

History of how Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo name was changed

Dr. Harry Kelsey's book "Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo" published in 1986 by the Huntington Library Press, ISBN 0-87328-176-4, is probably the most detailed book on Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo's life {until 2015 when Dr. Wendy Kramer discovered thousands of pages in the AGI (Archivo General de Indias), AHPS (Archivo Municipal de Palma del Rio), HSS (Hospital de San Sebastian), AGCA (Archivo General Centro America), on Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo}.

In Dr. Harry Kelsey's book there are these details on how the name of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was changed to Portuguese:

Chapter 1, page 4, third paragraph and NOTE #4 on page 184.

Chapter 1, page 5, third paragraph and NOTE #9 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 5, fourth paragraph and continues page 6 and NOTE #10 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 6, third paragraph and NOTE #12 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 6, fourth paragraph and NOTE #13 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 6, last paragraph and NOTE #14 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 7, first paragraph and NOTE #15 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 7, second paragraph and NOTE #16 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 7, third paragraph and NOTES #17 & 18 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 7, fourth paragraph and NOTE #19 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 7, fifth paragraph and NOTE #20 on page 185.

Chapter 1, page 8, first paragraph and NOTES #21 & 22 on page 186.

Chapter 1, page 8, second paragraph and NOTE #23 on page 186.

Chapter 1, page 8, third paragraph and NOTE #24 on page 186.

Chapter 1, page 8, fourth paragraph and NOTE #25 on page 186.

See information below:

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Chapter 1, page 4, third paragraph and NOTE #4 on page 184.

At the time of his death in 1543, the estate of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was one of the richest in Central America, destined to be fought over by his heirs and his enemies for another three-quarters of a century. The legal cases arising from these disputes have produced thousands of pages of documents (see note#4) that now make it possible to know more about Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo than ever before, though not nearly enough to satisfy all our curiosity.

Note # 4. The main sources in the Archivo General de Indias (hereafter A. G. 1.) are: *Patronato* 87, "*Informacion de los servicios del general Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*"; *Patronato* 182, "*Escritura de renuncia otorgada a favor de S. M. por Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*"; *Justicia* 280, "*Beatriz Sanchez de Ortega, vecina de Guatemala, con Don Francisco de la Cueba, vecino de dicha ciudad sobre ciertos indios*"; *Justicia* 286, "*Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, vecino de la provincia de Guatemala con Don Francisco de la Cueba y otros consortes sobre los pueblos de los yndios de Jumaytepeque y Tacuba*"; *Justicia* 290, "*Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, vecino de la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, con el fiscal de S. M. sobre 105 yndios de 105 pueblos de Cobar. y Acatenango.*" These and other Guatemalan manuscripts (a total of seventy thousand pages) were micro-filmed in 1967 and succeeding years by Dr. Ruben E. Reina of the University of Pennsylvania and the staff of his Hispanic-Latin American Research Project. His staff also prepared a file of twenty-seven thousand pages of typed extracts and transcripts of this material, which he very graciously made available for my use. The microfilm is in the permanent custody of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, where it is available for scholarly use under certain restrictions. There is a much smaller collection of similarly pertinent manuscripts in the Archivo General de Centro America (hereafter A. G. C. A.), the most useful of which are *signatura* A1.29, *legajo* 4672, *expediente* 401312, "*Meritos y servicios de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*"; and *sig.* A3.2, *leg.* 1539, *expo* 22569, "*Merecimientos y servicios de los ascendientes de dona Isabel y de dona Ieronima de Solorzano y Mazariégoz ... bisnietos de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo.*"

Chapter 1, page 5, third paragraph and NOTE #9 on page 185.

Herrera called Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo a Portuguese, which no one had ever claimed before, but he missed the well-known Portuguese origins of the captain and pilot Antonio Correa (Carrera).⁹

Portuguese pilots were in great repute at the time. Such a man would be mentioned in dispatches. His name and nationality would be important information for any book on seafaring. It is not difficult to imagine Herrera as a weary author, revising his manuscript for the second or third time, deciding that it was important to say one of the men was a portugués, but carelessly placing that word next to the wrong name. Even easier to imagine is that a thoughtless printer allowed his attention to wander just long enough for the word portugués to fall into line behind the name Cabrillo instead of Correa.

