

Las Casas, Alonso de Sandoval and the defence of black slavery

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyse the contributions made by the Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas, in the XVI century, and the Jesuit Alonso de Sandoval, in the XVII century, to legitimize and regularize discourses about the slave trade and black slavery in the Spanish Americas.

Key-words: Colonization of the Hispanic America; Evangelize of blacks; Black slavery.

David Brion Davis in the 1960s warned that many historians were exaggerating the antithesis between slavery *and* Catholic doctrine. The purpose of this article is to move away from a value-laden analysis of the actions of the Catholic Church both in defence of black slavery and in defence of the blacks.¹ Rather, I seek to revise the work of two missionaries who worked in Spanish America and who played an important role in the construction of a discourse that at the same time legitimated and regulated the black slave trade. I refer to the Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas in the sixteenth century and the Jesuit Alonso de Sandoval in the seventeenth.

Las Casas and the blindness of Christians

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Bartolomé de Las Casas was one of the best known missionaries in Spanish America. He was born in Seville in 1484². When he was still young he received from his father, upon the latter's return to Spain after accompanying Columbus on his second journey to America, an Indian slave as a present. A short while later, however, he had to return the Indian by order of Queen Isabel. At the same time he studied in the University of Salamanca, where he got a degree in Law. In 1500 he participated in the suppression of a rebellion of Moors in Granada³. Two years later, he went with Nicolás de Ovando to the New World for the first time. Not yet a priest, he took part in the fighting against the Tainos in Santo Domingo. From the island of Hispaniola he was called to the island of Cuba by Governor Diego Velásquez to provide legal services⁴. Las Casas received an *encomienda*⁵, close to Xagua, which he divided with Pedro de Rentería⁶ and kept for around a decade. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, possibly in 1507, he was ordained a priest in Rome⁷. He returned to Santo Domingo in 1509. Later he contacted the Dominicans who arrived in America in September 1510⁸.

On 21 December 1511, ordained and still an *encomendero*, Las Casas heard in Santo Domingo a sermon by the Dominican Antonio de Montesinos against the abuses in the exploitation of indigenous labour that profoundly affected him. The friar in his homily, according to Las Casas' own report, asked with what right were the Indians kept in such cruel slavery. With

² Some authors allege that Las Casas was born in 1474, but according to Isacio Pérez Fernández it can be said with almost total certainty that 1484 was the year of his birth. PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, Isacio, Fr. *Bartolomé de Las Casas: viajero por dos mundos. Su figura, su biografía sincera, su personalidad*. Cuzco: CBC, 1998. p. 17.

³ SARANYANA, Josep Ignasi (dir.). *Teología en América Latina*. Desde los orígenes a la Guerra de Sucesión (1493 - 1715). Madrid/Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 1999. v. 1. p. 66.

⁴ EGUIARA Y ERGUREN, Juan José de. *Historia de sabios novohispanos*. (1754) México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1998. p. 28.

⁵ An *encomienda*, according to Bernard and Gruzinski, was an Iberian institution that was transposed to the Antilles by Nicolás de Ovando, governor of Hispaniola (1503) and to Mexico by Cortés. In Spain *encomiendas* had emerged out of the *Reconquista*; in America, however, an *encomienda* did not correspond to a donation of land, but rather the concession by the state of compulsory labour. The *encomendero* became the beneficiary of the forced labour of the Indians: he received tribute or personal service and was supposed to provide in exchange material and religious assistance. The considerable decline in the indigenous population and the criticisms made of it contributed to the institution's decline. *Repartimiento* and *encomienda* in Spanish America are synonymous for these two authors, the former term emphasised the distribution process, while the second is linked to the responsibilities of the person holding the grant. In Mexico, *repartimiento* was also called *cuatéquil*, in Peru, *mita* and in Colombia, *concierto*. GRUZINSKI, S., BERNAND, C.. *História do Novo Mundo: da descoberta à conquista uma experiência europeia, 1492-1550*. São Paulo: Edusp, 1997. p. 606 ~ 607.

