COLUMBUS — A GREEK?

Yes—was the reply given to the above question by Mr. Demetrius Sicilianos, former Greek Ambassador in Washington ·at a lecture given recently at the Athens Club of which he is the chairman.

Contrary to the commonly accepted belief, which makes Christopher Columbus a Genoese, Mr. Sicilianos was able to produce documentary and other evidence to show that the discoverer of America came of a noble Greek family— the Disypatoi Palaeologi—and was born at Constantinople in 1439. He left that city after its capture by the Turks in 1453 and thereafter led a wandering life as a corsair until he persuaded the Spanish sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabela to finance his expedition to the West Indies ·which led to the discovery of the American continent.

Mr. Sicilianos invokes the evidence of the biography written by Christopher Columbus' son Fernando, who says that his father was a relative of George Disypatos Palaeologos, known as George the Greek, a famous corsair in the service of King Louis XI of France with whom Christopher served for several years against the Turks and Venice.

According to Mr. Sicilianos, there were two men bearing the name of Christopher Columbus—the first of illustrious Greek origin, as mentioned above, and the second a humble weaver and cheese-merchant born at Genoa in 1451.

It is a fact that the discoverer of America nowhere mentions the place of his birth but merely calls himself a 'stranger' in Spain.

It is absurd to wish to identify the ·great navigator, a highly-cultured man who had studied astronomy, mathematics, geometry, physics and the works of the Greek and Arab geographers and whom King Ferdinand honoured with the title of 'Viceroy of the Indies', with the simple weaver and cheese-merchant of Genoa who died an obscure death in Portugal.

Many countries and cities, including no less than nine Italian rivals of Genoa, claim to have given birth to the great navigator. But the probabilities, as Mr. Sicilianos concluded, are in favour of his Greek origin, for the reasons stated above.