Note # 9. Correa made no secret of his Portuguese origins. His statement is summarized in Francisco A. de Icaza, *Diccionario autobiografico de conquistadores y pobladores de Nueva Espana* (Madrid: Imprenta de "El Adelantado de Segovia," 1923), 2: 342-43. See also the testimony of Lazaro de Cardenas, 26 April 1560, in A. G. 1., *Justicia* 290. 10. Jotio Rodrigues Cabrilho, *achegas para a sua biografia* (Lisbon: Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1958), 32-33.

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Chapter 1, page 5, fourth paragraph and continues page 6 and NOTE #10 on page 185.

American historians have been able to recognize such an error, but the historians of Portugal remain unconvinced. Chief among these writers was the Visconde de Lagoa, who consulted archival sources in Portugal and Spain without finding real evidence that Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo came from Portugal. Lagoa did find a number of Portuguese soldiers and seamen in New Spain named Juan Rodríguez, but that name was as common as is John Jones in the United States. Lagoa also found dozens of Spaniards named Juan Rodríguez in the same lists, but he decided not to mention this. 10

Note # 10. Jotio Rodrigues Cabrilho, *achegas para a sua biografia* (Lisbon: Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1958), 32-33.

Chapter 1, page 6, third paragraph and NOTE #12 on page 185.

In recent years a number of scholars tried to locate Cabrillo descendants in Portugal, or a Cabrillo birthplace, or even a family named Cabrillo, but without notable results. A Portuguese historian, Celestino Soares, finally admitted that "the name Cabrillo is not known in Portugal." Nevertheless, Soares continued to insist this great explorer was Portuguese. 12

Note # 12. Celestino Soares, *California and the Portuguese* (Lisbon: SPN Books, 1939), 39. Apparently the name exists-or nearly so-among Portuguese in the United States. A "Portuguese fisherman" named Juan Cabrill took the part of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in San Diego's Cabrillo Celebration in 1894. *Los Angeles Evening Express*, 26 September 1894, 3.

Chapter 1, page 6, fourth paragraph and NOTE #13 on page 185.

In 1955 Maurice Holmes tried without success to locate "material relating to Cabrillo" in the Portuguese national archives. He found none and concluded that there was no proof for the assertion that Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was Portuguese. 13

Note # 13. Maurice Holmes, *From New Spain by Sea to the Californias*, vol. 9 of the Spain in the West series (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1963), 269-71.

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Chapter 1, page 6, last paragraph and NOTE #14 on page 185

Many surnames of the sixteenth century were derived from the name of a town, a province, or a region. The practice was particularly common among people of humble or rural origin, who often had no surname at all until they left their native villages and emigrated to America. Some historians, Portuguese and others, have guessed that Cabrillo was such a name.¹⁴

Note #14 Lagoa, *Jotio Rodrigues Cabrilho*, 33. Joan M. Jensen, "Notes from a Western Explorer," *The Western Explorer: Journal of the Cabrillo Historical Association*, 4 (March 1967): 3-5. Euclides Goulart da Costa, *Portugal Descubridor: Apontamentos respeitantes a descoberta de California* (Lisbon: Tipografia de Manutencao Milirar, 1928), 28. Peter Boyd-Bowman, *Patterns of Spanish Immigration to the New World (1493-1580)* (Buffalo: State University of New York, Special Studies, 1973), 15.

Chapter 1, page 7, first paragraph and NOTE #15 on page 185.

The problem for Portuguese historians is that there is no province or region in Portugal named Cabrillo. There are several Portuguese villages named Cabril and a few Spanish places with similar names. In both countries there are mountains and rivers named Cabril or something like it, as well as towns and other geographic locations named Cabrilla, Cabrilanes, and Cabrillas.¹⁵ But not Cabrillo.

Note # 15 *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada Europeo-Americana* (Barcelona: Hijos de J. Espasa, 1905-1930), 10:218-19.

Chapter 1, page 7, second paragraph and NOTE #16 on page 185.

In an effort to solve the problem Joan M. Jensen traveled through Portugal in 1966 for the Cabrillo Historical Association of San Diego. She visited every village named Cabril, and she failed to discover any valid evidence about the origin of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. But so strong was the Portuguese tradition that she came home "much more convinced that Cabrillo was Portuguese and that he indeed came from one of these villages."¹⁶

Note # 16. Jensen, "Notes," 3-5.

