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Christopher Columbus, the Last Templar

BY RUGGERO MARINO

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In this book, Italian journalist Ruggero Marino challenges centuries-old myths and deliberate disinformation to re-affirm the dominant roles that Pope Innocent VIII and Christopher Columbus played in the 1492 discovery of the New World.

Marino's thesis is that for more than 500 years, Pope Innocent VIII has been deliberately slighted by historians and researchers and the part he played in the discovery of America has been intentionally expunged by Spanish King Ferdinand and his Roman cohort Pope Alexander VI, Rodrigo Borgia. Their intent was to dishonor Innocent and to ensure that Spain, not Italy, was acclaimed as the dominant power in the discovery of America.

To substantiate his claims, Marino spent more than 16 years researching archives, libraries, and even sites at the Vatican, including Innocent VIII's tomb. He confesses

to constantly puzzling over a cryptogram of Columbus' reproduced in the final pages of the book but indecipherable still.

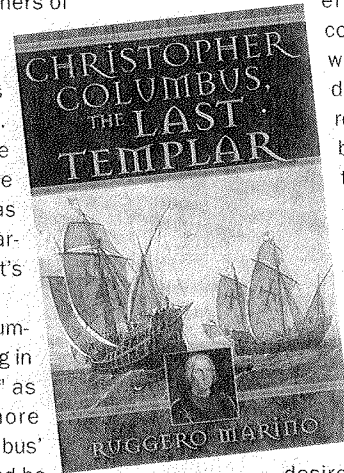
Marino details why he believes Columbus was Pope Innocent's illegitimate son and presents the logic for seeing Columbus as an educated renaissance man. He explains the relationships among practitioners of the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish religions and alludes to present-day parallel struggles between the East and the West. He stresses how all knowledge and political power at the time was centered in Rome but was being threatened by the barbarians at the gate, hence Innocent's call for a crusade.

He forges links between Columbus and the Templars, including in the use of the term "Master" as applied to Columbus and more tellingly, in the fact that Columbus' father-in-law was a Templar. And he expounds about the numerous world maps of the time with their mysterious markings and references to the New World, Atlantis,

Antilya, Cipango, and the "fourth peninsula." Marino even posits that Columbus' voyage of 1492 was a hoax, of sorts, since Marino asserts that he had already discovered America during a previous voyage.

Marino's suppositions are interesting and worth considering. Readers may find, however, that the book can be confusing because of the way subjects are introduced, then dropped, then re-introduced, a technique better suited to fiction than non-fiction. North American readers with an average knowledge of and interest in Italian and European history may also find the references to the multitude of persons and events difficult to follow. But those who have a desire to uncover more about the mysteries of the discovery of America will be well rewarded.

—M. WAYNE CUNNINGHAM



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