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Bartolomé de las Casas and the Dissemination of the
Black Legend in England

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ABSTRACT

The Black Legend has been essential in the history of Spain, specially in the relations between Spaniards and England. One of the figures that contributed to the creation of this Black Legend was Bartolomé de las Casas and his work in the defense of the Native Indians of America, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*. The following dissertation shows how the translations of Las Casas' work have a great importance in the dissemination of the Black Legend in England. For this, four English translations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are analyzed, paying special attention to the prefatory and paratextual material, from the prefaces to the images added to the original material. This analysis proves a thematic pattern describing negatively both Spaniards and their actions, which significantly marked the perception of Spain in England.

KEYWORDS: Bartolomé de las Casas – Black Legend – Dissemination – Translations – England – Spain

La Leyenda Negra ha sido esencial en la historia de España, especialmente en las relaciones de los españoles con Inglaterra. Una de las figuras que contribuyó a la creación de esta Leyenda Negra fue Bartolomé de las Casas y su obra en la defensa de los indios de América, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*. El siguiente trabajo muestra como las traducciones de la obra de Las Casas tienen una gran importancia en la divulgación de la leyenda negra en Inglaterra. Para ello, se han analizado cuatro traducciones inglesas de los siglos dieciséis y diecisiete, poniendo especial atención al material prefatorio y paratextual, desde los prefacios a las imágenes añadidas al material original. Este análisis demuestra un patrón temático a la hora de describir negativamente tanto a los españoles como sus acciones, lo que marcó significativamente la visión de España en Inglaterra.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Bartolomé de las Casas – Leyenda Negra – Divulgación – Traducciones – Inglaterra – España

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	7
2. The Black Legend: origin and development of the negative portrait of spaniards.....	9
3. Bartolomé de las Casas.....	12
3.1 <i>Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias</i> and its reception	13
4. The enhancement of the Black Legend by Englishing Bartolomé de las Casas.....	16
4.1 Rhetorical strategies: the prefaces	16
4.1.1 Cruelty	17
4.1.2 Religion	19
4.1.3 Patriotism.....	23
4.2 The impact of the visual and the layout	26
5. Conclusions	29
6. Works cited.....	32

1. INTRODUCTION

During the beginning of the twentieth century, the Black Legend has been studied from different perspectives and this has contributed to the production of several studies which have completed the definition of the Black Legend. Among these researchers, the most remarkable figure is Julián Juderías since he was the first one who coined the term “Black Legend” and he has defined as the distorted image of Spain itself and its inhabitants created by other foreign nations with the principal aim of disseminating a damaging propaganda to damage them (28). In this sense, his work, *La leyenda negra*, has been the pioneer to determine the study of the Black Legend. It is true that thanks to this work, there have been a wide range of possibilities in which to focus this topic, and there have also been many researches directly connected to the Black Legend from the point of view of the English nation. In this sort of studies, it can highlight authors as William S. Maltby or Joseph Pérez, whose works centered on the relations between England and Spain have been essential to the production of this dissertation. Even though there are some authors who have been emphasized the importance of the figure of Bartolomé de las Casas, nobody has paid attention on the prefaces of the English translation on his most famous work, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*.

This dissertation is going to focus on how the prefaces of English translations of the original work of Bartolomé de las Casas had an impact on the spreading of the Black Legend in England. In addition, it is going to pay attention to how both the titles of these translations and the images that go along with them could have a great influence on the mind of the reader. It is important to take into consideration that the following dissertation is supported by proving a thematic pattern within the prefaces of each translation, regarding cruelty, patriotism and religion. In order to achieve this study, the main objective is the analysis of four translations from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that have been selected specially because of the historical moment when they were produced. The first selected work is the one from 1853 and it is really remarkable since it was the first translation of Las Casas’ work into the English language. As it was directly transferred from the French translation,

the preface contains some references to the difficult relation between the Spanish Empire and its territories in the Netherlands. The 1656 translation belongs to a critical period of commercial rivalry between the Spanish Empire and the Commonwealth of England in the Caribbean Sea. The next selected translation from 1689 is linked before the Glorious Revolution and for this, it has some important characteristics regarding both religion and patriotism. Finally, the last text is from 1699, which is a period where the Spanish and English tension continued until due to their political and commercial rivalry. The analysis of this dissertation is going to show the relevance of these English translations in the dissemination of the Black Legend.

2. THE BLACK LEGEND: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEGATIVE PORTRAIT OF SPANIARDS

The term Black Legend was coined firstly by Julián Juderías in his work *La leyenda negra* and it is defined as the grotesque perception of Spaniards and Spain itself created by foreign nations with the main objective of spreading a negative propaganda to damage them (28). Even though this negative opinion was mainly spread during the sixteenth century and in England, it is important to consider that its origin is presented centuries earlier and not only throughout the English nation.

