

Translation and the Spanish Empire in the Americas

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by Roberto A. Valdeón

Translation and the Spanish Empire in the Americas

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Preface

The origins of this book go back to a conference held in Antwerp in 2009. The location may sound well-chosen for a text on translation and the Spanish empire. Antwerp, part of the Spanish empire in the sixteenth century, preserves many reminders that connects it with its Spanish rulers, including the Latin translation of Bartolomé de las Casas's *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, printed in the city and exhibited at the Plantin-Moretus Museum. In fact, many of the texts of the conquest of the Americas were published in Antwerp. However, the location was very much a coincidence except for the fact that my participation was the result of a kind invitation by the organizers, Luc van Doorslaer and Peter Flynn. It was a small and yet highly international event. Edwin Gentzler, Cecilia Alvstad, and Dirk Delabastita, among others, offered their insights into Eurocentrism and translation studies, and discussed the connections between translation, Europe and the Americas that Edwin Gentzler's own *Translation and Identity in the Americas* debated. In retrospect I am not sure whether my participation met Luc van Doorslaer and Peter Flynn's expectations, although my contribution was later shaped into one of the articles of the special issue of *Translation and Interpreting Studies* devoted to translation and Eurocentrism (2011), later published in book format.

It was also the beginning of an interest in the role played by translation in the conquest of America (as we use the word in Spanish, that is, to refer to the territory comprising North, Central and South America) and in the development of the Spanish colonial rule in the continent. Two of the issues that I discussed in my Antwerp talk became the starting points of this book. On the one hand, the scholarly use of Doña Marina/La Malinche, Hernán Cortés's interpreter, as the perfect example of the violation of the land and its peoples by the conquistadors, as well as a metaphor of the treason to her own people (cf. Valdeón 2011 and 2013a). On the other, the role of the translations of Las Casas's *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (a small tract in which the Dominican friar combined fact and fiction to encourage the future king, Philip II, to curb European abuse in the Caribbean and elsewhere) in the creation and expansion of the Spanish Black Legend and the promotion of benevolent empires, notably by the English (cf. Valdeón 2012a and 2014). But as I probed into the uses of translation, and the importance of translators and interpreters, I found approaches in other disciplines (but also in translation studies) that could provide us with a more nuanced view of these highly contentious issues.

This book explores the connections between translation and the Spanish empire in the Americas, as well the dissemination of the events of the conquest through translation, following the path and the suggestions of those who have preceded us. Translation studies, like other disciplines within the Humanities and the Social Sciences, has a certain tendency to attempt the conquest of new territories by labelling and relabelling concepts and suggesting new epistemological approaches. However, I have preferred to rely on previous scholarly work, namely Georges L. Bastin's periodization for the study of the history of translation in the Americas (2006, 124). The book aims to examine the role of translation and translators in two periods: the encounter and conquest, and the colonial period. Bastin speaks of three more epochs: from pre-independence to emancipation, the independence period, and from 1920 to the present. Bastin's definition of translation in Latin America as an activity that is "displacing and creative, politically, economically, educationally, and culturally committed – a specific and, above all, appropriate practice and space" (2006, 124) marks the boundaries between the periods covered here, and the other three, the former being an activity more clearly linked to the discourse of empire than the latter.

The first chapter introduces some of the issues that will be discussed in the book, paying particular attention to two axes: the Black Legend versus the benevolent conquest on the one hand, and translation as violation versus translation as (mis)communication on the other. "Conquerors and translators" examines the encounter/clash of civilizations, the difficulties posed by the lack of communication and the gradual use of translation in the expansion of the Spanish in the Americas. "Translation and the administration of the colonies" delves into the role of translation in the establishment of the colonial administration and its role in effacing many and adopting a few of the cultural marks of the so-called New World. "Evangelizing the natives" reflects on the role of translation in the evangelization of the Americas through translation but also on how the relationship between the various religious orders and the indigenous peoples contributed to the expansion of the knowledge of the lands and cultures. These sections are established for practical reasons, but it should be understood that, chronologically, the events were simultaneous. The fifth and sixth chapters partly justify the title of this book, *Translation and the Spanish Empire in the Americas* rather than *Translation in the Spanish American Empire*. "The chroniclers translated" and "Native chroniclers and translation" examine the role of translation in the dissemination of information about the Spanish empire in other European languages, which shaped national identities in other parts of Europe as a result of the emergence of the so-called Spanish "Black Legend", "invented precisely to rule Spain out of imperial contention" (Mignolo 2002, 459). It will consider what was translated and into what

languages, but I will also discuss more recent versions of Spanish texts to evaluate the ideological evolution of these translations, as we move from the early colonial period to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and, eventually, to contemporary renderings. It will put to the test the initial assumption that all translations of Spanish documents portrayed the Spanish negatively.

The texts used to obtain information about how translation served colonial purposes on the one hand, and establish communication with the natives on the other are the chronicles of the conquests, the religious texts used by the missionaries and the Church, the legislation produced in Spain and in the colonies themselves, and administrative documents of all sorts (such as those issued by the governing bodies of towns and cities). Translations of the Spanish chroniclers will be considered primary sources in that they will inform us of the dialogues and debates among emerging European powers. Secondary sources, not only by literary and translation scholars, but especially those produced by anthropologists, historians and ethnographers, will also be of paramount importance. Many of these are US-based researchers. They have dealt with translation practices in one way or another, although their work is less known to translation scholars. A few of them have even translated some of the chronicles. All these sources will contribute to establish an uneven triangular base for the book, as we look at legislation and religious texts that originated in Spain and were translated into indigenous languages, Spanish and indigenous visions of the conquest (and their translations into European languages), and contemporary approaches to the use of translation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, notably by US scholars, who, due to their political and geographical position, have become particularly interested in the history, literature and cultures of the whole continent.

