, and, on top of all this, to be a Viceroy. King João II refused such excessive demands as an outlandish affront to the nobility by a peasant dreamer whose proposal was nothing more than a fantasy.

The refusal did not deter Colombo. He tried everything to get this King to sponsor him. During fourteen years of trying, however, King João II appears to have been incapable of comprehending a simple plan that consisted of nothing more than sailing 800 leagues west to the coasts of India. In the same breath, the history books say that João II called the mission a fantasy, yet they also say that the sly king, the world’s authority in navigation and geography at the time, saw Toscanelli’s idea as viable when presented by the weaver. João II thus felt the idea needed a closer analysis and deceitfully convinced the weaver to go explain this “complicated plan” to the scientists of his Assembly of Scientists.

The sly chief of the Junta, Diego Ortiz de Villegas *Calçadilha*, advised King João II to keep the wool weaver on standby for a bit while they secretly sent a ship to investigate the never sailed route. So João II supposedly sent a ship to see if it was true that one could really reach India by sailing west, an element of the story that suggests the Portuguese had never allowed their caravels to lose sight of land and sail westward, which they had actually been doing for decades, if not centuries before.

While the unsuspecting Colombo waited patiently, the timid crew in the Portuguese caravel supposedly sailed for a few days to the west of Lisbon. After not finding any land, and fearful of falling off the edge of the earth, they returned home like scared puppies with their tails between their legs. According to Fernando, “They lacked the knowledge, the fortitude and the person of the Admiral, after having spent many days wandering in the sea, they returned to the Cape Verde islands, scorning such enterprise and saying that it was impossible that there was any lands in those seas.”¹³³

When news of the failed voyage reached the wool weaver’s ears, furious and angry that João II had betrayed his confidence and tried to steal his genius idea (even though it was really Toscanelli’s idea), his son Fernando writes that he “Acquired such hatred for that city and nation that he decided to go to Castile.... At the end of the year 1484, with his son Don Diego, he left secretly from Portugal, for fear that the king would have him detained, because knowing how badly had failed those who he sent with the caravel, the king wanted to get in the Admiral’s good graces, and desired that he stay to execute his enterprise.”¹³⁴

At that very moment in 1484, the King of Portugal was occupied with arresting, exiling, and even killing the traitors who, aided by his enemy, Queen Isabel of Spain, were planning to assassinate him. Apparently, now confronted with the real possibility of being put in charge of a fleet bound for India via the Atlantic by King João II, the voyage of his dreams, Colombo decided, instead, that it was best to secretly flee the kingdom with João II’s would-be assassins and go to Spain.

This way the poor king of Portugal was left dead in the water without that “genius” wool-weaving peasant to lead the expedition. Upon entering Spain, the wool weaver suddenly became fluent in Spanish, and was so respected that the Duke of Medinaceli, a powerful Spanish nobleman, hosted him in his palace for two years. Within a short time he was visiting the court, receiving stipends from Queen Isabel, and presenting his plan to sail west to India.

As late as May 16, 1479, Queen Isabel was still insisting on calling herself Queen of *Portugal* and ordering her ships to intrude and overpower the Portuguese in their conquests:

“Dona Isabel, by the Grace of God queen of Castile, of Leon, of Aragon, of *Portugal*... organize and order sent a fleet in the sea against our adversary of Portugal, and against his subjects, vassals and protectors and for the trade in *Elmina* [St. Jorge da Mina] and to all parts of *Guinea*.¹³⁵

The Queen of Spain never in her life had equipped one single ship for discovery, limiting herself to sending her ships to invade lands that the Portuguese had already visited and continued attempting to trade in forbidden Guinea, yet she had agreed to not send her ships to Guinea in the treaty she signed with Portugal.

What Queen Isabel had her eye on was the Portuguese monopoly of the African trade. She had no intention whatsoever of trying to get to India. Regardless, the discoverer continued insisting, year after year, that she give him this opportunity to serve her. By this time, according to the official history, Bartolomeo Colombo and Cristoforo Colombo were now using the surname Colón (to disguise their low birth, according to the tale) and worked together to propose going to India via the West. Queen Isabel and her court, however, realized that there was some big ulterior motive behind this whole proposal by these “Portuguese” who had arrived in Spain with the other traitors. The court even described Colón’s proposal as a *burla* – which means *ruse* or *deception*, and not a *joke* as English texts wrongly translate – and Queen Isabel dismissed them.¹³⁶ Yet, Queen Isabel still felt some strange obligation to keep offering stipends to Colón, which she continued to do for several years. Would Queen Isabel treat a peasant weaver as if he was a true nobleman?

The only nationality Queen Isabel’s court ever gave to Admiral Colón in the court documents was “Portuguese” (SEE CHAPTER 14). Still, some academics have tried to explain this *Portuguese* nationality by insinuating that the author of the court payment receipt, Pedro Díaz de Toledo, made a mistake.¹³⁷ Or perhaps he had no idea what the recipient’s nationality was and therefore assumed the discoverer was Portuguese for having lived and married in Portugal. It is ludicrous, however, to think that an official member of the court who witnessed Colón’s meeting with Queen Isabel, and to whom Isabel secretly entrusted Colón, was so incompetent that he could not tell the difference between a Portuguese and an Italian.

Colón’s brother Bartolomé visited the King of England in 1488 and then went to visit the King of France, in whose court Bartolomé Colón was still residing in 1493.¹³⁸ Yet supposedly he was a wool weaver named Bartolomeo Colombo, now turned cartographer. Apparently the four courts – Portugal, Spain, England, and France – were conducive to granting audiences to peasants, although there is no record of the peasant weavers having received any letters of introduction that they would have needed to meet with the royalty of these four kingdoms. Not only did Bartolomé Colón have an audience at the court of France, he was actually living at that court as special guest of Ana de Valois, Duchess of Borbón and regent of France. Once Bartolomé received the news that Admiral Cristóbal Colón had returned from the First Voyage of Discovery in 1493, the King of France, Charles VIII, (an ally of João II of Portugal against Spain) gave Bartolomé Colón money to hurry off to Spain and join his famous brother.