The origin of the Black Legend can be set at the end of the thirteenth century when the Crown of Aragon began its expansion to the Mediterranean Sea, specifically in Italy, under Peter III of Aragon's command. The expansion of this reign during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries coexisted with the papal rule of two members of the Borgia family closely associated to the Crown of Aragon due to their birthplace and the ones that, as subjects of the Aragonese crown, supported this expansion through the Mediterranean. It is important to take into consideration that this hostility against Aragonese people started to include the Castilians at the end of the fifteenth century since the heirs of both crowns, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabel I of Castile, married in 1469. Due to this marriage, there was a dynastic union of both kingdoms once Ferdinand became king of Aragon in 1479 and they ruled all the territories under the name of Catholic Monarchs. However, this unification was not effective until their grandson, Charles I, became the king of not only both crowns, but as an emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. This union causes that "the image of Catalans, Aragonese and Castilians gradually merged into an image of the "Spanish"" (Edelmayer, 4) and thus, the bad reputation of the Spaniards did not end with the Crown of Aragon, but it went over from this one to the concept of the Spanish.

Once Charles I came into power (1516), the Spanish Empire focused its objective on the conquest of some Italian territories, as Rome, but also on the conquest of the New Land, which had been discovered years before by Christopher Columbus. It is also important to mention that during the reign of Charles I, the anti-Spanish legend arose in the English nation

when Henry VIII of England, who was married with Catherine of Aragon, declared the new Church of England totally dissociated from the Pope and from Catholicism. As the head of the Church, Henry VIII was able to divorce Catherine, which caused tensions with the Spanish Crown since it was a rupture not only in political terms, but in the religious sphere. It was the beginning of a religious confrontation that would last beyond the end of the sixteenth century and that would be really essential in the dissemination of the Black Legend, which would become increasingly important whilst Philip II, son of Charles I, was reigning.

Philip II was the King of Spain (1556-1598) and of half world due to his family inheritance, but it was other political questions which made him an outstanding figure of the Black Legend. The first important issue to consider is that anti-Spanish sentiment emerged in England previously mentioned. During the reign of Philip II, Mary Tudor – only child of Henry VIII with this first wife, Catherine of Aragon – became the queen of England, which caused that this nation was governed again by a Catholic monarch after having been ruled by two Anglican monarchs. Mary I of England married Philip II, but this marriage provoked a popular discontent due to her fervent Catholicism and hatred towards Protestantism. Once Mary I of England died, Philip decided to claim the English throne, but Elizabeth, the half-sister of Mary, was the one that ascended to the throne (1558) with a clear anti-Spanish sentiment that would be performed and even increased during all her reign. Within her supremacy, it can be found the beginning of the Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604), which was an economic, political and religious conflict between two of the most important European powers. This war broke out in 1585 when English merchant ships seized some Spanish harbors. As a response, the Spanish king decided to punish England and in 1588, the Spanish Armada was led as an attempt of occupy England, but it was a total failure that would be remained in history, especially in England where this was considered a victory that helped in the creation of the anti-Spanish myth. After the death of Elizabeth I, James I of England succeeded her in the throne in 1603 and signed the Treaty of London (1604) with Philip III of Spain, who was the son of Philip II, by which both kingdoms agreed to the end of the war.

Another important issue related to the figure of Philip II and that had an impact on the Black Legend deals with the death of his son Don Carlos under strange circumstances, which was shortly followed by the death of his wife. Philip II decided to marry his son's bride, Anna of Austria, and all these events accompanied with the fact that the Dutch had rebelled against the Spanish domain caused the work of William of Orange titled the Apology. In this letter, he accused the king of being the killer of both his son and his wife in order to marry Anna of Austria and consequently, the Spanish were seen in Europe as the clear image of fornication and mortality connected to the Spanish Inquisition and its brutalities (Edelmayer, 5). This was used as an anti-Spanish propaganda in the Netherlands during the war of independence.

Finally, it is necessary to mention the behavior of the Spaniards towards the Native Indians during the conquest of America that was reflected in some writers of that period, such as Antonio de Montesinos,¹ However, it was Bartolomé de las Casas and his *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* the one that is going to be a significant contribution to the propaganda against the Spaniards and their culture and in the development of the Black Legend.

¹ Antonio de Montesinos (1475-1545) was a Spanish Dominican friar and missionary who is known mainly because of writing sermons in defense of the Native Indians that had an impact on Bartolomé de las Casas.

3. BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS

In 1484, Bartolomé de las Casas was born in the well-known city of Seville from a trader family who had a French origin, and his education was basically based on the study of Theology, Law, and Philosophy.² He travelled to the New World in 1502 to the island of Hispaniola where he became landowner and time afterwards, he returned to Rome where he was ordained priest. In 1510, Las Casas returned to Santo Domingo in order to move later to the expedition of the conquest of Cuba along with Diego Velázquez – who was a Spanish conqueror and the future governor of Cuba – and there, Bartolomé became a chaplain and obtained some Indian slaves. However, affected by the brutality against the Native Americans by the Spanish colonizers, as it is the case of the Caonao massacre,³ the young priest renounced to his own Indian slaves and decided to start his fight in their defense writing *Memorial de remedios para las Indias* (1516), a reform plan that supports the education and evangelization of the Native Indians at the landowners or *encomenderos*' hands in contrast to their exploitation (Baptise, 15). It is essential to mention that the coronation of Charles I as the new king of Spain (1516) allowed these protests of Las Casas to be heard, causing that the Spanish crown commissioned him the project to colonize the New World through his pacific methods, which was never accomplished. Therefore, disappointed by the failure of his mission, Bartolomé confined himself in the convent of Santa Cruz in Santo Domingo (1522), where he had a non-active role in his fight against those injustices of Spaniards throughout his studies and his writings.