⁶ ESTEVE BARBA, Francisco. *Historiografía indiana*. 2nd ed. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1992. p. 87.

⁷ The date and place of the ordination of Las Casas is not known for sure. Cf. PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, Isacio, *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 31 ~ 35.

⁸ THOMAS, Hugh. *Quién es quién de los conquistadores*. Espanha: Salvat, 2001. p. 383.

what authority were wars made against these people who were peacefully and tranquilly living on their lands?⁹

The same year he went to Cuba on Pánfilo Narvaez's expedition as the chaplain of the fleet and saw close up the mistreatment of the Indians by the *encomenderos*. Later he would write: while I was in Cuba, 7,000 children died in three months. Some mothers actually drowned their children out of despair, while others finding themselves pregnant caused themselves to miscarry by using certain herbs^f. He was also the witness of the Caonao massacre, when the Spanish attacked the Indians without any apparent reason, apart from, as Las Casas himself suggested, seeing how sharp their swords were¹⁰.

On 15 August 1514, the Feast of the Assumption, he renounced his *encomienda* in a sermon, converting himself to the indigenous cause and started to preach against the cruelty of the Spanish to the Amerindians. He also began a series of journeys between Spain and America seeking to convert the Spanish Crown to the idea of a peaceful colonisation, as was attempted in Cumaná, in the north of Venezuela, in which clerics and peasant-colonisers substituted soldiers. The experience was a total failure, however, when the Indians rebelled in 1521, killing the missionaries¹¹.

It was also at this time that he argued that it would be advantageous for the Crown to substitute the Indians with blacks or other slaves from the mines^f. He believed that much more gold could be obtained using blacks than with Indians. At the beginning of 1516 he met Cardinal Cisneros and was able to influence him in regard to colonial policy, ensuring that Hieronymite monks were chosen to study and reform conditions in America¹². Las Casas is said to have prepared the instructions given by Cardinal Cisneros to the three monks which permitted the entrance of black slaves to America. The following June the three monks in a letter approved and recommended the introduction of black slavery. In a memorandum from the same year, Las Casas proposed to Carlos V that all colonists have black slaves: two men and two women¹³. In

⁹ JOSAPHAT, Carlos, frei. *Las Casas*. Todos os direitos para todos. São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 2000. p. 53.

¹⁰ CASAS, B. de las. *Historia das Índias*, II, 13 *apud*. TODOROV, T. *A conquista da América: a questão do outro*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1988. p. 130, 136 ~ 137.

¹¹ BALLESTEROS, A. *História da América*. Espanha: no edition specified., 1954. tomo XVII. p. 74 - 76.

¹² THOMAS, Hugh, *op. cit.*, p. 384 - 385.

¹³ The first authorization from the Spanish crown for transporting black slaves was issued in 1501. This licence was revoked two years later. In 1510 authorization was given again, which was suspended upon the death of King Ferdinand by the regent of Castile, Cardinal Cisneros. HÖFFNER, Joseph. *Colonização e evangelização: ética da colonização espanhola no Século de Ouro*. Rio de Janeiro: Presença, 1977. p. 173 ~ 174.

September 1517, Las Casas was nominated *procurador dos índios* (advocate of the Indians)¹⁴ with an annual salary of one hundred pesos. In 1518 in Santo Domingo, the judge Alonso de Zuazo, who had been appointed visiting judge the previous year highlighted the convenience of substituting Indians with blacks. Whether or not Las Casas wrote the 1516 instruction is still a cause of disagreement among authors. But irrespective of this, he was neither the original nor isolated representative of the idea of bringing black slaves to America. This belief combined his defence of the Indians with a type of juridical and religious concept that regarded the subjection of infidels to slavery as legitimate, who as slaves would benefit from the wardship of Christian lords¹⁵.