This is a truly complicated story, one that not only confuses the average reader but has also confused countless historians for centuries. At times nothing in the story seems to make sense.

PERSISTENCE PAYS

Queen Isabel of Spain rejected his proposal time after time, but the discoverer did not get discouraged. He dug in his heels for a long fight with the attitude that eventually the Queen would have to give in. Among Cristóbal Colón's friends in Spain was a Portuguese friar known very well for his cosmography expertise. He was enlisted to help convince Queen Isabel that Colón's plan was really not a *ruse*. Yet one wonders why a scholar in geography and astronomy, like Friar Antonio de Marchena, would promote a plan to reach India heading west across seventeen time zones (250 degrees) from Spain when it had been well known for the previous 1,300 years that India's location was seven time zones (110 degrees) east of Spain. Heading West made the voyage more than twice as long and impossible to accomplish, unless there was a food resupply on the way, since food and water would run out long before the ships reached those lands.

In an attempt to further prove that his proposal to Queen Isabel was really not treachery, Cristóbal Colón had Doctor Villalón, a trusted member of the Spanish court, read to Queen Isabel letters from the King of Portugal, the King of France, and the King of England, inexplicably acquired, that revealed how those three kings were ready to sponsor Colón's great adventure.¹³⁹ Cristóbal Colón, however, had refused those three offers because he was saving his Great Enterprise solely for Queen Isabel.

Colón had turned down three solid offers that he declared, "weren't few nor hollow,"¹⁴⁰ from three kings so that he could continue waiting on the only monarch that constantly rejected him. Why?

Stubbornly, he continued his attempts to convince Queen Isabel to sponsor his voyage to the west. Why did the sponsor of Colón's voyage need to be Spain?

Colón visited with the great Spanish Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Duke of Medinaceli, but instead of assuming the three were colluding on a ruse against Queen Isabel, historians say Colón proposed the same voyage to them. As such, Colón had turned down the solid offers of three kings to gamble on the uncertain acceptance of a Spanish duke. Why?

Medinaceli, an ally of Portugal and an antagonist of Queen Isabel, was impressed with the fantastic voyage idea and realized the big enterprise could only be funded by Queen Isabel. Therefore, Medinaceli wrote to Queen Isabel asking her to reconsider the excellent proposal from Cristóbal "Colomo." The astute Isabel refused again. Sponsoring ship invasions into Portuguese-controlled Guinea was important enough for her to help the Braganças attempt to assassinate the king of Portugal. But she remained disinterested in Colón's "easy" voyage to India.

Despite countless refusals over the course of seven years, Colón never gave up. The friars insisted, the Dukes pushed, and finally the queen allowed herself to be swayed, though she complained about the war with Granada and the funds needed to sponsor such a discovery enterprise. Luis de Santangel, a Jewish financier to the crown, interceded with a loan on the Queen's behalf and Colón, himself, agreed to put up the rest of the money. However, there is no explanation of how the wool weaver's wallet would be bulging with money, as if he had received some large inheritance from his poor debt-ridden wool-weaving family in Genoa, as the following excerpts from Colón's letters to Queen Isabel show:¹⁴¹

– *Colón declared that he was going to put his person in danger and was spending his money to "give the Indies to Your Highnesses."*

– *Your Highness should remember that I left wife and children and came from my homeland to serve you, where I spent all that I had, [along with] seven years of my time and received a thousand affronts with dishonor and suffered [living without] many necessities, and I didn't want to agree with any other prince that implored with me.*

– *I came to serve being 28 years old, and now I haven't got a hair on me that isn't white and my body infirm forever, and I spent all that was left to me by grandparents. All was taken from me and ruined, and from my brothers even their shirts without having been heard or seen [by justices], all great dishonors to me.*

Many insinuated that Santangel only helped the discoverer because they were both Jews, and this is why Admiral Colón hid his true identity. Yet no one has ever proposed that the Queen of Spain was

also a Jew, based on the simple fact that Santangel financed many more of her ventures. Nor did they explain why the discoverer needed to hide that he was Jewish if Santangel did not need to hide it.

Furthermore, when Admiral Colón moved from Portugal to Spain, a Portuguese Jew named Isaac Abravanel, one of João II's traitors, also fled to Spain. Abravanel never changed his name and never hid that he was a Jew. In fact, Abravanel, a practicing Jew, was sheltered in Queen Isabel's court just like the other non-Jewish Portuguese traitors who sought refuge in Spain in 1484. Queen Isabel even employed Isaac Abravanel at the Spanish court.¹⁴²

The Kingdom of Granada fell to the Spanish monarchs at the end of 1491 and on the first days of January 1492, their great wool-weaver disguised as a nobleman was in the royal entourage to witness the Muslim king hand over the keys to the city and the raising of the Spanish flag atop the Alhambra fortress.¹⁴³ Now the queen was finally ready to take on the great voyage into the unknown, and on April 17, 1492, at the battle camp named Santa Fe (Holy Faith) the agreement between the discoverer and the crown was signed and sealed. The discoverer sent an agent to negotiate on his behalf with a long list of demands. The contract, known as the *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe*, begins this way:

"The things requested and that Your Highnesses give and grant to *Don Cristóbal de Colón*, in some satisfaction for what he has already discovered in that Ocean sea and for the voyage that he now, with the aid of God, will undertake for them [the things granted] in service to Your Highnesses..."¹⁴⁴

The use of the high-nobility title "Don" in the official court document is again passed off by most as an error of the scribe. However, the King and Queen reviewed the contract before signing it and had no problem with acknowledging a person, whom history books claim was a peasant wool weaver, with a title that was reserved for the elitist of blue bloods.

We next find the discoverer in charge of preparing the ships for the voyage at the town of Palos, near Huelva, where it just so happens that his Portuguese sister-in-law, Violante Moniz, also resided in a home coincidentally enough owned by the Duke of Medina Sidonia, a friend of Portugal.