Nonetheless, between 1537 and 1538, Bartolomé de las Casas and other Dominican friars directed a Christianization mission in Guatemala, which was successful and therefore,

² All the biographical information regarding Bartolomé de las Casas has been selected from Bernat Hernández (2015) and from David T. Orique (2014).

³ Caonao massacre (1513) was a Spanish expedition in Caonao, a small Cuban village, where Spanish troops killed almost five hundred Indians, as it is established in one of the chapter in Las Casas' *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (92).

they obtained the control of the territory by a peaceful method based on the Evangelization of these indigenes. Again, he traveled to Spain where he met the emperor in Valladolid in 1542 and as a consequence of this hearing, Charles I enacted the New Laws – “Leyes Nuevas” in Spanish, – which prohibited the slavery of the Native Indians by the Spanish landowners, limited the control of these *encomenderos* in America, protecting the natives under the power of the Spanish Crown. It was then when he accepted the bishopric of Chiapas; however, he found there the chaos and the disagreement of the Spanish settlers for his active participation in the New Laws and this caused that his stay in the Indies came to an end in 1547. On his return, he took part of the Valladolid Debate (1550-1551), which was the first moral discussion about the behavior and rights of the natives caused by the settlers, in which he claimed that the Native Indians were human and not objects to be civilized as Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda⁴ maintained. All these remarkable experiences in the American continent had an influence in the creation of his masterpiece, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, which had been improved according to the stages of elaboration until its final version printed in Seville in 1552. His last days were spent between Atocha and Madrid, where he died on July 1556 even though his final burial place was later placed in Valladolid.

3.1 *BREVÍSIMA RELACIÓN DE LA DESTRUCCIÓN DE LAS INDIAS* AND ITS RECEPTION

As it has been mentioned before, Las Casas’ most famous work was *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*. It was published in 1552 and dedicated to prince Philip with the main objective that the future king of Spain had the knowledge of the injustices and atrocities committed in America to its Native people by the Spanish colonizers. Through

⁴ Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1494-1573) was a Spanish philosopher and theologian who was fervent defender of colonial slavery. In contrast to Bartolomé de las Casas, Ginés de Sepúlveda believed that Native Indians were cannibals and inferior that needed to be civilized and therefore, evangelized.

Bartolomé de Las Casas' perception, this account narrates the Spanish conquest of the New Land and how the Native Indians were treated unjustly under the Spanish settler's power.

Although this work was important because it helped in the defense of the rights of the Native Indians in a period when some social injustices were seen as something commonly. Personally, it was especially vital since it was useful in the creation of the well-known Black Legend thanks to the vision that is offered above the image of the Spanish colonizers. Nevertheless, it is essential to take into account that the greatest factor that indeed helped the development of this Black Legend was the manipulation of the translations of this work, used as propaganda against Spain by other nations as England. In this regard, it is important to take into consideration the reception of this work in England during a period in which the relations between both nations were difficult and controversial.

During the long period of war between Spain and England (1585-1604), there was a continued intensity and popularization of the Spanish literature by early modern English authors and thus, a wide variety of Spanish texts were translated into the English language, regarding several genres as chivalric romances, pastoral or picaresque. The war intensified the interest in translation since the access to both Spanish geographical and military information became of immediate importance. In this context, English translators leveraged the prefaces and dedications to readers to modify them for their own benefit and these prefaces were used as propaganda against the Spanish Empire. Thus, the new aim in Elizabethan translation changed from copying Spanish literature to intensify the nationalistic and pragmatic propaganda against Spain (Fuchs, 16). As Hannah Leah Crummé has demonstrated, there was a great number of translations directly related to a political interest (8). Therefore, the purpose of political propaganda obscured the English perception of Spain and enhanced the Spanish stereotype, which started to be associated to cruelty, ignorance, sloth, pride, and vanity.

Within this context, the French translation⁵ of Las Casas' work arrived at England and consequently, the alterations produced in the French language were transferred into the first English translation⁶ in 1583, which shows a different portrayal of the Spaniards from the one that the young friar wanted to give. For this reason, it is essential to consider that the vision captured by Elizabethans was not only affected due to the political confrontations against Spain, but also by the variations of the original text produced in France and subsequently in England throughout the several English translations published until the eighteenth century. In the midst of this situation, the text of Bartolomé de las Casas started to become increasingly important, especially in the divulgation of the Black Legend, since as William Maltby asserts in the following quotation:

The fact that its author was as Spanish as the men he so heartily condemned lent a dramatic touch of irony, and from another point of view, verisimilitude, to his charges. If Spaniards spoke so ill of one another, the English could scarcely be blamed for doing likewise! (12)

Therefore, for many decades, Bartolomé de las Casas and his masterpiece were important symbols in the religious and political critique against colonizers. And this criticism is the one that is going to be maintained for centuries for the creation of the Black Legend and was used to reflect a propagandistic depiction against Spain, its culture, and its population.

⁵ Jacques de Migrode was the Protestant Flemish translator of Bartolomé de las Casas' work into the French language in 1579, with the title *Tyrannies et cruautés des Espagnols*.

⁶The whole title of this translation is *The Spanish colonie, or Briefe chronicle of the acts and gestes of the Spaniardes in the West Indies*. It was translated by M.M.S and printed in London by Thomas Dawson in 1583.

4. THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE BLACK LEGEND BY ENGLISHING BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS

In this section, it is going to be analyzed some translations of the original work of Bartolomé de las Casas into the English language between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to show the significant differences that each of these translations have and how they have an influence in the dissemination of the Black Legend. For this, the analysis is going to be mainly focused on the prefaces created by these English translators because they follow the same thematic rhetoric, but always talking into account the original work of Las Casas. Together with this, this section is also going to be centered on the titles of the diverse translations since they had been altered depending on the period when these works were published and focused on other aesthetic elements as images that had an impact on the perception of the reader. In order to facilitate this examination, these translations are going to be identified according to the year of publication and consequently, the analyzed works date from 1583,⁷ 1656,⁸ 1689⁹ and 1699.¹⁰

4.1 RHETORICAL STRATEGIES: THE PREFACES

As it has been mentioned previously, the analysis has found that the prefaces of Las Casas' work commonly shared a thematic pattern, regarding cruelty, religion and patriotism. In them, translators used these themes to distort the real image of Spain and its inhabitants with the main objective of creating a negative and abusive portrait of them.

⁷ Casas, Bartolomé de las. *The Spanish colonie, or Briefe chronicle of the acts and gestes of the Spaniardes in the West Indies*. Translated by M.M.S, London: Thomas Dawson, 1583.

⁸ Casas, Bartolomé de las. *The tears of the Indians*. Translated by J.P., London: J.C., 1656.

⁹ Casas, Bartolomé de las. *Poperie truly display'd in its bloody colours*. London: R. Hewson, 1689.

¹⁰ Casas, Bartolomé de las. *An account of the first voyages and discoveries made by the Spaniards in America*. London: J. Darby, 1699.

4.1.1 CRUELTY

The first theme is cruelty and how this is depicted through the actions of the Spaniards since it is this exaltation of the cruelty the one that gives an abusive, negative and punishing depiction that is going to be always related to Spain. The real intention of Las Casas had been to prove the incorrect and terrible means used during the evangelization of the Native Indians because it depicts an image that is not typical of Christian behavior, and the fact that they were Spanish is a side effect (Pérez, 107). This sort of cruelty can be found in the translation from 1583 that was printed in London. It was the first English translation of Las Casas' work, which was taken from the French translation made by Jacques de Migrode – a Protestant Flemish translator of Bartolomé de las Casas' work – and as a consequence, all the changes made to the original by Jacques de Migrode were transferred into the English version. The cruel portrayal that can be obtained in the first page is marked by different adjectives and verbs connected with the Spaniards and their actions, such as “put to death”¹¹ or “murdered” (¶2r),¹² and the barbarous means that they used to Christianize and colonize the New Land (¶2r). A few lines before, this translator asserts that never so “barbarous or cruel a nation have been in the world” (¶2v). In addition, the translator, who is known as M. M. S., emphasizes this cruelty by saying how Spanish colonizers entered the land by force and how this enforcement caused a high number of death of Native Indians, which was indeed “12,15 or 20 millions of poor reasonable creatures” (¶3v). By showing this is exaggeration of deaths, the translator is focusing on the idea that Spaniards committed genocide.

The next translation was translated by John Philips, a man who has translated and done some anti-Catholics works, in 1656.¹³ Before getting started, it is essential to consider the

¹¹ All the quotations have been adapted into the Modern English in terms of morphology and lexicography.

¹² As some pages of the prefaces are not numbered, I have decided to number them according to the quires.

¹³ In this translation, the analysis is going to be focused on both the dedicatory to Oliver Cromwell and on the preface directed to the Englishmen.

historical background¹⁴ in which it was published. It coexists with the period of the Protectorate (1653-1660),¹⁵ where England, Scotland and Ireland were governed under the Lord Protector, who at this time was Oliver Cromwell, and therefore, it coexists with the Anglo-Spanish War (1654-1660), a conflict between the Protectorate and the Spanish Empire provoked by the commercial rivalry in the Caribbean Sea. Similarly, the number of Native Indians' deaths can be also found here and, indeed, it appears on the dedicatory to Oliver Cromwell where this translator also specified the number of deaths: "twenty millions of the souls of the slaughtered Indians" (A3v). Curiously enough, this author expressed himself in the first person within the text as if he was a witness of this mortality and cruelty, such as it can be seen when he says that he has heard "the cry of blood ceasing at the noise of your great transactions" (A3v). In my view, the translator induces himself in the text to give credibility to the account and therefore, to persuade the reader while reading. The preface also contains important references to the "blood" (b1r) and to the blood of the innocents (b[b]v, and b3v), which had been shed through the "cruelties and barbarous massacres of the Spaniards" (b7r). This is connected with the image of Spanish as bloodthirsty and cruel due to the "devilish cruelties" (b1v) and "barbarism" (b2v) that they used against those "so many millions of poor innocent heathens" (b[b]v). In addition, it is really remarkable how this translator criticizes the Spanish Monarch, who coincides chronologically with Philip IV of Spain (1605-1665), and his imperial government, being "blood and tyranny the pillars of his greatness, [...], his arcana empire" (b5v). Thus, the translator is not only using this work as a tool against Spaniards, but also as a political propaganda directly targeted against the Spanish Monarch and his empire.

¹⁴ All the historical background has been taken from Ángel Alloza Aparicio (2015).