Back in Santo Domingo in 1521, Las Casas took refuge in the Dominican Convent there and at the end of the following year he joined the Order of Preachers. He started there a new stage of theological studies, expanding his knowledge and building up a collection of manuscripts, which he would use in his future works. It was probably in the 1520s that he began to write his *History of the Indies* and *Apologética histórica* (Apologetic history), a text that arose out of his desire to describe the wonders of the New World and goodness of its inhabitants in the first book of the *History of the Indies*. The subject turned out to be so vast that he decided to dedicate a separate book to it¹⁶.

In 1530 he went to Spain to interview Carlos V and obtain from him some help for the Indians. Back in America he applied himself to the study of theology in Guatemala and Mexico. From there he moved to Peru to organise the Dominican Order in the province with the friars that were there, but was unsuccessful and returned to Vera Cruz. His treatise *The only way to attract everyone to the true religion* dates from this time and was possibly written in Oaxaca in 1536¹⁷. In this work he expresses his vision of evangelisation, not dealing just with the concrete case of America, but also moving into the realm of ideas¹⁸. According to Las Casas the only way to attract people to the true religion is by following what is taught in Christ's doctrine: the preaching of the Gospel by missionaries without weapons. Rational beings could only be influenced by the persuasion of understanding that would subtly touch the heart and gradually sensitise the will. Listeners would understand that preachers did not want to obtain any dominion over them, nor

¹⁴ THOMAS, Hugh, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

¹⁵ ESTEVE BARBA, Francisco, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.98.

¹⁷ SARANYANA, Josep Ignasi (dir.), *op. cit.*, p. 66.

¹⁸ ESTEVE BARBA, Francisco, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

did they want any sort of wealth. In turn preachers should be benign with those they taught, no matter how resistant they were.

Therefore, the gentiles should be attracted by sweet words, humility, affability and the exemplary life of preachers. These in turn should burn with the same love for humanity that moved Saint Paul. It can be said that Las Casas had this type of love for the Indians. The love of charity, sister of serenity, patience and goodness¹⁹. Thus, evangelisation that presupposed submission by force, through war, was contrary to the teachings of Christ²⁰. Thinking that through war one could destroy the obstacles to preaching the faith was something disproved by reason and in contradiction of biblical texts and the Church's tradition. Through war only resentment could be caused and any conversions obtained were false and caused by the fear of greater damage and worse losses. The war against gentiles was for him futile and those involved in it sinned mortally.

If *The only way* really was written in 1536, it was a year before the Papal Bull *Sublimis Deus*, issued in 1537 by Pope Paul III, and despite the fact that we do not know whether the pontiff was aware of this work, it is interesting to think that Las Casas' teachings might have had some impact in Rome²¹. The bull declared Indians to be true men, free and capable of understanding the Christian faith. Furthermore, the Indians and all other people who might come to be discovered by Christians, even though they lived outside the faith of Christ, were not to and should not be deprived of their liberty and their ownership of goods. Thus, indigenous slavery was prohibited and conversion through the word and good example was insisted on²². Carlos V prohibited the application of the Bull, for reasons of defence of ecclesiastical patronage, but nevertheless it had an influence in America²³.

¹⁹ In his book Todorov evaluates the relationship between Las Casas' love for the Indians and the knowledge he had of their cultures. Looked at from the perspective of benevolent love this question should not be put in this manner, since it does not involve the recognition of another identity, but rather belonging to the same unit, the body of Christ. TODOROV, T., *op. cit.*, p. 165 ~ 179. José Alves de Freitas Neto discusses the relationship between loving and knowing in Todorov's vision of Las Casas. NETO, José Alves de Freitas. *Bartolomé de Las Casas: a narrativa trágica, o amor cristão e a memória americana*. São Paulo: Annablume, 2003.