Don Cristóbal Colón was put in charge of recruiting a crew and readying three ships with food and supplies to sail to the unknown ends of the earth. Would such a paramount undertaking have been entrusted to a weaver, someone with no prior experience captaining ships? This is especially surprising if you accept the entire official story, which claims that Colón had not even succeeded in convincing anyone that he was going to find any land to the west.

The whole crew would probably be sailing off to their deaths. At the same time, the supposed lowly weaver's Portuguese son, Diego Colón, was appointed Royal Page to the future king of Spain, Prince Don Juan. Half a year prior to lifting anchor for the First Voyage, without anyone knowing if he would succeed or not, Queen Isabel made Cristóbal Colón's son a Royal Page at the court. Could this happen if Cristóbal Colón was not nobility? Again, the history books fail to explain why the sons of foreign wool laborers would be brought to the Spanish court, receive free room and board as well as a stipend, and be allowed to mix with courtiers born so high above their peasant weaver class. Had the Spanish court decided to apply an egalitarian law in 1492 and create a classless society 300 years prior to the United States?

THE IMPOSSIBLE VOYAGE TO INDIA

History has told us that the *Raccolta's* wool weaver, who historians described as never before having commanded a crew, never piloted a ship, and who had no notion of how to use navigational instruments, set off on an uncertain adventure to cross seas that had never before been crossed. While at the Canary Islands, Colón ordered the *Pinta* to be fitted with "square sails because she was lateen-rigged." The proponents of the official tale would, no doubt, say he made that decision on a whim because it was impossible for Colón to know what winds he would find heading west, thus ignoring the decades of reconnaissance that Portuguese pilots had done in those seas.

On September 6, 1492, he aimed the prow west from Gomera Island in the Canaries and followed the parallel of those islands, blindly trying his luck, without knowing what he was doing, where he was going, or if he knew how to return home.

The three ships and the fate of their crews rested on the orders of one man, who, according to the legend, was a weaver and the least qualified to lead them. After a few difficult weeks of sailing and even a near mutiny, when the fearful crew threatened to throw the “foreigner overboard” and turn back home, Colón managed to convince them to hang on for a bit longer because the land was within reach. In fact, he had a map of that region with islands on it, which he passed to the Captain on the *Pinta* to review. The fleet found one of the islands at 2:00 AM of October 12: after less than four weeks of sailing. Colón named the island *San Salvador*: Holy Savior.

What they found was not that famous India that had defeated Alexander “The Great,” nor the one filled with trading ships that Marco Polo encountered. It was not the source of the Muslim spices, or that great Hindu civilization known to exist in the Orient from time eternal. It was, instead, a paradise of naked natives living without a care and happy in their innocence, as the Admiral described them in his Ship’s Log: “They are a people who are very poor in everything.... They have no weapons and are all naked and with no experience of arms and very timid... completely without evil or aggression, naked every one of them, men and women, as the day they were born.”¹⁴⁵

Even though these lands did not fit any of the known descriptions of India, the dreamer, because he was an ignorant weaver, became convinced he was now in the real India. Delusional, he imagined himself to be also in all the famous places of the Orient – Japan, Asia, China, Ophir, Sophora – everywhere except in a “New World.” And though he knew that all those famous places already had their well-known names from antiquity, he renamed them all anyway: one he called San Salvador, another Cuba, another Española, and so on, as if no Europeans had ever heard of them. It was as if he knew he was nowhere near India and was baptizing new, unnamed lands.

He claimed those lands for Queen Isabel, without opposition from the open-mouthed natives, stunned as they watched the whole charade of planting a flag and loudly proclaiming the land for Spain. Colón named those natives *Indians* and, according to his contract with the Spanish monarchs, he was now Admiral, Governor, and Viceroy of those lands. In the Admiral’s writings to the court, he places Cuba at 42° north of the equator, as would be expected of someone who was not schooled in the sciences of geography, astronomy, and navigation. This stands as proof that he was an ignorant weaver who did not know how to measure latitudes and, therefore, that he was completely lost and had no idea that he was not in India.

History books continue misinterpreting Colón’s route home. After having sailed around a few of the Caribbean islands, not having found anything worth trading for, and losing one of the three ships in the shallows, he began the return voyage on January 16, 1493. Instinctively, the Admiral decided to return home by heading northeast into new seas instead of backtracking east to the Canaries, the same route he had travelled west. On the first day he set a northeast trajectory and maintained that route day after day, week after week. Even when he found himself at the latitude of Portugal’s Cape Saint Vicente, he did not turn east towards the Straits of Gibraltar so he could sail to Spain. Instead, he maintained the northeast route set weeks earlier. Where was he going?

He was heading directly for the Azores, a location he reached just as he intended to do when he had left Haiti. His expert piloting pinpointed a small rock of land in the middle of the ocean, an amazing feat for someone who, history claims, had no idea how to navigate. How lucky was that? Once in the Azores, he wrote a letter to Spain, which he dated “*Fecha en la carabela sobre las Islas de Canaria, a XV de Febrero*” (Written on the caravel at the Canary Islands, 15 of February), 1493. This is an obvious lie. Saying he was located 1,323 kilometers away from the Azores had not peaked the interest of historians who, seeing the discoverer as an idiot, touted this as another foundation supporting their theory that Colón was completely lost.

How then to explain that in his Ship’s Log, on February 10, Colón wrote that he was located south of Flores Island in the Azores? How could he have been at the Canary Islands on February 15, if on that very day his Ship’s Log says that “*se hallava estar con las yslas de los Açores*” (he found himself at the Azores Islands)?

Arriving at the Azorean island of Santa Maria, the Admiral received a great welcome from Captain João da Castanheira, who sent him a welcoming committee with fresh food. The Portuguese Castanheira said that he “knew Colón very well,” even though the Admiral was now using a false name that he had assumed in Spain. Not much later, the Admiral wants us to believe that he was faced with a huge difficulty: the same friendly Captain that welcomed Colón to Santa Maria Island with fresh food became hostile for no reason and arrested half the crew that was on shore on a visit to pray at the local chapel. The Captain then came to Colón’s ship, saying he had specific orders from King João II to arrest the Admiral. One can only assume the king’s orders arrived overnight by courier pigeon since, when Colón had arrived Captain Castanheira, knowing very well who Colón was, had welcomed him with food, not with weapons.

