



Christopher Columbus and His Family: The Genoese and Ligurian Documents (Repertorium Columbianum)

J.E. Dotson

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Any analysis of the background and youth of Christopher Columbus is necessarily based on the documents gathered in this volume, which includes all the known records relating to Columbus and his family in Liguria. All these documents, covering the century from 1429 to 1531, are preserved in Genoese and other Ligurian archives; more than a third of them have come to light since the 1896 *Raccolta Colombiana*. Most are notarial instruments that record the family's business and real estate transactions, wills, and so forth. A few are taken from the financial records of the city, and several more record the settlement of various conflicts, mostly involving business disputes. The colourful exception involves Christopher Columbus's cousin Giovanni Colombo, who was accused in the death of a fellow worker. Whatever their precise form, these are all official documents. Even the autograph letters of Christopher Columbus were not written to individuals but to officials of the Bank of San Giorgio in Genoa. Here are the day-to-day activities of five generations of a family that - except for the man who made the name 'Columbus' famous - was entirely ordinary. The appearance in English of this material is of great importance to those interested in the explorer and the economic, social and cultural context of his life. 'Dotson has done an extraordinary job of putting these 188 documents into a readable English that fully conveys the meaning of the originals.... Simply reading [them] is a marvelous introduction to the daily life of men and women in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.' - Steven A. Epstein, author of *Genoa and the Genoese, 958-1528*.

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