To finish this preface, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have read the book, or parts of it, and who have provided valuable suggestions at various times over the past four years. I would like to start by thanking my colleague and friend Luc van Doorslaer, whom I first met in 2008 at a conference I organized in Oviedo. Our mutual interest was, and remains, news translation but Luc inadvertently sparked my curiosity in the theme of this book. At the Antwerp conference, I first met Edwin Gentzler, with whom I shared many enjoyable breakfasts (and one or two sips of prosecco) in the cold December of 2009. His invitation to join the University of Massachusetts Amherst Translation Center and the generous funding of the Spanish Ministry of Education (Reference: PR2011-511) allowed me to have access to most of the texts I needed to consult, and so many more. Edwin's support and advice have always been an invaluable asset. Other colleagues who have provided their advice include Georges L. Bastin (Montreal), Luise von Flotow (Ottawa), Nigel Griffin (Oxford), An van Eecke and Lieve Behiels (Leuven), Kyle Conway (North

Dakota), Elizabeth Woodward (Coruña), Thomas Scanlan (Ohio). I would also like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their careful reading and insightful comments. My special thanks go to África Vidal (Salamanca), who enthusiastically agreed to read the first two chapters of the book and kept asking for more.

I would like to end by thanking my family, first my parents (my mother, who taught me how to read and write, and my father, who has now forgotten all the lands he once conquered) and my siblings. To Dolores, my wife (who finished her Ph. D. dissertation in Amherst) and to my daughters Sara and Marta, I cannot find the words to express my love and admiration.

Language, translation and empire

1.1 Of empires, national rivalries and languages

The arrival of the Europeans in the Americas has been a complex object of study for historians (Guilmartin 1991, 41), let alone translation scholars. It is a period that changed the understanding of the world as it was known, and initiated the processes of globalization that we know today. Like all the projects of expansion and conquest, it had serious consequences for the native populations and transformed their cultures forever (Zinn 1999). From present-day Canada to contemporary Chile, colonial scars are visible in the land, the peoples, the culture and the languages spoken today. Maybe for this reason Robinson has claimed that translation, understood as communication and interaction, does not seem to go with empire (1997, 8). And yet translation was (and remains) an essential part of the process of colonization, an instrument of power, a symbol of the violence of the clash between Europeans and native Americans (Arrojo 2002; Simon 2000, 10).

From a post-colonial perspective, translation has become a favourite sexual metaphor. Writing about the European colonization of Egypt, Tageldin stresses that translation consummates the “copulation of the colonizer and the colonized”, which ultimately “annexes a colonized people far more effectively than arms” (2011, 14–16). Translation has indeed been a crucial channel of empire building. Some even avoid terms like “hybridity” and “interaction” when dealing with translation and empire because, they argue, those words tend to obscure the violence of the encounter (Fossa 2006b). Cultural violence was imposed not only by the conquistadors and the settlers, but also by missionaries, anthropologists and others who “chose to translate the texts which corresponded to the image of the subjugated world which they wished to construct” (Simon 2000, 10).

Other authors have cast doubts over the use of such reductionist views. Translation scholar Georges L. Bastin (2009), on the one hand, and historian Andrew Restall (2003), on the other, have proposed a more nuanced approach to the myths and misconceptions of the encounter. Simon also argues that the conquest was a period for interaction (Simon 2000, 11), however asymmetrical it may have been. This interaction can be explored in the thousands of surviving pages written by the conquistadors and the natives, many of which have been discovered only recently. These texts reflect the asymmetry of the relationship between the conquerors and the conquered, but they are also indicative of the power struggles

between the various participants. In this sense Lamana has spoken of Spanish conqueror accounts versus nativelike accounts (2008, 8), not only because the former clearly outnumber the latter, but also because the nativelike chronicles of Betanzos, Titu Cusi Yupanqui, Garcilaso de la Vega and Guaman Poma speak of interaction: Betanzos, though married to an Indian princess, was a Spaniard (and an interpreter); native Americans Titu Cusi and Guaman Poma worked as interpreters for the Spanish colonial administration, and Garcilaso de la Vega, also a translator, was a mestizo who moved to Europe, where he spent most of his life and wrote his chronicles. Writers and translators. Language and translation as instruments of power forcing us to accept the official narrative of the period or undermining the validity of it (Vidal 1995, 86). As specialists from other fields, such as history, anthropology and ethnography have researched some of these texts, the role played by translation in the encounter has received renewed attention. Many of these scholars (cf. Schroeder 1991; Lockhart 1972, 1991b, 2001; Schroeder, Cruz, Roa-de-la-Carrera and Tavárez 2010) have become translators themselves and have produced versions of the stories written in indigenous languages. Both the source texts and the narratives resulting from this interlinguistic transmission are valuable contributions to study the period, and the role of translation itself.

In translation studies, researchers have focused on certain figures that have become metaphors for violence and oppression, notably Doña Marina, one of Hernán Cortés's interpreters, while the many channels of (mis)communication that characterized the conquest have been largely neglected. Bastin, for example, mentions the case of Felipillo, the Indian boy who mediated between the Spaniards and Peru's native chiefs, and claims that "interpreters did not make such a deep impression on the Peruvian conquest" (2009, 487). However, translators and interpreters in Peru (as elsewhere) played a greater role that has been acknowledged, as historians, anthropologists and literary scholars have shown over the past three decades. These researchers have thrown light on the extent to which (mis)communication was vital during the Spanish invasion of the Americas. At the same time reductionist approaches to the conquest seem to have left such an indelible mark upon translation studies that the discovery, creation and invention of the Americas cannot be shaped beyond the scope of a small number of people and events, such as Doña Marina and her mediating role between the Aztec chief Moctezuma¹ and the Spanish conqueror Cortés on the one hand, and the all-pervading influence of the translations of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas's *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* on the other. Both will feature prominently in this book, but Doña

1. The main text will use the spelling "Moctezuma", although other spellings will be maintained in quotations.

Marina and Las Casas will be joined by Felipillo, Betanzos, Cieza de León, Tito Cusi, Guamán Poma, viceroy Toledo, the Church councils and so many others.

