
Three Sources of Textual Evidence of Columbus, Crypto Jew

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Introduction: The purpose of this paper is to add new material, based on Columbus's writings, to the large body of historical research and forthcoming scientific analysis of DNA intended to shed light on Columbus's origins, specifically regarding indications of his identity as Crypto Jew. We address only textual sources from Columbus's writings, for as we have shown previously, he was a prolific and talented writer and he wrote in Spanish. The keys to his religion are to be found in the Book of Prophecies, the Diary of the First Voyage, and in Columbus's triangular autograph. Another key, the influence of Ladino or Jewish Spanish on his expression, will be the subject of another paper.

The intense Columbus of the voyages, diaries, and petitions to the royal monarchs had another side that showed through when he undertook an ambitious spiritual and literary project he called The Book of Prophecies, from 1501 through 1503, between the letters of his last two voyages, with the stated purpose of helping to recover Jerusalem for Christianity.

Columbus opted to keep the text in the original Latin, gathering selections from 44 books of the Old Testament—mainly psalms and prophetic texts—, along with the four Gospels, 23 Epistles, and some passages from classical authors. The work involved selecting and copying the Latin texts, without translating the originals. The book also contains several poems and marginal notes attributed to Columbus or in part to his younger son Fernando. This was Columbus's first openly "literary" venture in that it had no immediate practical purpose. It is a contemplative work that responded to his deepest spiritual needs, among them, his religious faith.

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