¹⁵ During the Commonwealth (1649-1660), which was the period in which all the English territories were ruled as a republic, Oliver Cromwell was named Lord Protector of all the English territories thanks to the English writing constitution known as the Instrument of Government, and this led to the period known as Protectorate.

The next translation is the one from 1689 and there the unknown translator is using a different vocabulary, as “wickedness”, “tyranny” and “cruelty” (¶3r), to describe the actions of the Spaniards colonizers in America. However, it is curious how this translator mentions the unlimited avarice of conquering that the Spaniards had (¶3v) and which is a feature that is going to make appearance from now on.

Finally, the translation from 1699 is the last analyzed text and it is outstanding how the translator compares the Spaniards and their actions with the devils (A2r), which is related to the idea that they wanted to prove that Spanish people were the wickedest since at that time, a comparison to the devil was the most horrible description that a religious person could obtain. Furthermore, the translator utilizes some terminology that has been seen before as “murderer” or “murderous” (A2r) because he wants to emphasize the idea that what Spaniards did in America was not justified and was, in fact, a crime. That is to say that they wanted to prove that this was beyond moral or social terms, it supposed some legal implications that they wanted to use against the image of the Spaniards colonizers. In the same way as the first translation, here it can be found a reference to “all inhuman methods that Spaniards could invent” and that were used against Native Indians (2r). Finally, the preface mentions some words seen before as “tyranny” (A2v) or “barbarities” (A3v) to describe both actions and Spaniards.

As a summary, it can be seen that what these prefaces try to demonstrate in terms of cruelty is that Spanish people were barbarous, cruel and bloodthirsty that caused the death of millions of Native Indians and in this regard, this sort of crimes cannot be justified. All the translators have emphasized this idea because they wanted their English readers to obtain a distorted image of the reality, an image of Spain and its inhabitants as murderers and evil and heartless people.

4.1.2 RELIGION

It is important to take into consideration that this brutality was always connected with the idea of religion and thus, with the second pattern found in the prefaces. Religion had an

important role in education and if this cruelty became part of it, it would be a good argument for criticism by those religious enemies. One of the prefaces in which this fervent religiosity can be seen perfectly is in the one from 1583. Jacques de Miggrode, the author who translated the original work of Las Casas into French, was a Protestant in Flanders during the Dutch War of Independence,¹⁶ and his hatred against Spaniards and, consequently, against Catholicism, are going to be essential in the translation, which is directly transferred from French into English. As it has been previously mentioned, in the preface itself, the Spanish are characterized as the cruelest nation and the rest of European nations needed to realize the horrible nature of the enemies who they had to face. Thus, the main aim of this translator when translating into English is to “persuade readers of the necessity of helping their co-religionists, a frequent plea of English Protestants throughout Elizabeth's reign, attacking what they saw” (Hadfield, 305). It is important to consider that in order to spread that negative image associated with the Spanish Empire, Jacques de Miggrode manipulated some aspects of the translation to persuade his Flemish compatriots. As Joseph Pérez claims, “todas las veces que el autor emplea la palabra «cristiano», Miggrode la traduce por «español»” (107). This can be seen when Miggrode considers Catholics to be the cause of their punishment since they had abused God's service (¶3r) and thus, he thinks that Spaniards, as they were Catholics, were the real problem and the real cause of the suffer in America. For this, Flemish people should take the example of the massacre of Native Indians into consideration to prevent the same situation in their own nation.

Another important aspect is that from the very beginning, the translator starts the text with “God's judgments” (¶2r) to specify that the activities of the Spaniards in the New Land were seen and judged not only by all human beings, but also by God, who has always had an important role in the coetaneous life. Taking into consideration that this idea of God and his

¹⁶ The Dutch War of Independence or the Eighty Years War was a political and religious conflict between the Spanish Empire and the Seventeen Provinces, which states that were part of the Spanish Empire in Habsburg Netherlands.

judgement is going to be repeated throughout all the text, the author is going to reflect the idea that God has judged their cruel actions even though they had acted in the name of God and the Pope. That is to say that he is associating the image of God with the Pope, who is the representation of God on Earth and the enemy of Protestantism. Finally, to demonstrate this cruelty and these actions, the translator provides some Biblical examples, as the one of King Saul, but the most important and curious reference is when he compares Spaniards with Pontius Pilate, relating the fact they both were condemned people to death and the translator pleads God to be the judge in these injustices (§4r).

The 1656 translation also contains some criticism to the Catholic religion. Firstly, in the dedicatory to Oliver Cromwell, the editor defines the Spain as the “Popish Nation” (A4v), connecting in this way that relationship of the Pope with the Spanish Empire using the adjective “popish”¹⁷ in a hostile and pejorative tone. It is curious how the editor emphasizes the idea that Cromwell seems to have been sent by God to control the country and those who are against him, as it can be seen when he says that God “has put this great design into your hands” (A6r). Regarding the preface, there is a common characteristic within it which is related to the description of Catholics as liars. According to the translator, Catholics, associated with Spaniards, grounded upon love and charity, but their actions were related to the barbarism and the massacre of millions of Native Indians (b2v). In this sense, it is understandable that he mentioned Jesus Christ as someone who was sacrificed due to the politic interest of Spaniards (b[b]v).