Many of these writers and translators epitomize what de Certeau has found “in the use made in ‘popular’ milieus of the cultures diffused by the ‘élites’ that produce language,” that is, the “imposed knowledge and symbolisms become objects manipulated by practioners who have not produced them” (1984, 32). De Certeau, of course, was pointing in the opposite direction, the subaltern manipulating the language produced by the elites, but the notion is multi-faceted and can function in very diverse settings. We will see how the subaltern did indeed manipulate texts to resist the colonizers, but we will also consider how rival linguistic, cultural, political, social and religious elite groups and individuals manipulated events, and hence created and recreated documents, for their own benefit through space and time, often against their “own” people. For instance, native accounts were manipulated to produce a narrative where native participation in the conquest was presented in ways that emphasized the role of the indigenous elites to the detriment of the strangers, i. e. in the works by Chimalpahin, Diego Muñoz Camargo and Alva Ixtlilxochitl, whose accounts presented their ancestors as the heroes of the conquest rather than the Spaniards whom they had supported.

Translation was instrumental in the many successes and failures of the conquest, but also a word with many meanings and purposes (Hart 2001, 5). As we have mentioned, two of the most powerful figures of the period have cemented the images that researchers have used and recycled over the centuries: Doña Marina (or La Malinche) and Bartolomé de las Casas. Both are irremediably linked to translation one way or another. Doña Marina is probably the most famous interpreter in the history of Spain’s involvement with the New World. A former slave of noble origin, she became Hernán Cortés’s interpreter (or *lengua* [tongue], as he called her) and, ultimately, his lover and mother of his son. The combination of this “professional” and personal relationship has given way to many interpretations. Doña Marina has come to symbolize almost everything, but, for some translation scholars, she embodies the perfect metaphor, that of the women violated by the Spaniards (Arrojo 2002, 142), but also of a traitor to her own people (Arrojo 2002; Baker 2009, xvi).

For his part the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas was among the first and most outspoken critics of the actions of his compatriots. He wrote a small tract, *Brevísima historia de la destrucción de las Indias*, intended for Crown Prince Philip, in which he exposed some of the evils of the conquest and expected the future king to start the necessary reforms that would bring the misdemeanours of the conquistadors to an end. To that aim he created a fiction that exaggerated the already despicable acts of his fellow citizens. Translations of Las Casas’s text were used by the English, the Dutch and the French, giving way to unusual connections: “national self-interest cut across the lines of religion, so that, for instance,

French Jesuits and English Protestants often pursued common arguments about the theory and practice of Spanish colonization” (Hart 2001, 5). In other words, the Americas complicated the map of political rivalries in Europe, pointing to the fact that while Eurocentrism might be a convenient concept to epistemologically study the empires of the modern world (Robinson 1997, 42; Tymoczko 2010, 190), the existence of a unified European approach to empire is simply unrealistic. And translation is there to prove it.

Translations of Spanish colonial texts into other languages were instrumental in pointing the finger at Spanish colonial rule, but they also served to promote alternative (and superior) visions of empire. The English translations of the *Brevisima* clearly epitomize this, but, as we shall see in Chapter 5, they are not the only ones. Although this book will consider the role that translation played in the Anglo-Spanish rivalry (as the two main contenders in the Americas), enmity characterized much of the European relations of the time and beyond. The French translation of Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s *Décima tercia Relación*, entitled *Cruautés horribles des conquérants du Mexique*, exemplifies a similar approach to Spanish imperialism. Published in Paris in 1838, a few years after the Napoleonic wars had ravaged large parts of the continent, the French editor wrote a prologue in which he stated:

Avant la découverte du Mexique, les Indiens de ce pays conservaient le souvenir des événements de leur histoire dans des manuscrits hiéroglyphiques et dans des chants héroïques. Les premiers conquérants, voulant étouffer en eux jusqu’au sentiment de leur nationalité, détruisirent tous les monuments de ce genre don’t ils purent s’emparer. (Alva Ixtlilxochitl 1838, iii)

The text is ripe with all the commonplaces that will be discussed in this chapter: the positivized image of the Indian population, the belief in the existence of coherent social, cultural and economic groups in Mesoamerica and the Andes (the two main areas covered in this book²), the existence of a feeling of belonging to these groups among the natives, the conquerors’s desire to destroy the Others. These are some of the elements that promoted Spain’s Black Legend, mostly via translation.

1.1.1 The Black Legend

Although the term originated in the nineteenth century, the story of the Black Legend can be traced back to the early colonial period. According to Highley, the narrative had been articulated around anti-Catholic feelings, which Las Casas’s tract had contributed to create or promote. The text was first translated into English as *The Spanish Colonie*:

2. For information on other areas, see Lafarga and Pegenaute (2013).

For English readers of the 1583 translation, the eyewitness accounts of gruesome atrocities would have been deeply shocking. Perhaps just as alarming to an English reader, though, was the anonymous translator's explanation that the book was meant "to serve as a President and warning to the xii Provinces of the Lowe Countries (...)" the translator of the Spanish colonie had no doubt that the violence inflicted by Spaniards on the peoples of the New World could just as easily be visited upon the Protestant peoples of northern Europe unless they mounted a concerted resistance. (Highley 2008, 157)

Within this context, the prejudice against the Spanish reached new heights. Highley recalls the appearance of terms that denoted negatively any preference for Spanish habits. The *Oxford English Dictionary* claimed that the word *hispaniolization* stems from Thomas Stocker's translation of a French text. Stocker wrote about the "Hispaniolized low Countrey men" and "the treacherous hispaniolized Walloons" (Highley 2008, 157). Other words used at the time included *Spaniolized*, *Spagnolized*, *hispanized* and *hispanated*. This wave of anti-Spanish hysteria existed since the marriage of Mary I to Philip II, but worsened as the first English Catholic colleges opened in the Iberian Peninsula, in Valladolid, Madrid and Seville. The Royal English College in Valladolid continues to form priests to this day. At the time those who joined the colleges were accused of betraying their country and religion. Even some English Catholics mistrusted those compatriots who had chosen to join the papal anti-Christ (Highley 2008, 158–159). Negative stereotypes of the Spanish (and other "Latin" peoples) would remain popular in German and English literature in centuries to come. Zacharasiewicz recalls that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the negative view of the Spanish extended to their language, as writers like Howell believed that the "devil used Spanish [or French] to seduce Eve" and spoke of the "loose lascivious touns of Spain, Italy and France." (2010, 142). The controversies surrounding the Black Legend did not cease after the fall of the Spanish empire, and the narrative has remained a useful tool "whenever anti-Hispanism has filled a need, as in the English-speaking nations and in modern Spanish America" (Gibson 1966, 136).

