



The life of the Admiral Christopher Columbus by his son, Ferdinand

By Fernando Colōn

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"The cornerstone of the history of the American continent." --Washington Irving This revised edition (originally published in 1959) of the famous biography of Columbus by his son Ferdinand was published to coincide with the Columbus quincentenary celebrations. Benjamin Keen's introduction traces the changing assessments of Columbus and his Discovery over almost five centuries, as reflected in the writings of historians, other social scientists, novelists, and poets, and shows how these assessments were influenced by varying political, social, and intellectual conditions. Keen has also revised his translation and notes to reflect new information and viewpoints. Ferdinand's book is a moving and personal document. Provoked in part by the Spanish Crown's attempts to diminish Columbus's role as discoverer, it reveals the restrained emotions of a loving son jealous of his father's honor. Ferdinand had access to all of his father's papers. At the age of thirteen, he accompanied Columbus on the last voyage and participated in many of the events he relates here. The narrative has the irresistible excitement of an adventure story: shipwreck, storms, and battles with mutineers or Indians. Ferdinand's imaginative insight into the many-faceted personality of the discoverer and his artistry with words make this biography, as Henry Vignaud has said, "the most important of our sources of information on the life of the discoverer of America." Benjamin Keen is Professor Emeritus of Latin American history at Northern Illinois University. He is the author of *The Aztec Image in Western Thought* (Rutgers University Press) and many other books.

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