



Monday January 16, 2006

Jobs | Real Estate | Motoring | Ad Listings | Watch | Advertise | Contacts

SEARCH  JOBS

SEARCH  HOMES

- News
- National News
- World News
- Business
- Sport
- Technology & Science
- Headlines
- Opinion
- Money
- Motoring
- Property
- Employment
- Weather
- Lifestyle & Leisure
- TV Music & Film
- Food & Wine
- Fashion & Beauty
- Arts & Literature
- Health & Fitness
- Travel
- Games
- Sudoku
- Crosswords
- Horoscopes
- Ringtones & txt
- Site Explorer
- Ad Listings



- Reader Services
- Subscription Services
- Back Issues
- Letters to the Editor
- Schools & Students
- Sponsorships
- Reader Panel
- Feedback
- FAQ / Site Help
- News via Email
- News to a PDA
- Promotions
- Competitions
- Photo Sales
- APN sites
- Careers at APN
- Make nzherald.co.nz your Homepage
- Digital Replica of Paper

Tuesday in print

### Scientists to use DNA tests to trace Columbus lineage

13.01.06 1.00pm  
By Elizabeth Nash

Spanish scientists are to test the DNA of hundreds of Catalans with the surname Colom in order to prove that Christopher Columbus, far from the Italian gentleman he has long been believed to be, was in fact a swashbuckling pirate born in Catalonia.

The experiment, in determining whether any of the participants are related to the pioneering explorer, is designed to clarify the disputed origins of the man - thought possibly to have been Catalan - who made landfall in America in 1492.

While historians have mostly reckoned Columbus was an Italian born in 1451 in Genoa, a persuasive counter-lobby argues that the mariner who pioneered the Spanish conquista was in reality the Catalan Cristofol Colom, who airbrushed his past to conceal activities as a pirate and conspirator against the king.

Some 120 Catalans are to donate samples of their saliva next week to a team of geneticists headed by Jose Antonio Lorente Acosta, head of the Laboratory of Genetic Identification at Granada University.

Similar tests on another 180 sharing the name Colom will follow in Mallorca and Valencia.

Investigators will compare the results with the DNA from Columbus' illegitimate son Hernando, whose remains lie in Seville Cathedral.

"We are not looking for descendants of Columbus, but a common ancestor who may be the link between the Admiral and today's Coloms.

If we find a Y chromosome (the only one that males inherit by the paternal line) we could say they were related," a spokesman for Mr Acosta said this week.

The first historian to suggest that Columbus was Catalan was a Peruvian, Luis Ulloa Cisneros, who published his theory in Paris in 1927.

Linguists favour the idea, saying that Columbus used Catalan - or something like it - rather than Italian or Castilian Spanish in his writings, and gave many of his discoveries in the New World Catalan names.

One historian reckons most of the places in the Caribbean and Central America named by Colombus can be linked directly to the Balearic island of Ibiza.

Historians have speculated that Columbus may have been a Catalan nobleman who joined a failed uprising against King Joan II of Aragon, father of King Ferdinand, and took orders from the French in various acts of piracy, including the sinking of Portuguese galleons.

Finding he'd backed the losing side, Columbus expunged his former identity and hispanicised his name to avoid reprisals and maintain the support of the new monarch for his planned voyage to America, this argument runs.

Ferdinand and his wife Queen Isabella united Spain and sponsored Columbus' voyages, and on the strength of his discoveries founded the richest maritime empire the world had ever seen.

Some versions suggest Columbus was the illegitimate son of Prince Carlos of Viana, a (itals)mallorquin nobleman related to Ferdinand and Isabella.


They suggest that Columbus was aware of his royal connections, which were never acknowledged, addressing his patrons with the unusually familiar "my natural lords".

Columbus had a great knowledge of the work of the prestigious Mallorca cartographical school.

Other theories include that of the historian Salvador de Madariaga who argued that Columbus was from a Catalan family who fled to Genoa to escape persecution for being Jewish.

### infocus

- Categories
- Family and relationships
- History
- Locations
- Caribbean
- Central America
- Dominican Republic
- Europe
- Spain

 Related feed(s)

What is RSS ?