The tenets of the Black Legend are opposed by the less popular white legend, which argues that Spain took Christianity and civilization to the Americas (Zacharasiewicz 2010, 143). Both are irreconcilable. One would expect that, after the lucid critiques by Gibson (1966) and Hanke (1965[1949]), the issue should have been put to rest. On the one hand, the legend was cemented on Bartolomé de las Casas's *Brevísima* and its many translations into French, Dutch, German, Latin and English. The text can hardly be described as accurate in historical terms (Gibson 1966, 137). On the other, the colonizer-colonized relationship "involved more intimate kinds of white-Indian contact than did the otherwise similar processes in the colonies of the English, French, and Dutch, and it provides for this reason a more

complex example of the destruction of a native society” (Gibson 1966, 159). And, Gibson added, it also involved a more legalistic administration than other colonial societies, which has left far more documented evidence of that relationship than other Europeans imperial projects of the time. As we shall see in Chapter 3, translation (from and into native languages) featured prominently in those documents.

However, the legend continues to thrive. In the twenty-first century, at a time of extreme political correctness, certain scholars and communicators, keep resorting to commonplace arguments, very often without much support from any historic sources. And when they resort to documents they do so sparingly only to support their own ideological stance. For example, in 2004 Cruz Pacheco wrote “fueron los españoles quienes violentaron la paz y la vida de los indios” [it was the Spaniards who disrupted the peace and life of the Indians] (2004, 16) and “siempre que pudieron continuaron aplicando las peores crueldades contra los indios” [whenever they could they continued to treat the Indians in the cruellest possible ways] (2004, 17). Reyna, for his part, uses Las Casas’s *Brevísima* to support his theory that the policy of Spain was “simple: to destroy the Indians as a community and a culture” and believes that the *Brevísima* “is an extraordinary document, which reveals that the Spanish domination had as one of its *main objectives the elimination of the old cultures*” (2005, 422).

Other scholars have incorporated more nuanced approaches. Restall, for instance, underlines that although the Spaniards (and the Europeans in general) were responsible for the demographic catastrophes in the American continent, this can rarely be interpreted as the result of a plan:

But the decline was not a holocaust in the sense of being the product of a genocide campaign or a deliberate attempt to exterminate a population. Spanish settlers depended upon native communities to build and sustain their colonies with tribute, produce, and labor (...) The arguments of a local minority – of whom Las Casas remains the best known – that colonial brutality was the principal cause of the natives seeming to “come to an end” were taken seriously by the Crown. As a result, edicts were regularly passed that were designed to protect natives from colonial excesses. Their impact was limited, but they reflected the important fact that Spaniards needed Native Americans to survive and proliferate, even if this was only so they could be exploited. (Restall 2003, 128–129)

It is paradoxical that writing in the twenty-first century, at a time when the availability of sources and historical data can provide more balanced views of the events that did indeed mean the downfall of American civilizations as they existed, bigotry remains embedded within a certain sector of academia. Authors like Reyna resort to Las Casas but disregard other witnesses and participants who, in their own writings, provide us with complementary views. José de Acosta, for instance, wrote:

Hállase en las naciones de la Nueva-España gran noticias y memoria de sus anti-guallas. Y queriendo yo averiguar en qué manera podian los Indios concervar sus historias y tantas particularidades, entendí, que aunque no tenian tanta curiosidad y delicadeza como los Chinos y Japoneses, todavía no les faltaba algun género de letras y libros, con que á su modo conservaban las cosas de sus mayores.

(1894, 160)

In other words, Acosta believed that the stories of the natives might not deserve the interest of the Chinese and the Japanese, but they had merit all the same. Another relevant point in this text is Acosta's use of the word *naciones*, indicative of the existence of many tribes rather than one coherent group, as some scholars have chosen to believe.

Another aspect that has rarely received the attention of these researchers is the social history of the Spaniards who embarked on a transatlantic adventure looking for a land of opportunities that could not be found in Europe, but never succeeded in making the fortune they had sought. Las Casas himself hoped to establish colonies in which the poor Spanish peasants in the metropolis could join the Indians and, together, create an ideal Christian community (Hanke 1965, 154–165). References to this sector of the Spanish society in the Americas can be found in some of the chronicles, even in native accounts. Guaman Poma, for instance, who worked as an interpreter for the administrators of the Andean region, mentioned that he had translated both for those who held power (“bisorreys, oydores, präsidentes y alcaldes de corte y a los muy yllustres yn Cristos señoría obispos”, 1615, 701) and those without means, including poor Indians and blacks, but also Spaniards (“preguntando a los españoles pobres y a yndios pobres y a negros pobres”, 1615, 701). And, of course, many more Spaniards did not even make it to the Americas, and remained in poverty in the metropolis, leading a life of permanent strife oppressed by Spanish lords, and working the land (Phillips and Phillips 1991, 17).

1.1.2 The Spanish struggle for justice

The twentieth century would bring about a new breed of anglophone scholars that reassessed traditional images of the conquest and provided more balanced accounts. Lewis Hanke clearly stands out among these. Hanke, a professor based at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, devoted much of his life to the study of key figures of the conquest, notably Bartolomé de las Casas. During the 1930s he researched the figure of the Dominican, and in 1965 published a book entitled *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*, in which, without denying the cruelties of the Spaniards, produced abundant information of the

various experiments carried out by them, such as those of Rodrigo de Figueroa, to bring some degree of social justice to the colonies (1965, 45–47). These people were among the first Europeans to fight for the rights of human beings at a time when many of their compatriots believed that some men were superior to others in the same way as men were considered superior to children and women (Hanke 1959, 47). Hanke also mentioned that similar views of the Indians were held by other European nations, including the English, but few of the latter stood up to speak for the rights of the natives. One of these was Captain George Thorp of Virginia, who was killed in the 1622 massacre (Hanke 1959, 99). Hanke went on to mention a large number of examples of native ill-treatment in North America, quoting abundant sources (1959, 99–103), and reminded his readership that he was writing at a time when, in the United States, blacks were still fighting for their own rights. Hanke's discourse did not intend to diffuse the responsibility of the Spanish but rather to stir the conscience of his fellow Americans, all too pleased with the fact that their conquest had been benevolent and the actions against the natives justified.