Colón wanted us to accept that Castanheira arrested the fourteen sailors that had gone ashore, yet the Portuguese militia was so incompetent that it could not arrest the other half, still in the tiny ship, including the Admiral. The Portuguese were defeated in a battle of words, in which Admiral Colón simply stood firm and refused to be arrested. Yet, instead of enforcing the king’s orders, Castanheira let the rest of the crew that was on land go free so that the Niña could leave Santa Maria Island for Europe. Would Castanheira have disobeyed his king and given the victory to Portugal’s enemy?

Having in this way “escaped” arrest, the Admiral made his merry way to Spain, but ran into another misfortune. “Already in the sea of Castille,” he wrote, and within hours of reaching Spanish soil, a great storm came, ripping the sails to shreds, forcing him to “backtrack into the Portuguese port of Lisbon seeking shelter” to save his ship and his life. This sudden storm made everyone believe that Colón had no intentions of ever stopping in Portugal, as his written statement declares, “after having written this and *being already in the sea of Castile*, there came such wind South and Southeast, that has forced me to lighten the ships, but I ran here today into this port of Lisbon, which is the greatest wonder of the world, where I have decided to write to Your Highnesses.”¹⁴⁶

The poor Admiral had been forced to sail out of the “sea of Castile” and go hide in the lair of the wolf, against his will. He had no choice. His only hope of survival was sailing into that marvelous port of Queen Isabel’s often touted “*nuestro adversario de Portugal*” (our adversary Portugal).

One would think that the Admiral would hide with the Niña in some deserted cove until the storm blew over. And then, once the storm had abated, Colón would again try hurrying off to some port in Spain to give the great news to “the Chosen” Queen Isabel – that monarch for whom Colón had saved this great enterprise and who, for seven hard years, he had so desperately tried to convince to sponsor him.

But no. Not only did Colón not try to hide from the Portuguese patrol ships, he went and anchored his Niña right next to King João II’s patrol ship, *S. Cristóvão*, a huge man-o-war that the Admiral himself describes as being “*la más bien artillada de artillería y armas que dice que nunca nao se vio*” (the most outfitted with artillery and arms it is said that anyone has ever seen),¹⁴⁷ which was also anchored at Restelo on that day. What an act of defiance and bravery, after escaping capture in Santa Maria, to go and anchor his little caravel next to the warship that was best prepared to arrest him. But, yet again, luck was on his side. Instead of arresting him, the commander of the patrol ship, Álvaro Damán, who, in great formation, with drummers and trumpeters and heralds, making a great [welcoming] party, came to the caravel and offered to do whatsoever Colón ordered,” as Colón wrote on his Ship’s Log.

After learning that King João II was not in Lisbon, the Admiral immediately wrote a letter to the king of Portugal and waited for the king’s orders. Is it possible that Colón was doing everything he could to be arrested? Why did he not simply leave for Spain since there was no storm? If there had been a storm, Commander Álvaro Damán would not have been parading around with a marching band. So, clearly, there was no storm, and still he did not leave for Spain. Instead, the Admiral moved the Niña even closer to Lisbon and prepared to disembark.

While the week before at the Azores he declared that, as an Admiral of the Kings of Spain he would not leave his ship, Colón then leaves the *Niña* behind in a foreign port and travels fifty-five miles to Vale do Paraíso, in Azambuja, to meet with that very same king that history books tell us Colón “hated” and in that same kingdom everyone claims Colón never wanted to set foot in again.

Contrary to logic, instead of arresting him, Admiral Colón writes in the Ship’s Log that Portugal’s “King ordered all the principal knights of his household to go and receive him honorably.” Furthermore, “the King received him with much honor and paid him many respects and ordered him to sit and spoke very kindly,” with him – all actions and honors reserved for the highest of nobles. No lowly wool weaver would be treated at the court of Portugal, or at any royal court, as if he was of the highest nobility, worthy of the greatest honors, privileged to the highest degree, even to the point of being allowed to sit and keep his hat on in the presence of the king.

History tells us that the Admiral only wrote to the King of Portugal and accepted the invitation to go to the court at Vale do Paraíso so that he could scorn and ridicule King João II for having refused to sponsor his voyage. Yet nowhere are these objectives declared by Colón, nor is there any insinuation of them in the Ship’s Log.

Contrary to what is in the Ship’s Log, history books say that the poor helpless king, having been subjected to the insults and gloating of the victorious weaver-Admiral, supposedly cried from sadness and self-pity. Las Casas who wrote in his *Historia de las Indias* that “with loud voice and forceful self-loathing [João II] punched his chest, moaning, “*Oh man of poor knowledge why did you let slip through your hands an enterprise of such importance?*’... and other similar words.”¹⁴⁸

The Portuguese chroniclers even pretend that the king was advised to have the Admiral killed right then and there to quash the discovery. They went on to say that João II’s “men offered to start a quarrel” with that badgering, conceited peasant, impolite, rude and offensive guest, who had been barking his fantasies of Japan in Spain, so that they would have a pretense to kill the dog and this way prevent the news from getting to his patron, the enemy Queen Isabel.¹⁴⁹

Contrary to his personality, the same cold-blooded João II, nicknamed by some “the Tyrant,” who had previously ordered the highest nobles of the kingdom killed by decapitation, by quartering, by poison; “killed by steel in France”; held prisoner in the Tower of London; who threatened to kill his wife, the queen, “for treason” simply for crying at the funeral of her traitor brother; and who, while still prince, not only ordered the killing of the traitor Lopo Vaz de Castelo Branco but had threatened to throw Cardinal Alpedrinha off a bridge and drown him in a river for mere discourtesy, suddenly in March 1493, facing an unimaginable loss to his kingdom and confronting a simple peasant, had become so changed that, “fearing God,” he decided that the crude, insulting peasant should live.

