

DNA to settle mystery of Columbus' origins

More than 500 years after Christopher Columbus set foot in the Bahamas, DNA experts are working to determine the particulars of his early life.

Theories about the mariner's origins run the gambit from the illegitimate son of a prince to a Jewish refugee of the Spanish Inquisition, The New York Times reported Sunday.

For decades, these alternate theories couldn't be confirmed but genetics may settle the debate.

Around Europe, scholars and enthusiastic amateur geneticists are collecting cheek swabs for comparison with DNA collected from a cache of Columbus' bones to determine if he was Genoese, Castilian, Catalan or something else, the newspaper said.

If there is a match between Columbus' and volunteers' Y chromosomes, it could pin down the start of famous traveler's journey.

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