More recently Lippy, Choquette and Poole have also argued that Las Casas was not alone in his struggle: "A multitude of churchmen and humanitarians fought for the rights of the Indians but often in a more moderate way than the fiery Dominican" (1992, 89). Bartolomé de las Casas may be the most famous (or infamous for some) critic of the Spanish empire, but he was not the only one. Before him, Pedro de Córdoba "quickly became a defender of their rights, clashed with Spanish authorities over his denunciations of slavery, and encouraged Las Casas to join the Dominican order" (Early 2006, 127). Lippy, Choquette and Poole mention Motolinía (Fray Toribio de Benavente) and Gerónimo de Mendieta, a Franciscan whose *Historia Eclesiástica* was published in 1870 (1992, 89). On the other hand, official policies were more in line with Las Casas's proposals than with those of Sepúlveda (Brokaw 2010, 137), who believed that the natives were sub-human. In fact, the conflict between the *encomenderos* (in charge of exploiting a large area of land, including the natives living in it) and the missionaries posed a threat to the Crown. King Ferdinand tried to solve this through the Laws of Burgos (Gibson 1966, 76–77), a reminder that the conquest was full of internal problems.

In the Andes, Domingo de Santo Tomás, the author of *Grammatica o Arte de la lengua general de los Indios de los Reynos del Perú*, showed his preoccupation with the Indian predicament (MacCormack 1985, 449), whereas Polo de Ondegardo was "sensitive and familiar with Andean realities" (Murra 1991, 81). For his part, Pedro de Quiroga criticized the attitude of the colonists and of some priests towards the languages of the Indians (Vian Herrero 2009, 299). The title of his book was symptomatic of his preoccupations with the problems affecting the natives: *Libro intitulado Coloquios de la verdad: trata de las causas e inconvenientes*

que impiden la doctrina e conversión de los indios de los reinos del Pirú, y de los daños, e males e agravios que padecen. The book was influenced by Las Casas and Domingo de Santo Tomás (Urbano 1990, 779). José de Acosta had a similar pro-Indian stance, albeit less enthusiastic than that of Bartolomé de las Casas (Mills et al. 2004, 134–138). Mignolo regards his work as an antecedent of the liberation theory (2002, xxi). Acosta was working within a context in which the natives had to be converted but also liberated: he was “working within the conflicting ideologies of the Church and the Crown” (Mignolo 2002, xxi).

Twentieth and twenty-first century researchers have continued to document other such examples. Bishop Francisco Marroquín “quickly took an interest in the Mayan population and began learning Kaqchikel” (Early 2006, 125). Additionally, many Spanish authors spoke highly of the justice system before the conquest, including Bernardino de Sahagún, Motolinía, and Fray Diego Durán and Zorita (Ruiz Medrano 2010, 13). For his part, Francisco de Vitoria, chair of theology at the University of Salamanca, gave two lectures in 1538 and 1539, which became the basis for “the first theory of international law, binding on all nations” (Lippy, Choquette and Poole 1992, 84). He believed that the Indians were entitled to own lands. Vitoria rejected the rights of the Pope and the Crown to conquer them, and claimed that native refusal to accept the Europeans as lords did not justify war against them. In the Andes, the Dominicans argued for the restitution of property to the natives. This line of reasoning informed Guaman Poma’s natively like *Nueva Corónica* (Adorno 1986, 23). Guaman Poma praised Spaniards like Jerónimo de Loaysa, the Archbishop of Lima, who had ordered to give all his properties to the Hospital of Lima and had convinced many of his parishioners to follow suit (Adorno 1989a, 33).

There was a Spanish struggle against the injustice of many of the Spanish conquistadors and settlers, but there was also native collaboration with the conquistadors, which was represented in local visual accounts. Kranz has observed that the so-called Tlaxcalan pictorials (native accounts of the conquest) provide “more nuance in colonial power relations than violent resistance or acquiescent accommodation” (Kranz 2010, 41). These images, in which the Tlaxcalans welcome the Spanish, show the natives converting to Christianity and helping the conquistadors in their endeavours. Later these documents might have been used at the Spanish courts to make territorial claims (Kranz 2010, 44 & 53) (see Section 3.4). Kranz argues that the pictorials offer a much wider perspective as the representation of the historic events changes over time. Many of these drawings were accompanied by glosses or intersemiotic translations in Spanish and Nahuatl.

But the Tlaxcalans were not the only ones to become allies of the Spanish. The Tlatelolca, the Xochimilca, the Cholulteca, the Huexotzinga, the Texcoca, the Quauhquecholteca, the Chontal, the Popoluca, the Huichol and many others

provided guidance, goods, troops and weapons to the Spanish (Matthew and Oudijk 2007, 319). As with the Tlaxcalans, all these groups may be regarded as traitors, but the reasons behind their actions are difficult to judge from a twenty-first century perspective. Undoubtedly, many of them wanted to keep the privileges they had enjoyed before the arrival of the Europeans, even though in many cases those privileges were greatly reduced or eliminated in the end.