Certainly King João II would have felt greatly aggrieved if his enemy, Spain, had discovered a sea route to *India* before Portugal did. Had he feared for the loss of the Indian trade, he would never have so readily handed the victory over that route to his archrival. If leaving Admiral Cristóbal Colón alive was not enough help to his rival in securing the New World, King João II went as far as resupplying the *Niña* for free and did everything possible to make sure that Colón got back to Spain safely. João II even offered an escort to make the voyage to Spain over land if Cristóbal Colón wished to go that way instead.

The king also offered twenty gold coins, *espadines*, to a pilot who was traveling with the Admiral. Most likely this pilot was Juan de La Cosa, owner of the ship *Santa Maria*. The coins were probably given as a token of appreciation for La Cosa’s cooperation in Colón’s ruse against Spain, as we will see in Chapter 10.

Alongside João II at Vale do Paraíso was the Prior of Crato, a highly trusted man who was deeply involved in the kingdom’s secrets. It was this Prior of Crato, Don Diogo Fernandes de Almeida, who hosted Admiral Colón in his house because, as the Admiral wrote in the Ship’s Log, “he was the principal person and of greatest authority of all those there with the King,” and the Prior “received him with pleasure and made him good company, from which the Admiral received many honors and favors.” The Prior’s brother was married to Admiral Colón’s niece, but no one has mentioned this family connection.

It was no coincidence that the discoverer was hosted by Don Diogo Fernandes de Almeida, who was one of the members of the king's Junta of Mathematicians involved in planning secret voyages of exploration as well as spy missions. One can only wonder what secrets the Prior and the Admiral must have exchanged during those two days and nights in Portugal.

Furthermore, Vale do Paraíso, where King João II's court was at the time, had not only been a possession of the Order of Santiago since 1272, but since 1360, Vale do Paraíso was a Commandery¹ of the All-Saints Monastery in Lisbon. Its church still displays the coat of arms of the Comendadoras² of All-Saints and the ceiling decorations show the patron saint to be Our Lady of the Ó. On December 18, 1492, the Admiral wrote in his Ship's Log that at dawn he "ordered the flagship and the caravel to be decked with arms and banners for the feast that day, which was Santa María of the Ó... Many lombard shots were fired."¹⁵⁰

One wonders if the discoverer got to visit with his Portuguese wife and any children he had left behind in Portugal while visiting her Commandery at Vale do Paraíso?

On Monday, March 11, 1493, as Colón took his leave, King João II, "always showing him great affection, gave messages to be given on his behalf to the Spanish Monarchs."¹⁵¹ The Admiral later would report to the Spanish Monarchs that King João II claimed those visited lands were his by the 1479 Treaty of Alcazovas between Portugal and Spain. At the same time, however, João II protected the Admiral by stating that, to resolve this matter, "there was no need to involve a third party." João II would deal with Queen Isabel directly.

As Colón was taking leave of João II, a messenger arrived from the Queen of Portugal, Dona Leonor, insisting that the Admiral should not leave Portugal until he had visited her at the monastery of Santo Antonio da Castanheira, in Vila Franca de Xira, "and he went to pay her reverence and kissed her hand, because she had sent word for him not to leave before seeing her."¹⁵² From these events, one can see that Portugal's King and Queen both held him in their highest regards.

And so, the official history has made us believe that a "lowly wool-weaver" made such dear friends and high connections that the Queen of Portugal begged him not to depart without visiting her. What matters of high interest did the Queen of Portugal have with this man, who they insist was an Italian peasant who had lived only a short eight years in Portugal, had secretly deserted the kingdom, had been living in the enemy kingdom for eight years now, and was sailing at the service of the enemy crown? Why was the Queen of Portugal so insistent on seeing him? It was not normal protocol for the queen to meet with visitors to the court. Don Fernando Colón writes that the Queen "became very glad to see him and welcomed him with the courtesy worthy of such a Great Lord."¹⁵³ The Queen of Portugal *became very glad*, as if she had not seen him in ages. Why?

After spending almost two weeks visiting with the royals and highest nobles in the kingdom of Portugal and being hosted by João II's most trusted councilors, Colón finally headed for Spain. Yet, as he lifted anchor on March 13 for Seville, Spain, a letter he had written on March 4, upon arriving in Lisbon, apparently at random, was already spreading the news of his discovery of "India" to the whole world. The letter he wrote to Luis de Santangel would be printed within days and many would read it before Colón's royal sponsors even knew the full details of the voyage.¹⁵⁴

Queen Isabel, therefore, did not have much time to decide what to do about this great victory over Portugal. When the Admiral finally arrived in Barcelona to have his audience with the Spanish Monarchs, half the world already knew about Colón's discovery of "*the Indies*." It was spreading like wildfire from printing press to printing press all over Europe.

HOME, SWEET HOME

A few weeks after arriving back home in Seville, Cristóbal Colón went to Barcelona to debrief Queen Isabel and King Fernando. He was at the height of his career. The monarchs welcomed him as if he were a king himself. Queen Isabel and King Fernando honored him by bestowing upon him the degree of “Knight of the Golden Spur,” an elite honor of knighthood that required the recipient belong to the nobility.¹⁵⁵ Don Fernando Colón, his youngest son who was barely five years old at the time, later wrote:

When he went to kiss their hands, [Isabel and Fernando] stood up, as if to a Great Lord, and pretended he needed not kiss them, and made him sit next to them... When the King rode through Barcelona, the Admiral rode on one side, and the Prince Fortuna on the other, never there having been such a precedent of any one other than the said Prince, who was a very close relative of the King, riding alongside the King.¹⁵⁶

The court accepted that Cristóbal Colón was so noble that only he, out of all the nobles in Spain, could ride next to King Fernando along with the king’s cousin, Enrique de Aragón y Pimentel, ruler of Cataluña in King Fernando’s absence.