In contrast, the translation from 1689 does not criticize the theme of religion as much as the previous ones and in fact, the anonymous translator emphasizes the fact that Bartolomé de las Casas was a religious performer in some way who had gone to America to promote the Christian Faith (§2r) towards those pagan Native Indians. It is outstanding how he associates the image of Catholic and Spaniards as being saintly, which is something that is

¹⁷ “Popish”. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed., 2009.

not fully represented in the original book of Las Casas (§3v). At the end of the preface, there is an instance in which the translator begs “all true Christians and moral men throughout the whole world” to consider the crimes that they are going to read in the book (§4r). This is because the translation is contextualized after the end of the Glorious Revolution (1688),¹⁸ a period in which Protestantism repressed Catholicism and for this, the only true Christians that could be in England were those who adopted the Protestant faith.

In the translation of 1699, the translator gives a different but outstanding example of religion and which has to deal with Native Indians. He indicates that once Spaniards had entered the New Continent, Native Indians were ready to worship them as if they were Gods, but soon they realized their error and suffered the cruelty of the people that once they wanted to venerate (A2r). With this, the translator wants to prove that Native Indians were innocent and vulnerable people who were pagans willing to venerate anyone, but Spaniards were worse than they expected and this caused them suffering.

In addition, the translator talks about the religious figure of Bartolomé de las Casas since he considered the young bishop to be honest and sincere despite his education based on Catholicism: “This Bishop writes with such an Air of Honesty, Sincerity, and Charity, as would very well have become one of a better Religion than that in which he had the unhappiness to be educated” (A2v). This is connected with another reference to the bishop, whose arguments in defense of his own religion were so weak that the translator seems to empathize more with the figure of the young Bartolomé (A3r). Finally, the last aspect that can be considered is that this translator mentions the Inquisition and how both Spain and Spaniards are subjugated to it (A2v) and this is interesting since none of the other translations

¹⁸ It was the overthrow of the king of England, James II, in 1688 due to the unification of the English Parliamentarians with the Dutch governor, William of Orange, who would become William III of England once he ascended to the English throne and married Mary II of England, the daughter of James II. This Revolution supposed the last opportunity of reestablishing Catholicism in England because of the fact that James II was Catholic. However, her daughter and her new husband, both being Protestant, decided to pass a law, “The Act of Settlement” (1701), which claimed that the succession of both English and Irish crowns could only be Protestants.

mention it. The reason might be because the anti-Catholic movement that had resurfaced in England after the Glorious Revolution, which caused that many Protestant focused their attention on negative issues regarding Catholicism, as the Inquisition.

To sum up, religion and specially, Catholicism are not seen as something positive in these prefaces since it can be found a fervent religiosity – used in a pejorative and negative tone – that some translators associate with being the real cause of these abuses against Native Indians. For these translators, Spaniards had acted in the name of the Pope and their King and not in the name of God, who would not have allowed these crimes. However, it is curious how they defended the image of Bartolomé de las Casas as an honest man who was able to tell the truth even though he was a Catholic.

4.1.3 PATRIOTISM

The final topic that can be identified is related to patriotism and defense of the nation. This can be associated in some way with the idea that all of these translations were used as propaganda against Spain during not only the Anglo-Spanish War, but also during the Dutch War of Independence (1568-1648).

The most significant example of this patriotism is the 1583 translation, which as it has been mentioned previously, was made by a Flemish Protestant author and then was translated by M.M.S. into English. In my view, this text has been used for both nations – England and Flanders – in order to create a negative image of Spain during their respective wars and consequently, to show how negative the Spanish Empire was, they reinforced their own religion, which is Protestantism, over Catholicism, which was seen as a germ to the nation. In this regard, all the examples found that criticize religion can be used to stress that patriotism. Nonetheless, it is really interesting the fact that this author approves Las Casas' attitude about criticizing the behavior of the Spaniards in America, since he considered the young bishop as a traitor of his own patria, who writes “fair more bitterly than myself” (¶2v). The translator also refers to the Spaniards as the enemies (¶2v) and in my view, Jacques de Miggrode (and his English translator) is not only making a reference to the situation of Native

Indians in America, but also to the tension and warlike situation that were taken place in Flanders. This is supported by Andrew Hadfield when he says that people from the Low Countries needed to realize the horrible nature of the Spaniards if they wanted to achieve their independence (305).

The next translation, the one from 1656, is really outstanding due to the fact that it was produced during the Commonwealth of England. In the dedicatory, the translator indicates that everything that Oliver Cromwell had commanded does not have such importance in comparison to what the Spaniards had done before since God had given Cromwell the victory over his enemies in England (A4v), which had become the “admiration of other nation” (A5r). Therefore, the translator claims that he has published this book about the Spanish cruelties in the New Land in order that all the good men “may see the justness of your proceedings” (A5v). This same justification of the actions that Cromwell had committed can be located within the preface when the translator claims, in the same way that in the dedicatory, that it is not fair the fact that people had paid more attention to what Cromwell and England had done than to what had happened in America at the hands of Spaniards (b[0]v). In this context, he asks “all the true Englishmen” not to fight between them since they are compatriots, but to struggle against Spain and its inhabitants, who are the real enemy:

That you are not fight against your countrymen, but against your old and constant enemies, the Spaniards, a proud, deceitful, cruel and treacherous nation, whose aim has been the conquest of this land, and to enslave the people of this nation (b4r).