Towsend, on the other hand, deals with the problem from a wider perspective: “the indigenous were preoccupied from very early on with the question of how the Spanish had known of their existence; the Europeans’ knowledge, their weaponry, implied a technological superiority that promised a problem” (2006, 87). The indigenous, anywhere in the Americas, were likely to have been confounded with the technological and deadly military advances of the Europeans. But military power was not the only thing that astounded the natives: European dress, concepts and manners must have caused great distress as well as interest. From the very early stages of the conquest, hybridization characterized the encounter. Its intensity, no doubt, increased as the conquest progressed:

...present and past accounts also veil the fact that Spaniards and native people were different but also similar (...) Conquerors and Incas copied each other’s ways of waging war, dressing and practicing politics; Spanish clergymen tried to appropriate Inca religious forms and cosmogology, while Incas did likewise with the Christian ones. (Lamana 2008, 2–3)

Language, through some form of translation, was at the base of it all, as it was at the base of the imperial rivalries of the time. Anglophone writers used Spanish sources whenever they saw fit and, thus, “translated texts fill the pages of Hakluyt and Purchas. They communicate with the history of English colonization” (Goldberg 1992, 180) (see Chapter 5). Purchas attacked the legal basis of Spanish colonization in the Americas because

possession, as François I and Elizabeth I had argued and so many of their advisors, promoters, and colonizers had also held, was based on discovery, conquest, and settlement and not on a papal bull. For more than two centuries, through their books, decrees, and pronouncements, England spoke to themselves, to Spain, and to Europe, trying to have the Spanish admit that there was no basis to the papal donations. (Hart 2001, 221)

This was intended to benefit their settlements and trade in the Americas. Purchas manipulated translated versions of Las Casas to produce a rhetoric of condemnation of the Spanish, but he also included references to French piracy and the rights of England to the Americas.

1.2 The benevolent conquest: Different and yet similar

The English colonial adventure drew inspiration from translations of the chronicles authored by Spanish and French explorers (Mackenthun 1997, 22). Momentous events such as the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the subsequent publication of Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* included translations and translated quotes. These accounts moved Hakluyt to produce his own *Discourse of Western Planting*, in which he encouraged Elizabeth I to replace the Spaniards rather than steal their riches by means of privateers like Drake and Hawkins (Mackenthun 1997, 66).

While the anti-Spanish feeling was narratively constructed through the use of historical or pseudo-historical sources, there was also a wide variety of rather picturesque texts that attributed the nastiness of the Spanish to a number of reasons. Some of these texts dissuaded the English to visit Iberia, others blamed the diet of the Spaniards or the climate of the country (Highley 2008, 160–180) for their evil. Racism was also present in some of the arguments. Highley recalls that Thomas Bluet “described ‘the hote Spanish’ clime as harming ‘the Angels faces’ of English youth (...) he tapped into racialized assumptions about physical beauty that privileged pale skin over dark” (2008, 162). In Highley's view, this was also connected with translation: Thomas Stapleton's 1565 of Bede's *The History of the Church of Englande* tells the legendary story of how Pope Gregory sent St Augustine to evangelize England after encountering some pale-skinned English slaves whom he considered angels (2008, 162).

Thus, the English approach to the new world was different, we are told. It is rarely referred to as a conquest. It was a settlement. The start of British colonization is symbolized by the arrival of the Puritan pilgrims at Plymouth, Massachusetts, where there were “no ceremonies upon landing, no crosses planted” (Seed 1995, 16). Unlike the Spaniards, Seed claims, the English were not driven by the solemn possession of the land, but by the need to find a place to build their homes: “To build a house in the New World was for an Englishman a clear and unmistakable sign of an intent to remain – perhaps for a millenium” (Seed 1995, 18). For Seed, the English invasion of the New World is represented by the most quintessential element of them all, the garden: “Spanish explorers and colonists were lured to the New World by tales, tall and true, of gold (...) but the English, far more than any other group of colonists, were tantalized by the garden” (!) (Seed 1995, 26–27). John Smith, Richard Hakluyt and Walter Raleigh, three of the promoters of English colonialism, are mentioned as garden lovers (Seed 1995, 26, 29, 30).

Other authors have underlined the exaggeration of the image of a benevolent conquest: the English sacrificed Indian customs and political structures in the

same way as other Europeans did before them (Rabasa 1993a, 67). For instance, Raleigh, like Columbus before him (see Section 2.1), returned to England with a bounty that included human beings:

English adventurers had penetrated the mystery of the North American continent and had brought back wonders – animals and plants unknown in England, and even people, Manteo and Wanchese, Amerindians brought to Queen Elizabeth's court as part of the bounty of Walter Raleigh's 1585 voyage to Roanoke Island in present-day Carolina. (Bailey 2004, 4)

Manteo and Wanchese, which represent the violence of the European conquest of the Americas, had a different attitude towards their kidnappers. Whereas Wanchese was "an unwilling guest" (Bailey 2004, 7) and escaped as soon as he was taken back to Virginia, Manteo was baptized and acted as an intermediary between his people and the English. In this sense Manteo resembled another famous native character, Pocahontas, the little girl who had become friendly with European children, learnt some English and was kidnapped in 1613 when the situation between the settlers and the natives deteriorated (Bailey 2012, 21). Similar examples will be mentioned in Sections 2.1 and 2.4.

On the other hand, in North America, the main indication of possession, adds Seed, was the fence: "the principal symbol of not simply ownership, but specifically private ownership of land" (1995, 20). In other words, the fence became a seventeenth-century symbol of English property, "translated" to the new continent.³ And together with it, the English created a world that aimed to be very much like the one they left behind. Thus, they transferred physical symbols like the fence, as well as linguistic symbols like the toponyms of English villages and towns. Running parallel to the decimation of the native population, there was a policy of erasing their names as well (Mackenthun 1997, 292). It underlines the importance of language in the expansion of empire anywhere in the Americas. In fact, probably nowhere else in the New World can we find more names reminiscent of the metropolis than in New England.

The view that the Spanish were not interested in the conquest of the land is not shared by other historians. Lamana reminds us that one of the rituals of the conquest, of Peru in this case, consisted in taking possession of the land: "The first was by physically occupying the space, setting a material claim to it that incorporated it into the Spanish order of things" (2008, 106). Phillips and Phillips add that it is erroneous to think that all Spaniards were armed soldiers: "the social and occupational structure of the population was much like that in the rest of Europe" (1991, 15).