Queen Isabel drew up a new royal decree augmenting the Admiral’s original coat of arms. It was apparent to historians that the peasant Cristoforo Colombo from Genoa never had been granted a coat of arms. However, this is justified with the assumption that the Queen of Spain was not aware of this deficiency because the wool weaver had tricked her into believing he was a nobleman. Some have even written, although without any proof, that the Admiral, being the same Colombo weaver, had fooled the court by presenting as his coat of arms one that “belonged to the wool-weaver’s guild of Genoa.”¹⁵⁷ Others went as far as erroneously claiming that Admiral Colón had as his original coat of arms the three pigeons of the noble Colombo family from Cuccaro, Italy, even though pigeons are not represented anywhere on Admiral Colón’s coat of arms.

Nevertheless, as the story goes, the queen was so convinced of the lowly weaver’s “noble lineage” that she declared, on May 20, 1493, a new patent of arms by Royal Decree. Admiral Colón could now use a new coat of arms consisting of four quarters, and in the fourth would remain “*las armas vuestras que solíades tener*”¹⁵⁸ (your coat of arms that you have) from his ancient lineage. Contrary to what has been written, proving to a court that a person bore a coat of arms was not that easy and almost always required a genealogical investigation in the person’s kingdom of origins before the coat of arms was accepted in the new kingdom. Makes one wonder how easy it was, then, for the peasant weaver to have fooled the courts and pretend to be noble.

The symbols of the Kings of Spain were integrated into Colón’s new coat of arms, which is an indication of some connection to the Royal Family. The Castle and Lion symbols that Colón received are indeed the highest of honors for they represent the crowns of Castile and Leon, and too elite to be awarded to most nobles, regardless of how notable their deed had been.¹⁵⁹

By slight of hand, the official story insists, a lowly and ignorant wool weaver had managed to receive all of this special treatment and managed to surpass Barons, Counts, Marquis, and Dukes to receive a title of Viceroy – all for making that short voyage of thirty-three days and abandoning thirty-nine of his crew on the beach.

And just like that, all of those hours the Colombo weaver supposedly spent teaching himself Latin, math, geography, cartography, astronomy, navigation, etc., were justified. That indebted Colombo, who started out as the lowly, illiterate, peasant laborer depicted in the *Raccolta* had now transformed himself into a most learned and revered noble, becoming a Viceroy, and acquiring a true coat of arms by Royal Patent, thus fooling everyone in the process.

The ready acceptance of this fantasy has always lacked logic. How could the learned courtiers of the Portuguese and Spanish courts be so easily fooled by a peasant without schooling, without proper upbringing and breeding, without any gold in his pocket, without his entourage of servants, without any letters patent, without any letters of recommendation, and who, according to all the history books, was not even able to tell the monarchs who his true parents were?

Would any court accept a wool weaver as a nobleman if at the same time he could not provide the names of his noble parents and grandparents? The first requirement of anyone who presented himself as a noble at any European court was to prove his lineage: who his parents were. Therefore, the wool weaver could not refuse to provide the names of his parents to the same court that he was trying to convince of his nobility. His true parents had to be presented and, thus, had to be known to the courts.

What we are seeking is the answer to why the courts would help the Colón brothers hide their parents' identity from us.

REALITY CHECK

The original patent of arms, signed by Isabel and Fernando, unaccounted for 500 years, was finally discovered in 2006 and published by Dr. D. Félix Martínez Llorente in the *Cuadernos de Ayala*.¹⁶⁰ The document helps to prove how wrong the history books are about Colón's true original coat of arms and lineage (SEE FIGURE 6.1 IN THE COLOR INSERT). Just a few months after the publication of our "O Misterio Colombo Revelado" (*The Columbus Mystery Revealed*) in 2006, in which we presented Admiral Colón's original coat of arms, discovered at Colón's Alcazar in Santo Domingo, news arrived that the original Royal Decree signed by Isabel and Fernando in 1493 had been published in the *Cuadernos de Ayala*. The Royal Decree confirms that all those books, which previously claimed that Colón had added the five anchors in 1502 in a stunt of bravado to further embellish his peasant roots, were wrong. According to the drawing on the decree, Colón's original coat of arms was cut in half with the top half being blue with five gold anchors in saltire and the lower half in gold with a blue band and a red chief.¹⁶¹

Many false, contradictory, and unsubstantiated claims have been made over the centuries in an attempt to make the wool weaver fit the life of the Knight of the Golden Spur. When we take a closer look at the facts, the lowly wool weaver Colombo and the noble Admiral Colón become two completely different people. This is not a simple case of an illiterate wool weaver donning a nobleman's clothes and pretending to be an educated noble. The official history got it wrong.

It also wrongly proclaimed that Queen Isabel pawned her jewels to pay for the voyage; that the discoverer died in poverty; and that the discoverer never knew he had not reached India.

At this point, the reader could attempt to explain the whole fantasy this way: Cristoforo Colombo, a wool weaver, married a high noblewoman in Portugal, thus becoming an uncle to Counts and Marquises, was a frequent attendant at the courts of Portugal and Spain, frequently received stipends from Queen Isabel, had a brother who lived at the court of France, children who were Royal Pages to the Prince Heir, and was allowed to display a stolen coat of arms – all prior to the First Voyage – because everyone already knew this peasant laborer was a prodigy who would at some future date discover a New World for Christianity. Thus, like a Walt Disney fantasy film, the Kings paid it forward.