[More infocus »](#)

### Technology & Science Headlines

- Stardust from dawn of time arrives »
- Waikato uni tests on map could change world history »
- NZ firm acquires rights to map tool »
- Smart appliances set to save energy and cash »
- Guidant goes with Johnson & Johnson »
- Great inventions »
- Video game sales jump »
- Robinson brothers navigating their way to the top »
- *Peter Griffin*: Gambling capital becomes gadget city » [P]
- *Hot wired*: Challenge for the heart rate »
- Phone firms slap brakes on cheaper, faster internet »
- Teetering on the edge of space »
- Vegies lower hypertension shows research »
- US scientists plan to reintroduce wildlife missing for 13,000 years »
- Frogs heading dinosaur's way »
- Bird flu epidemic 'good for sales', says Dell CEO »
- Dogs may be able to sniff out cancer »
- Renaissance shares hit high, prompt query »
- **Scientists to use DNA tests to trace Columbus lineage »**
- Signs of mutation in Turkish bird flu »
- Coloured pigs green cells and bacon »
- Speeding slowly towards internet deal with telco »
- Optus buys Virgin Mobile »
- Wireless operator welcomes Telecom's phone price hike »
- Ancient Maori artefact discovered on beach »
- Boeing heralds new era in airborne telecommunications »

[Ads by Goooooogle](#)

**Captain Jack Sparrow**  
Pirate swashbuckler boots just like Pirates of the caribbean  
[caboots.zoovy.com/](http://caboots.zoovy.com/)

**The Kite Connection**  
22 years world class service A "Real" kite store. Free shipping  
[www.kiteconnection.com](http://www.kiteconnection.com)

**Pirate Wenchies & Gypsies**  
Boots, Hats, Shirts, Skirts Bodices A Pirate, Wench & Gypsy Boutique  
[www.DressLikeAPirate.com](http://www.DressLikeAPirate.com)

**Skull & Crossbones**  
Pirate Wear shirts and tanks Traditional, Original & Unusual  
[www.piratemod.com](http://www.piratemod.com)

**Cool Pirate T-Shirts**  
Jolly Roger, Edward English, more! Everything 10% to 50% off.  
[HowCool.com](http://HowCool.com)

[Advertise on this site](#)



**SPECIAL OFFERS**

- The NZ Herald Sudoku book
- more exclusive herald-offers...



And Enrique Bayerri asserts that Columbus was born in a small island in Catalunya's Ebro delta, that was called Genoa.

The island later silted up, to form part of the river's flood plain.

Dr Lorente Acosta, who confesses he favours the Catalan thesis, has spent years trying to establish by DNA testing exactly where the great Admiral's bones lie: whether they are beneath the cathedral crypt in the Dominican Republic, or in a small lead box uncovered in 2003 in a Sevillian ceramics factory, formerly a Carthusian monastery.

Whoever he was, and wherever he is, we do know that Christopher Columbus died on 20 May, 1606, in the Castillian capital of Valladolid, north of Madrid.

The city will host big quincentenary celebrations in May, by which time investigators in Catalonia hope to be able to confirm, or not, the nationality of Europe's pioneering mariner.

- INDEPENDENT

Tools

- [Printer Friendly](#)

[Ads by Goooooogle](#)

[Advertise on this site](#)

[Pirate Flags & Swag](#)

More than 600 Pirate goods, flags & gifts. Quick 2 day shipping

[www.cdockpirates.com](http://www.cdockpirates.com)

[Dating in Spain](#)

Browse 1000s of great Expat photo profiles of Singles aged 30 plus!

[www.whereheartsmet.com](http://www.whereheartsmet.com)

Email to a Friend

Your Name (required)

Your Email Address (required)

You may enter a personal message here.

You may enter 5 email addresses to send this story to.

TO: (required)

CC:

CC:

CC:

CC:

No email address will be stored or placed in a database for any further reference or use.

Send

- [Apple debuts the Intel iMac »](#)
- [Nasa probe carrying comet dust set to return »](#)
- [Eye on the sky »](#)
- [Hitchhikers using safety text service »](#)
- [More headlines](#)



[Front Page](#) | [National News](#) | [World](#) | [Business](#) | [Sport](#) | [Science & Technology](#) | [Money](#) | [Property](#) | [Employment](#) | [Motoring](#)



Shannen generated this object at: Monday 16, January 2006 22:24.10 NZDT