3. It is fair to say that Seed has later toned down this idyllic use of the house and the garden as the metaphor for English settlement (2001, 13–15).

In fact, they continue, more artisans, notaries and accountants moved to the new lands than soldiers, even though they often had to act as soldiers as well. On the other hand, raids by privateers from England, France and the Netherlands became a danger for the native populations of Spanish America as well as for the Spaniards themselves. Surveillance of coastal areas in places like Honduras began in the early seventeenth century, first under the command of the Spanish, later entirely run by the local populations (Sheptak, Joyce and Blaisdell-Sloan 2011, 163–164).

However, writers like Seed prefer to elaborate on the differences between the two powers, without paying much attention to the words of Spanish and Indian chroniclers or to extant official documents. And yet, the possession of the land and the establishment of a permanent home was of far greater importance for the Spanish than Seed suggests. Guaman Poma's account of the administration of the Andean region (1615) includes many references to the land transactions of the colonial period in which he participated as a translator (Adorno 1993). Poma himself, an Andean native of noble origin, claimed rights to lands that he considered to be entitled to. Following the Spanish example, the native Andean elites also engaged in a quest of property (including land) that differentiated them from native commoners (Mellafe 1967, 332–333; Stern 1982, 170). Thus local leaders acted as mediators between the Spanish and the colonized, but they often exploited their own people in order to please the Spaniards and also to maintain their own social and economic positions (Ramírez 2004, 25).

The situation was similar in Mesoamerica where the local chiefs, who had been introduced to the culture of material possession by the Spanish (Anderson, Berdan and Lockart 1976, 7), and had been the rulers of the region prior to the arrival of the Europeans, would remain powerful under colonial rule. Restall stresses that in the case of the Mayan families, "as a result of protracted negotiations through a Conquest decades long [they] succeeded in preserving their local status as community rulers in return for accepting Spanish political authority" (2003, 127).

1.2.1 Untranslated images of colonial violence

The English conquest of the Americas may have been partly construed as benevolent, but the scars of the invasion are clear for everyone to see. In his twentieth-century account of the expansion of the English through Massachusetts's Pioneer Valley, Clarke found use for the Indians provided that they helped the English establish their colonies in North America, and, later on, break off from the metropolis. The Mohawks "were the most important factor in deciding whether North America should be an Anglo-Saxon or a Latin country" (Clarke 1941, 21). Otherwise, in Clarke's account, the French and the Indians (and later the English

themselves, as the metropolis waged war against US independence) are depicted as vicious murderers. The graphic description that follows is reminiscent of the accounts that Bartolomé de las Casas gave to the world, and were later popularized through (notably English) translations:

Simultaneously every house was attacked. Doors were battered in. The half-awakened inhabitants fell before the swords of the French and the hatchets of the Indians. Men, women, and children were treated alike. The slightest resistance on the part of the head of a household meant death to the whole family. The bodies of pregnant women were ripped open. Infants either had their brains dashed out against the doorpost, or were thrown into the fires of the blazing houses.

(Clark 1941, 98)

Here we encounter similar descriptions of the cruelty that, in Las Casas's tract, the conquistadors had inflicted upon the natives. The same narrative is reproduced four centuries later, but, in Clarke's account, the Indians joined the ranks of the Latin nations in their attempts to kill the English and impose their rule. This narrative is pervasive even today in historic sites and museums in New England (Valdeón 2012b). In the town of Deersfield (Massachusetts), in the museum of Wethersfield (Connecticut), in the street exhibitions of Augusta (Maine) the signs still remind visitors of the French and Indian massacres of English settlers. In contrast, Indian attacks on the Spanish are rarely acknowledged, although they were also a part of the Spanish conquest. For example, in his study of the 1780–1782 native rebellion in the Andes, Robins shows that the Indians “sought not only the wholesale extermination of Creoles and Spaniards, but that of their allies and cultures as well” (2002, 2), proving that violence and vengeance are not exclusive to certain groups of humans, but are “available *everywhere* in the human species” (Charny 2002, x).

More balanced academic accounts of the English massacres in the Americas, and notably in the early years of the conquest, are of course available. Silverman writes about the slaughter of hundreds of innocents in seventeenth-century New England, and recalls the words of Captain John Mason, who told his soldiers “we must burn them” (2005, 6). Accounts of the massacres perpetrated by the English during the conquest are well documented. Mackenthun recalls the devastation of Mystic, Connecticut, in a joined effort by the Boston and Connecticut forces. In a single event, between 400 and 650 people died, most of them women and children. The English went on to attack a group of Pequots, who were killed or taken captive and sold as slaves (1997, 290). Mackenthun provides us with more evidence of the so-called benevolent empire that was to replace the evil Spaniards. For example, she quotes texts by John Smith and George Percy, who do not hesitate to offer their readers the gory details of their actions. Mackenthun quotes Percy:

We fell in upon them, put some fifteen or sixteen to the sword (...) I caused the Indian's head to be cut off (...) it was agreed upon to put the children to death, the which was effected by throwing them them overboard and shooting out their brains in the water. (quoted in Mackenthun 1997, 263)

The scenes are clearly reminiscent of Bartolomé de las Casas's depictions of Spanish cruelty in the Caribbean (see Section 5.2.2), but are different in one respect: the events were uncritically reported by those who performed the attacks. Mackenthun recalls that this kind of texts (unlike Las Casas's, one may add) are rarely quoted in research and, least of all, in popular anglophone media. The image that has come down to us is that of the interracial relationship between John Rolfe and Pocahontas, recently revisited as popular pseudo-history in the Disney film *Pocahontas*, translated, dubbed and disseminated throughout the world.

Undoubtedly, the Spanish conquistadors were responsible for their own negative image. They conquered the land and the people, and caused widespread devastation, but many of them were also very critical of their compatriots, as they put in black and white. These texts circulated in translation, whereas English accounts of their own conquest remained largely unknown. Mackenthun, who has studied the creation of fictional representations of the English conquest of New England (1997, 207–264), has drawn comparisons between English accounts of the “settlements” and some of the Spanish chronicles: “The Mexican chronicles immediately offer themselves for comparison (...) The *Historie of Travell* by far lacks the polyphony and dialogism of the *Historia General de Sahagún*” (1997, 257).