A FANTASTIC TALE

By continuously calling the Admiral by the wrong name of Colombo or Columbus instead of Colón, the name that he chose and is written in the Spanish documents, a lot of confusion was created. This confusion caused many investigators to unknowingly press onward with the construction of the Columbus myth. One such example is Henry Vignaud who, highly influenced by the *Raccolta*, became convinced of the peasant weaver theory:

Columbus never spoke one word of truth on what related to himself personally; and his family... Throughout his letters and writings he has sprinkled incorrect statements, skillfully devised, with the object either of obscuring certain portions of his life or of hiding traces of his origin; and, in fact, these statements have resulted in the creation of a sort of conventional history... criticism to-day is destroying fragment by fragment this falsification... We know where and when he was born. We know the standing of the family to which he belonged. We know with sufficient accuracy the employment of his time... we should be disposed to assert that many points in the life of Columbus, on which he and his biographers have sought to mislead us, are now sufficiently well known in

their true light to permit us... to sum up the true facts which have been replaced by the legend accepted as history... Columbus was born at Genoa. The year of his birth was not 1436, as his friend Bernaldez would have us believe, nor was it, as is generally supposed, one of the years between 1446 and 1451, but in the latter year 1451 itself... Contrary to what he wished to be believed and to what Las Casas and his son Ferdinand have set forth, Columbus belonged to an artisan family who lived by manual labour. Contrary to what he said himself and to what his authorized biographers have recorded, there was no famous admiral in his family. The two celebrated Colombos to whom reference is made belonged neither to his blood nor country. Again, contrary to what both Las Casas and Ferdinand allege, he was never at the University of Pavia... He never commanded a galley for King René... as he claimed to have done... He had neither overrun the seas as he boasted to have done, nor sailed for forty years, as he wrote in 1501... Forty years earlier than 1501 bring us to 1461, a date when Columbus was just ten years old... it was not in 1470, as Humboldt, Washington Irving, Fiske, and others think, nor in 1473 or 1474, as Harrisse, Winsor, and Markham decide, that he arrived in Portugal, but towards the very end of 1476, when he was twenty-five years of age. It is untrue that Columbus left Portugal secretly. Henry Vignaud, Toscanelli and Columbus, London: Sands & Co., 1902, pp. 260-264.

This text was written in early 1900s, yet it did not solve the ongoing controversy. Aside from erroneously modifying the name Colón to Columbus, Vignaud, like many others, denies factual evidence, mainly Colón's own notes and letters, and acts as if he has found irrefutable proof to decipher which parts of the Admiral's letters are lies and which are truths. Frankly, it is quite alarming to see how the establishment has passed on so many uncertainties as "factual evidence" about the life and lineage of Admiral Colón. In doing so, they denied, not only the words of Colón and his son Fernando but also the social order, logic, common sense, and court documents, as well as the history of Portugal and Spain. They only saw the Genoese wool-weaver solution. In that pursuit they opted to leave out all the evidence that did not support their theory that Colón, a noble knight, needed to fit into the skin of Colombo, the peasant laborer.

As incredible as the official history seems, a majority of academics continue to accept it today. The peasant Colombo from Genoa, however, has nothing to do with the noble Admiral, Governor, and Viceroy, Don Cristóbal Colón, other than having a similar name.

Among some of the many fallacies is the affirmation that Colón went to the grave believing he had truly reached India and claim that the Latin epitaph added to his grave, *Non confundar in aeternam*, means "Let me not be forever confounded," was the weaver Colombo's last attempt to tell the world that his discovery would prove to truly be India.

The more correct translation from the Latin is "I will not be forever confused." Or "Don't confuse me forever," because, already during his lifetime, Colón knew they were attempting to permanently change his lineage, his nationality, and his real name. In a letter to the Prince Heir's tutor, Colón writes, "let them give me then, whatever name they want" because his personal birth circumstance was responsible for the confusion and his family's restrictions did not allow him to correct these fabrications while he was still alive.

One major factor that hindered the search for the truth was the disinformation and the silence created around his Portuguese life by the Portuguese chroniclers such as Rui de Pina. What would all those past historians have thought about their "peasant weaver theory" if they knew that, at least by the year 1479, Colón was connected in Portugal at the highest levels to the nobles closest to the king, and especially to those whom the king held in the highest confidence?

None would have accepted that a peasant could have risen to such prominence in the short two years they presented in the tale of the Genoese Colombo. In the social climate of those days, a marriage of such contrast between peasant and nobility was as impossible as a marriage between an African American and any American white woman in the 1800s. Even more impossible if she happened to be a State Governor's daughter as was Filipa Moniz. Imagine if you read in every history book that Anne

Kinloch Lee, daughter of Virginia Governor Henry Lee III and sister of Confederate general Robert E. Lee, had been handed in marriage to an emancipated African American in the year 1820. Would you take that statement seriously knowing the social constraints of those days? Nevertheless, that is what history books have been forcing the world to believe for over a century with their tale of the wool weaver who married a noble Portuguese lady, Filipa Moniz Perestrelo, the daughter of a Portuguese Templar Knight, a privileged nobleman who was the Governor of Porto Santo Island.

MAKING SENSE FROM NONSENSE

The “Tale of the Wool Weaver” was based on invention, fantasy, and illusion. With just a few details about the time and place where Cristóbal Colón lived and some common sense, everything changes. The following points explain how the story changes, even before we present the rest of the facts. First of all, a *Cristoforo Colombo* could not hide his true name from the court by choosing as an alias *Cristoforo Colón*, which is hardly a pseudonym. If one truly wants to hide his identity, one would choose a name that leaves no trace of the original. Using those guidelines, the discoverer’s true name should have been nothing like Cristoforo/Cristóbal and Colombo/Colón. Furthermore, as a person who is trying to hide from Kings, as the history books insisted, he would not introduce two of his brothers, who would also need to hide their true identities from the courts. It becomes clear from the documents, as well as their actions, that King João II of Portugal and Queen Isabel of Spain always knew the true identities of the three Colón brothers and the two courts actually helped hide the true identities of the Colón brothers from the public.

Next, a man who arrives shipwrecked in a new kingdom without a penny in his pocket and only the clothes on his back would have had the hardest of times marrying any local woman, let alone a noblewoman. It would have been impossible for him to marry a privileged lady of high nobility who lived surrounded by servants in a monastery of the elitist Order of Santiago, protected by its knights, all of them initiated by its Master, King João II.

Then, a shipwrecked, indebted, ill-bred, poor person, as the *Raccolta* documents prove the weaver Colombo was, would not have spent his first hours in a new kingdom studying Latin and Spanish. If he could afford to study, he would have studied Portuguese so he could communicate with the people in the country he was now living in. He would not have used his time studying sciences, but working as a deckhand or even as a wool weaver, to pay for his food and shelter.