²⁰ PAGALDAY, José Ramon I., Fr. Bartolomeu de Las Casas e o seu conceito de evangelização. In: *História da Evangelização na América Latina*. São Paulo: Paulinas, 1988. p. 48. ESTEVE BARBA, Francisco, *op. cit.*, 93 ~ 94.

²¹ There exists another pontifical document called *Veritas ipsa* that appears to have been expanded and then given the name of *Sublimis Deus*. SUESS, Paulo (org.). *A conquista espiritual da América espanhola*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1992. p. 275. Cf. também SARANYANA, Josep Ignasi (dir.), *op. cit.*, p. 66 ~ 68; 101.

²² Papa Paulo III. *Sublimis Deus*. 1537. *apud*. SUESS, Paulo (org.), *op. cit.*, p. 273. Josaphat speaks of a missionary strategy, especially on the part of the Dominicans, of informing the Pope about the intellectual gifts, and the moral and spiritual qualities of the Indians and the progress of evangelisation in America. JOSAPHAT, Carlos, Friar, *op. cit.*, p. 101 ~ 105. Luis Martínez Ferrer and Carmen José Alejos-Grau

In 1539 Las Casas was sent by the Bishop of Guatemala, whom he had helped in his pastoral office, and by other men concerned with the defence of Indians, to Spain to recruit missionaries and to request from Carlos V laws that would guarantee the liberty of the Indians. He had to wait three years to get an audience with the King who was not in Spain²⁴. These years, 1541 - 1543, saw the writing, enactment and reform of New Laws that sought, amongst other things, to regulate the exploitation of indigenous labour, prevent new *encomiendas*, their inheritance and indigenous slavery. During this period Las Casas also wrote his most controversial work that later served as the basis for the so-called black legend of the Spanish conquest: the *Brief report of the destruction of the Indies*. The treatise was so well accepted by Spain's rivals that there were those who sought to deny the paternity of the writing, such as the Dominican Juan Meléndez, author of *True treasures of the Indies*, who believed that the *Brief report* was written by a French author and printed on a press in Lyon and not Seville²⁵.

In 1544 Las Casas was named Bishop of Chiapas, returning to America some months later. In 1546 the Ecclesiastical Council of Mexico met between June and October. Participating in it were Bishops Zumárraga from Mexico, Marroquín from Guatemala, Zárate from Oaxaca, Vasco from Quiroga, Michoacán, as well as Las Casas who joined the group shortly after it began work. Among the conclusions of the council was that the legitimacy of the Spanish presence in America was based on the conversion of the Indians, through the concession of the Holy See. However, this concession did not take the Indians their legitimate holdings and states. The Bishops also insisted on the Catechetical character of the *encomienda*, asking the *encomenderos* to request clergy to instruct the Indians²⁶.

The New Laws did not come into force and Las Casas returned to Spain in 1547, renouncing his bishopric in 1550. The same year he had his famous debate with the philosopher Gines Sepúlveda, who had translated Aristotle's *Politics* to Latin, and found a basis for his thought in the Greek philosopher. In *Demócrates alter de justis belli causis apud Indios* (*Democratis on the just causes of the war against the Indians*) Sepúlveda affirms the superior nature of Spanish culture and the observance of natural law by the Spanish. According to Sepúlveda the natural state of societies was hierarchy, translated in terms of superiority and

highlight the participation of the Dominican Friar Bernardino de Minaya. SARANYANA, Josep Ignasi (dir.), *op. cit.*, p. 101.

²³ SARANYANA, Josep Ignasi (dir.), *op. cit.*, p. 101.

²⁴ EGUIARA Y ERGUREN, Juan José de, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 34 - 35.

²⁶ SARANYANA, Josep Ignasi (dir.), *op. cit.*, p. 110.

inferiority, so the superior should govern the inferior, with the right to war against the Indians being defended, as well as the natural superiority of the Spanish over them. His treatise was refused by the theologians of the Universities of Salamanca and Alcalá, and it was recommended that it not be disseminated in Spain.