The survival of a more negative image of the Spanish conquest in comparison with the English invasion of North America can be found not only in popular and largely inaccurate works (Wood 2000), but also in the work of some contemporary anglophone scholars. As we have seen, in her elaboration of the metaphors representing the different European approaches to the conquest of the Americas, Seed (who would later pride herself on not using competing fantasies about how colonial powers treated indigenous peoples, Seed 2001, xi) perpetuates the myth of the aggressive Spaniard in search of gold on the one hand, and the benevolent Englishman in pursuit of gardens and freedom on the other. More serious researchers, as we shall see, have brought to the fore the *polyphony* of the chronicles, as Mackenthun puts it.

1.3 The narrative of the Indian as a good savage

The pervasive partial images of the conquest can be traced back not only to the critical narrative found in Las Casas's text, but also in the translations (of Las Casas and others) that soon circulated across much of Europe, promoting the image of

the native as a good savage vis-à-vis the evil Spaniard. Markham, a nineteenth-century English historian and a translator of some of the Spanish chronicles, compared the social system of the Incas to Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1892, 35). His vision of the perfect Inca world can even be found in contemporary writing by some anglophone academics: "Inca life was integrally linked to the spiritual life of its people (...) a world in which they communicated in their worship of nature, and which brought them into communion with an invisible world" (Stirling 2003, 27), even though the Andean world was far from idyllic. The centuries before the arrival of the Spaniards were, in fact, called "auca runa, the age of soldiers, a time of wars" (Murra 1986, 50), a period characterized by a succession of wars and rebellions. Another feature of the Inca society was a "psychology of submission" (Ogburn 2004), in particular as far as women were concerned (Classen 1993, 3–4).

The same applies to part of the scholarship on Mesoamerica. Braden, who has warned us against believing the Spanish primary sources literally, promptly accepts the dichotomy ruthless conqueror/good savage:

a great opportunity [to properly convert the natives] lost through the cupidity and ruthlessness of the Spanish settlers and the lack of real spiritual interests on the part of many of the later clergy, does not disprove the genuineness of the acceptance of Christianity by many of the Indians in the earlier stages of the process.

(1966, 237)

Translation has indeed been instrumental in creating such a myth. Las Casas's portrayal of the Caribbeans partly explains the spread of this narrative in the many interlinguistic and intersemiotic translations still available today. However, other chronicles (as well as recent archaeological evidence) suggest that Las Casas's images did not provide the whole picture. Even native (or nativelike) accounts of the conquest demonstrate that war and violence were part of native political and social systems. The translator and chronicler Alva Ixtlilxochitl provides a good example. Although he portrayed the Aztecs in heroic terms, much emphasis was put on the military values of their culture. He celebrated the values of Mexican culture, as Adorno claims (1989b, 214), but they were military values all the same. Aztec wars were similar to expansion battles elsewhere: "heavy slaughter of combatants, calculated slaughter of non-combatants, seizure of lands, burning of elite structures, and the incorporation of the vanquished as tributaries" (Adorno 1989b, 214). Ixtlilxochitl exposed these "values" in the society he described. After the arrival of the Spaniards, the large majority of the native population was subjected to two distinct groups, the newly arrived Europeans and also the local elites, who had been the dominant group in the pre-conquest era (Lockhart 1991b, 40), giving way to doubly subaltern peoples.

Another controversial trait related to the Amerindian population is cannibalism. Some authors prefer to omit any references to human sacrifices (Stirling 2005, 21), even though they are well documented by historians, anthropologists and ethnographers (Classen 1993, 64; Benson & Cook 2001; Besom 2009), not to mention reported by the Spanish and native chroniclers. The reasons for human sacrifice were many-fold. In the Inca empire it could be used as a punishment for adulterers, rapists and thieves. From ancient times, ritual sacrifice took many forms. Sacrifice and cannibalism was a common feature of ancient pre-Columbian societies such as the Moche in the Andean region (Bourget 2006), the Maya (Kartunnen 1994, 85), and the peoples who inhabited the El Tajín area in modern day Mexico (Koontz 2009). In Mesoamerica, Koontz mentions a variety of sacrificial methods, including scaffold sacrifice, gladiatorial sacrifice, decapitation sacrifice and evisceration sacrifice (2009, 79–88, 114–115). Sacrifices and the practice of cannibalism continued into the precolonial period with the Aztec world being defined as “the most extensive practioner of human sacrifice known in human history” (Peterson 2010, 94). Many of the conquerors were “sacrificed and consumed” by, for example, the Mayas (Kartunnen 1994, 85). Acosta reported on such habits (1894, 307 & 417), although translators like Markham omitted paragraphs and whole chapters devoted to a wide range of topics, ranging from cannibalism to sodomy (see Section 5.3.2.2).

The myth of the native groups as naïve and innocent was certainly put forward by authors like Las Casas and his translators, but also by native accounts, which portrayed native Americans in a positivized light. MacCormack reminds that

Garcilaso’s purpose in writing the Royal Commentaries was to record what was true, beautiful, and good about the Andean world that had been destroyed, and to pass lightly over its less estimable aspects. He remembered the Incas he wanted to remember, not the Incas who were capable of wiping entire populations or the Incas who offered human sacrifice. (1991, 371)

The image of the good savage has tended to portray the natives as meek and welcoming because they did not resist the invasion. As could be expected, this was not the case. Columbus’s wreck in Hispaniola in 1492 provides us with an example. The thirty-nine Spaniards left in the village of the cacique Guacanagarí were killed by the natives. This forced Columbus to settle in other areas. Violent resistance also occurred in other parts of the empire, including Florida (Deagan 2011, 55), as shown in the drawing by the Dutch engraver de Bry, which reproduced the Amerindian massacre of a group of Jesuits. However, this picture did not reach the popularity of de Bry’s own intersemiotic translation of Las Casas’s critique of Spanish massacres (see Section 5.2.2).