

Spanish Historian Says

MADRID, April 14 (AP)—Christopher Columbus—revered as an Italian who discovered America for Spain—actually was a Spanish Basque pirate, a Spanish historian maintains.

The historian is Fernando del Valle Lersundi, who presented his theory to the Spanish Royal Academy in October. In Rome, Italian

experts called the theory "silly."

Del Valle argued in the Madrid newspaper ABC that Columbus was the nephew of the French Basque pirate, Adm. Guillermo de Casenove, whose exploits against enemy shipping brought him the nickname of "Colon."

"The name of the discov-

erer of America," said del Valle, "has no relation to the Genovese Colombo, nor with the Columbuses of Pontevedra, nor with the Columbuses of Corcega or of our Levante lands, nor with any other considered until now related to the discoverer."

"The Columbus of Christopher is, simply another

Christopher Columbus Was a

form of the nickname of 'Coulon' or 'Coullon' by which his relative, the vice admiral of Louis XI, Guillermo de Casenove, was the first known in France."

Adm. de Casenove, said del Valle, was a Spanish Basque, probably born in Navarre. The historian theorizes that Guillermo fled to France, having taken the

losing side in a fight against King John II of Aragon.

In the battle of Cape St. Vincent near Lisbon in August, 1476, said del Valle, Christopher Columbus fought with his uncle's pirate fleet against a Spanish fleet as "Colombo Junior."

Del Valle says Columbus thereafter felt guilty for fighting his own country-

men, prompting him to bequeath money in his will to certain individuals with the stipulation that they were not to know their benefactor's name. Among the recipients were many of the owners of ships attacked at Cape St. Vincent.

The pirate background of Columbus, said del Valle, accounted for the mystery sur-

Basque Pirate

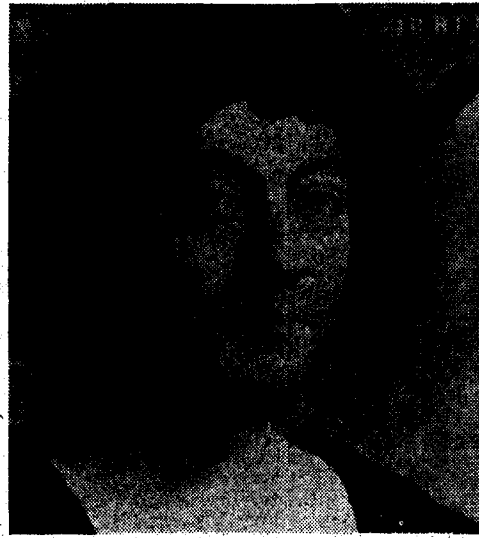
rounding his appearance in Spain, his name on the Spanish royal payroll, and his Spanish accent.

His family background accounted, too, said del Valle, for his Portuguese wedding to a noblewoman and the ability of his brother Fernando to stay in noble quarters in France.

The son of a Genovese

weaver could do none of these things in the 15th century, del Valle said.

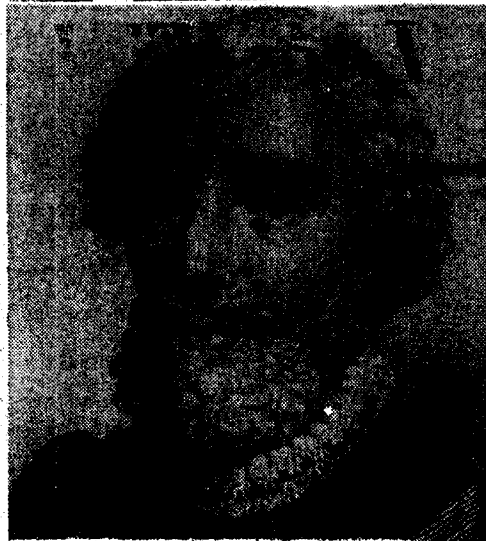
Christopher Columbus died in Valladolid, Spain, May 21, 1506, as Admiral of the Ocena Sea and hero of the world. But his right to be called the discoverer against the Norsemen and others has long been argued.



Christopher Columbus, whose three-ship



fleet was the first from Europe to reach America, was a man of mystery. Shown above are conflicting



paintings of what he may have looked like.