In this quotation, it can be perceived how the translator indeed asks English people to start a confrontation against Spain and to justify this, he exemplifies with the conflict of the Spanish Armada (1588), as it can be seen when he says, “whose aim has been the conquest of this land”. In my own view, he wants to compare this conflict between both nations to the current situation of England because it is a way of hiding their real problems and for this fact, he uses this combination of patriotism and religion to persuade English people, as it can be perceived in his following words: “we should be strengthened against the common enemy of Christianity” (b6r). Finally, to support all of this, he claims that they should chase the king

“from his Indian treasures” (b5v), that is to say to take possession of the Spanish territories in America. This is related to the fact that during this Anglo-Spanish War, Cromwell commanded the invasion of some Spanish settlements as La Hispaniola or Jamaica, the latter was indeed successfully invaded by the British troops in 1655, being a great defeat for the Spanish Empire.

In comparison, the translator of the work from 1689 does not have an explicit message that may be connected with patriotism. The translator claims that this preface was not published in favor of any particular nations, but it is true that he asserts that it is directed for “the public and advantage of all true Christians and moral men” (¶4r), as if it can only be understood by the English people. However, it is true that this is a critical time since this translation coincides with the Glorious Revolution (1688), which meant a period of Catholic repression under the Protestant supremacy.

In the final translation, the one from 1699, J. Derby does not exalt an exaggerated patriotism as it can be perceived in other translations. However, his only objective regarding this topic is to laud the figure of Bartolomé himself when he stood bravely in front of the Court of Charles I and denounced the truth and injustices committed in America even though he could have been tried him for falsehood (A2v).

As a summary, the patriotic theme has been used as propaganda in order to exalt the values of England in comparison to Spain and Spaniards, who had committed such crimes against Native Indians that they should be judged and punished. All of this is connected with the idea of religion since both nations had different official religions, but also it has a relation with the issue of cruelty previously mentioned. In this sense, the translations of Las Casas’ work were used as propagandistic tools which were useful and beneficial, depending on the period that they were published, particularly in the colonial competition for claiming moral and religious rights within the colonies.

4.2 THE IMPACT OF THE VISUAL AND THE LAYOUT

This section is going to be focused on the English translation of the titles in comparison to the original work, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, but also it is important to pay attention on the images and iconography that go on the title page and the preliminaries of the book, since as Joseph Perez claims:

Lo que iba a contribuir al éxito de aquellas traducciones fueron los grabados que las acompañaron a partir de 1590. En el último tercio del siglo XVI, católicos y protestantes reñían un combate enconado tanto con la pluma como con la espada. En seguida se puso la iconografía al servicio de la ideología (109).

Before starting, it is firstly significant to consider the original title that Las Casas decided to use for his work. The text is presented as a *relación*, which is an account of historical facts, and as Roger Chartier maintains, it is invested with authority since it is founded on the evidence and direct observation of the facts (90), but it is a brief account – *brevísima relación* – since the author is presenting the text as a summary of all the atrocities and horrors that were taken place in America. Therefore, the primary objective of Bartolomé de las Casas was to report what he had witnessed in the New Land briefly in comparison to the rest of his works, which are longer in content.

Taking all of this into consideration, the first translation in English was the one from 1583, which was also the one directly transferred from the French and thus, they share similarities, especially in the title. The original work was translated as *The Spanish Colonie*, which refers to the territories that Spain had in the New Land and that it is far removed from the original title that Las Casas had given. This may be because the translator wanted to emphasize the idea that Spain as an imperial power caused the brutal and real accounts that the readers are going to read and therefore, it is necessary to end the imperial Spanish supremacy. In addition, in the preface that is addressed to the reader, it can be found an interesting title that is *Spanish cruelties and tyrannies, perpetrated in the West Indies, commonly termed the new found world* (¶2r). It is really curious how the translators in both languages – French and English – refer to the actions of the Spanish as cruelties and tyrannies,

which are some characteristics that are going to be found throughout all the text. Even though this was the first translation, it is curious that this translation does not use illustrations to show the barbarities that Spaniards people had committed.

In the next translation, the one from 1656, the title has been translated as *The Tears of the Indians: Being an Historical and true Account of the Cruel Massacres and Slaughters of above Twenty Millions of innocent People; Committed by the Spaniards*. This title is very important since it incorporates the vision of the Native Indians as innocent people that had suffered the cruelties and massacres at the Spaniards' hands, which is a description that is going to be seen in the preface. It is important to mention that this title is strengthened since on the side page the editor has introduced some images that describe the tortures and cruelties of the Spanish colonizers over the Native Indians. For instance, there is an illustration in which some soldiers, dressed in coats of mail and helmets, are wielding swords that they use to cut some parts of the naked body of Native Indians. In another image, a soldier is throwing to the fire the small naked body of an Indian child whilst some other fully naked Native Indians are hanged above this fire.

The title of the translation of 1689 is *Popery Truly Displayed in its Bloody Colors Or, a Faithful Narrative of the Horrid and Unexampled Massacres*, and it is quite fascinating since it is the first time that it mentions the popery and consequently, the translator associates the figure of the Pope with the actions committed by Spanish people. In this sense, he insinuates in a way that all the brutalities and cruelties are the Pope's fault since they were committed under his command. This may be the reason why the translator decides to use "bloody colors", to associate the image of the Pope with the "horrid and unexampled massacre" that Native Indians experienced. In addition, this title includes within itself "faithful narrative", which is similar to *relación* that appears in the original title of Las Casas' work. Just as the translation from 1583, this translation does not contain images that could illustrate the sort of tortures that Native Indians suffered.