Also note that important documents, personal possessions, and papers belonging to the father-in-law would never be offered to a son-in-law unless there was no male heir, and if this was the case, they would have gone to the son-in-law that was head of the family at the time of his death. As such, when Captain Bartolomeu Perestrelo I died in 1457 his “maps and books” would have gone to his son, Bartolomeu Prestrelo II, brother of Colón’s wife and already Captain of Porto Santo in 1473 – six years before Filipa Moniz married the famous discoverer of America. Or at the very least the papers would have gone to Captain Pedro Correia, Colón’s brother-in-law who was Second Captain of Porto Santo from 1457 until 1473.

The official history presents this as a fact, even though Captain Perestrelo was known to be only a colonizer and never a *navigator* or owner of navigational maps. Because a death penalty covered the sharing of all such maps with foreigners.

Can one imagine Colón’s mother-in-law hiding such important papers from her son and heir in 1473 and saving them, instead, for a future son-in-law she was not certain she would ever have? If one accepts that the father-in-law’s papers included maps with a route to the New World, then common sense tells us that the Portuguese were already traveling that route before 1457, the year Bartolomeu Perestrelo I died.

Next, knowing what we know about King João II's personality and *modus operandi*, if he had truly ordered his soldiers to capture Colón, they would not have let him get away in the Azores. If they could not capture him alive at Santa Maria Island, the Portuguese would have sunk the *Niña* with Colón inside it. The lie that Colón hated Portugal and that Portugal continuously sought to arrest him was part of a constant thread of misinformation meant to protect Colón's ruse against Queen Isabel.

Already in the Ship's Log on September 6, 1492, when leaving the Canaries for the Caribbean, Colón wrote that he had "learned from a caravel which came from the island of Ferro that three caravels from Portugal were cruising in the area with the intention of detaining him; it must have been due to the envy the King felt at his having gone to Castile."¹⁶²

Three Portuguese caravels patrolling the channel of Hierro would not have let Colón escape, as they could have easily seen Colón's own three caravels because the channel is not that wide. Over the years Colón and his son made continuous false claims that Portugal wanted to arrest him, and yet, of the five documented times Cristóbal Colón entered Portuguese territory and the Portuguese had him in their grasp, even sitting vulnerably inside João II's lair at Vale do Paraíso, instead, they fed him, helped fix his ships, and helped him get safely back to Spain carrying Portuguese navigational secrets.

Another point is that a coat of arms in those days was similar to a passport or government-issued certificate by today's standards. It was regulated and not accepted on face value alone. No court would have accepted a coat of arms as authentic, nor would Queen Isabel have augmented it, without the usual background investigation into the lineage and importance of its holder. If Queen Isabel accepted that Admiral Colón already had a coat of arms, as she did, and then had her King of Arms draw it out on the 1493 decree of arms, then we can rest assured that Queen Isabel either knew from personal knowledge that Colón owned such a coat of arms in Portugal, or she confirmed its authenticity through the usual channels by contacting his native kingdom's King of Arms. Accepting otherwise would be contrary to the established protocols of the day.

The most important of all documents, the *Last Will of 1498*, so often touted as the last word that seals the fable of the peasant weaver, was said to hold as much value as a "blank piece of paper"¹⁶³ when it was presented in a 1580s lawsuit by Baltasar Colombo, an Italian pretending to be a relative to try to steal Colón's inheritance. The Spanish court did not trust nor accept this document, yet historians have continued to rely on it as their only proof tying the peasant Colombo from Genoa to the noble Colón from Spain. Chapter 8 presents a thorough analysis of this Last Will of 1498 and, for the first time in its history, clarifies all of the points that prove it is a forgery.

Finally, Admiral Cristóbal Colón did not die in poverty but instead in misery. He had many riches as far as gold and properties; what he lacked was the right to make use of his noble titles and their prerogatives. Colón had been arrested in 1500 and deposed from his posts of Governor and Viceroy of the New World because his lies about *being in India*, a monumental fraud against Spain, became obvious once Vasco da Gama returned to Lisbon from the real India, on 29 August 1499.

After his 1500 arrest, Colón was left only with the title of Admiral, which is only used at sea and has little power on land. He was also prohibited from setting foot in the New World again.

The documents found in the Genoese archives prove that several men with the name Cristoforo Colombo lived in Genoa, a fact no one denies. In reality, the Genoese documents of the *Raccolta* confirm beyond a doubt the low class of the Genoese weavers, making it impossible for that that Colombo to be the noble Colón.

Ricardo Beltrán y Rózpide who, during the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, spent quite some time investigating this dilemma, wrote "From the Italian documents we know where Colombo was and what he was doing in various times. From 1470 to 1473 he lived in Genoa and in Savona, bought wine and wool, held the profession of weaver and lived amongst the people of his breed, modest laborers, shoemakers, shearers, bakers, fruit peddlers, shopkeepers and tailors, all of which are found in those Italian notary deeds."¹⁶⁴

Over the years the story of the two men never fit into one complete narrative. The fact that the discoverer hid his true identity and did not want his lineage and place of birth to be common knowledge tells us that we are dealing with a great family secret, not with some commoner who was rewarded with a degree of nobility.

When we acknowledge that the courts of Spain and Portugal knew his true identity and had a hand in creating the cover-up, we must accept that we are facing an important state secret that involved the identity of a great noble person, not that of a plain wool weaver. Now the challenge is to find the motive behind the cover-up.

Don Cristóbal Colón certainly was born somewhere. Let us begin by looking closer to Portugal, where his noble nephews and brothers-in-law were also born, because there is no doubt that he lived in Portugal and was married there by King João II.

Cristóbal Colón's true identity was so important in that political arena, as the next chapters will show, that great effort was put into censoring it. King João II, Cristóbal Colón, and even Queen Isabel managed to fool us all with the assumed identity of the great navigator, which allowed a Viceroy to pass as a wool weaver in history books.