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DNA tests will settle Columbus' resting place

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An acrimonious dispute between Spain and the Dominican Republic over which of them is the final resting place of Christopher Columbus could be solved by DNA tests.

A team of geneticists from Granada University will fly to the Dominican Republic next month to examine bones in a mausoleum in Santo Domingo, the capital, which are claimed to be those of the 15th-century explorer. Spain insists that Columbus's remains lie in Seville cathedral.

"If we determine the bones are in a good enough condition and the authorities agree, the next step will be to extract DNA samples that will settle this issue once and for all," said Professor Jose Lorente, who will head the team.

The Spanish authorities approved the tests two years ago and now the Dominican Republic has finally agreed too. The tests will compare DNA from the bones with that of known relatives of Columbus buried in Seville.

The island of Hispaniola — of which the Dominican Republic is part — became Spain's bridgehead to the New World after it was discovered by Columbus in 1492.

The Sunday Times, London

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