Finally, the translation from 1699 is different from the other ones. Its title is as follows:

An account of the first voyages and discoveries made by the Spaniards in America containing the most exact relation hitherto publish'd, of their unparallel'd cruelties on the Indians, in the destruction of above forty millions of people: with the propositions offer'd to the King of Spain to prevent the further ruin of the West-Indies / by Don Bartholomew de las Casas, Bishop of Chiapa, who was an eye-witness of their cruelties; illustrated with cuts; to which is added, The art of travelling, shewing how a man may dispose his travels to the best advantage

It can be seen that it is similar to the original due to the use of the term “account”, which resembles to *relación*. However, it also includes that idea of cruelty and torture committed against “forty millions of people”, which is comparable to the translation from 1656 that also incorporates the number of deaths. Regarding images, this translation is accompanied by a series of them after the preface that describe several methods of torture. For example, one of the illustrations shows how a Spanish soldier whips the naked body of a Native Indian, who is tied to a tree; or another image depicts two soldiers stabbing spears to the Native Indians.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation proves further information of the fact that Bartolomé de las Casas has influenced the creation of the Black Legend, thanks to his masterpiece *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*. Above all, it proves that the figure of the young bishop has been a key element in the dissemination of the Black Legend in England through the translations of his work. Bartolomé de las Casas has been criticized because of his defense for the injustices that Native Indians were suffered at the hands of the Spanish colonizers. This caused that Las Casas was disliked by most of his own compatriots, who even came to consider him as a traitor, while at the same time he was admired by those who were rivals of his own nation, as England or France. This is reinforced by Maurice Wilkinson's vision when he states that "besides his protection of the Native Indians, caused him to be disliked by the colonists" (45). Probably, the fact that he was a Spaniard who was claiming those horrible actions and tyrannies of his own nation was the main reason why translators decided to use his book as a propagandistic tool against the vision of the Spanish Empire. For this, it was easy to manipulate and alter the original work of Las Casas for the British's own benefit and all these changes have been important factors to the propagation of the Black Legend in England during centuries of political and religious hostilities between both nations.

To show how these translations had a great impact on the Black Legend, this dissertation has analyzed four English translations from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, focusing on the prefaces where the translators have given their opinions and reasons about Spain and its people. This examination proves that the prefaces of the four analyzed translations share a common thematic pattern regarding cruelty, religion and patriotism. The prefaces accentuate the idea that Spaniards are barbarous and bloodthirsty people who accomplished a great number of massacres of the Indian population throughout several means of torture. There are various words associated with cruelty to define both the actions and the Spaniards in all the prefaces – words as tyranny, wickedness, cruelty, bloody, or barbarian – and all these adjectives and nouns were creating a distorted picture of reality far from the truth. For instance, in two translations, the one from 1583 and the one from 1656, there are references

to the specific number of deaths of the Native Indians, which was not a truthful figure since it was an exaggeration to cause an impact on the readers' minds.

Regarding the religious theme, Catholicism is seen as the one of the main reasons that translators have related to all the cruelties against the Native population. In other words, Spaniards, as fervent religious of their Catholic faith, had acted in the name of God and mainly, the Pope to justify the atrocities that they did to evangelize and conquer the Native Indians. For them, Spaniards were greedy people who wanted to colonize as many territories as possible and all of this was influenced by their religion, which is compared with English Protestantism, as it can be seen in the 1689 translation. However, it is important to mention that even though they harshly criticized Catholicism through his work, they still defended the image of Bartolomé as an honest and loyal men who was able to narrate all the accounts that he witnessed.

Patriotism is an essential theme within these prefaces since it is a topic which includes the previous ones. The patriotic theme in a way has been used as propaganda during the political confrontations between both England and Spain in order to exalt the national principles of the former compared to the latter. A good example of this praise is the translation of 1656, which coincides in terms of chronology with Oliver Cromwell's command, because of the fact that it was used to try to put the English readers' attention on what had happened in America during the Spanish colonization than to what in fact was taking place in England under Cromwell's domain.

Finally, this dissertation has proved that the titles and the images that go with the translation have a great influence on the perception of the reader. It is true that most of the titles of the translations have been modified and they have included certain characteristics which emphasize the idea of Spaniards as cruel, religious and violent people. Furthermore, it is essential to mention that the use of illustrations, which describe actions of barbarity and death, tries to persuade the reader and create an important visual impact, which intensifies the reading of the translations.

In this sense, it can be asserted that the manipulation of the original work of Las Casas had a remarkable role in the dissemination of the Black Legend in England. These translations reinforced the impression of Spanish people as cruel, fanatic in the Catholic faith, heartless people who enjoyed torturing Native Indians with several means, but all their actions were justified since they were acting in the name of God. Nonetheless, Bartolomé de las Casas was seen as an exception to English people because he was able to account what he had seen during his journey and because he, in a way, helped the rest of European nations to realize how Spaniards truly were even though this was not utterly certain.

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