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More recently, in 1973, W. Michael Mathes checked pertinent historical and genealogical sources, reviewing arguments presented by writers who insist that Juan Rodríguez was Portuguese. Mathes found listings for 124 persons named Juan Rodríguez who immigrated to the New World before 1542, none of them named Cabrillo or Cabrilho." Looking at the claims of Portuguese historians, Mathes found that they often misrepresented the facts in "a desperate attempt to prove a thesis rather than present objective evidence." After weighing all the evidence he could find, Mathes concluded that "there exists considerable doubt as to the nationality of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo and, in fact, there is much to indicate he was not Portuguese but Castilian." 18

Note # 17 W. Michael Mathes, "The Discoverer of Alta California: J08.0 Rodrigues Cabrilho or Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo," *Journal of San Diego History* 19 (Summer 1973): 1

Note # 18 Ibid., 7.

Chapter 1, page 7, fourth paragraph and NOTE #19 on page 185.

Portuguese scholars for the most part have ignored Mathes' argument. When they discuss the very many skilled Portuguese navigators who served the Spanish crown, they still include Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in that group. 19

Note # 19 D. R. Luis Mendoca Albuquerque, "An Aspect of the Political Application of the Tordesillas Treaty," *Cabrillo and His Era*, Sixth Annual Cabrillo Festival Historic Seminar 1 (September 1978): 1-7. A. Teixeira da Mota, "The Teaching of Navigation in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Cabrillo," *ibid.*, 9-18 .

Chapter 1, page 7, fifth paragraph and NOTE #20 on page 185.

Government bodies have joined individual scholars in the dispute, but with even less success. Both the United States government and the state of California have asserted that Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo is Portuguese. (see note #20) The government of Portugal, of course, agrees, but Portuguese agreement stops short of total harmony. Not one but two villages in Portugal named Cabril claim to be the birthplace of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo.

Note # 20 U. S., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Cabrillo National Monument, California*, leaflet (Washington: G. P.O., 1974). California, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 15, *Statutes of 1935*, 2409., contains the text of a resolution declaring in part that "John Rodriguez Cabrillo, a native of Portugal, discovered California on Thursday, September 28, 1542, while in the service of Spain by entering the harbor of San Diego." The original resolution, as introduced by Senator Walter McGovern of San Francisco, used the form "John Rodriguez Cabrillo."
See California Senate *Journal*, 51st sess., 21 January 1935, 142. Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 44, *Statutes of 1935*, 2693-94, had the name spelled as "John Rodriquez Cabrillo," which says something about the then-prevailing Anglo attitudes toward Hispanic names.

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The Camara Municipal de Montalegre insists that Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was born in the nearby village of Cabril. 21 Further south, near the city of Castro Daire, citizens in another village named Cabril point to one of the oldest buildings in town as the very spot where Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was born.22 Obviously, at least one of these groups is wrong.

Note # 21. João Goncalves da Costa, *Montalegre e terras de Barroso, notas historicas sobre Montalegre freguesias de concelho e tegiao de Barroso* (Braga, Portugal: Edicao da Camara Municipal de Montalegre, 1968).

Note # 22. Camara Municipal de Montalegre, unanimous resolution of 2 September 1978, addressed to the City Council of San Diego, California.

Chapter 1, page 8, second paragraph and NOTE #23 on page 186.

Convinced of the justice of their cause, the members of the Montalegre city council ceremoniously issued a proclamation in 1978, saying that " João Rodrigues Cabrillo" was born in Lapela, a barrio of their own village of Cabril. What is the evidence? Well, "in Lapela there exists a 'house of Galego' a name attributed to João Rodrigues Cabrillo.,23

Note # 23 Ibid

Chapter 1, page 8, third paragraph and NOTE #24 on page 186.

This is an obscure but not insignificant point. Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo discovered a port called Navidad on the Colima coast of Mexico. For years it was thought that Navidad was also called "el Puerto de Juan Gallego", presumably another name for the discoverer. As it turns out, the port of Juan Gallego is some distance up from Navidad, and Juan Gallego is clearly not Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. 24

Note # 24 The identification of the ports is covered at length in chapter 5 below.

Chapter 1, page 8, fourth paragraph and NOTE #25 on page 186.

The word Gallego Means a native of Galicia, the region of Spain just north of the Portuguese border. Supposing for the sake of argument that Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was also called Juan Gallego, would a man that called himself Juan Gallego be Portuguese? In apparent response to this and other queries the Montalegre city councilmen declared that "João Rodrigues Cabrillo" must have "emigrated to Galicia where is married and became related to Spanish nobility, then

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departed to join the seafaring expeditions that explored the coast of America.²⁵ “ This is the wildest of all the stories. It has no basis in fact.

Note # 25 – Camara Municipal de Montalegre to City Council of San Diego, 2 of September 1978.