In 1549, Carlos V decided to convene a *Junta* with the members of the Council of the Indies, other bodies and fourteen theologians to define whether or not it was proper or opportune to resort to arms to open the way to evangelisation. The debate was divided into two stages: the first sessions took place between August and September 1550 and the second stage between April and May the following year. The place of the confrontation between Las Casas and Sepúlveda was the chapel of St. Gregory's Convent in Valladolid. At the end of the meeting the *Junta* of theologians and canonists did not reach a decision, though judging by the fact that Sepúlveda was unable to obtain permission to publish his book, at that moment the majority of those involved favoured Las Casas²⁷.

Las Casas would not return to the New World. He stayed in Spain continuing his work as a consultant and continuing to defend the Indians through his writing. He seemed convinced that political support was fundamental for evangelisation and to combat those practices still present in the Americas that he considered unjust. As a result a large part of his activities took place in the Courts, especially after 1531 and even more so in 1547 when he returned definitely to Spain²⁸.

In 1566 he wrote two documents. One, produced in April, was for Pope Pius V and the other was sent to the Council of the Indies in July. In the two texts he illustrated his way of thinking and reinforced his positions about how to spread the Gospel. The *Junta Magna*, convened by Philip II, meeting in Madrid between July and September 1568, to organise the government of Spanish America and the *Pontifical instructions on how to treat the Indians in the New World* sent to Philip II while the Junta Magna was meeting, could have been responses to Las Casas' entreaties²⁹. However, two years previously, in July 1566, Las Casas had died in the Dominican convent of Our Lady of Atocha in Madrid³⁰.

When Las Casas died he left many original papers and documents, including a voluminous manuscript full of corrections and amendments that he had been working on for more

²⁷ XIRAU, Ramón. *Idea y querrela de la Nueva España*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1973. p. 17; TODOROV, T., *op. cit.*, p. 148 ~ 153; JOSAPHAT, Carlos, Friar, *op. cit.*, p. 147 ~ 155; ESTEVE BARBA, Francisco, *op. cit.*, p. 90 ~ 91; PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, Isacio, Fr., *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 102 ~ 104.

²⁸ PAGALDAY, José Ramon I., Fr., *op. cit.*, p. 47.

²⁹ PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, Isacio, Fr., *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 129 ~ 131.

³⁰ Hugh Thomas' entry on Las Casas served as the framework for the presentation of the biographical references. THOMAS, Hugh, *op.cit.*, p. 382 ~ 386.

than thirty years. This was the *History of the Indies*, a work that was to be divided into six parts. The first covered 1492 ~ 1500, while each of the following parts was to cover a decade until 1550. He only completed the first half, completing three books covering until 1520. Death overcame him before he could finish³¹. The manuscript however was preceded by a letter in which Las Casas stated that the work should only be published forty years later, because in case God decided to destroy Spain it would be seen that it was for the destruction that the Spanish had wrought in the Indies, and the reason of his justice would be apparent³². His wish was more than fulfilled, since his work would only be published more than three hundred years later in 1875.

Las Casas looked at ~ and judged - the Spanish and Portuguese activities in Africa in Chapters 17 - 27 of Book I of *History of the Indies*. This group of chapter is, according to Pérez Fernández, a long digression, written separately and inserted by Las Casas himself after Chapter 16, where in continuation of the previous chapter he refuted the belief that the West Indies had been known since ancient times. In Chapters 15 and 16, Las Casas draws on ancient authors to refute what Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo stated in his *General and natural history of the West Indies*. Thus, what is now Chapter 28 was, before the addition of the other parts, Chapter 17, while the digression was probably written by Las Casas in Valladolid in 1556. It was probably added to the text of *History of the Indies* in 1558 or 1559, when he cleaned up the manuscript, but without the chapters extracted to form the *Apologética História*³³.

On his return to Spain in 1547 Las Casas passed through Lisbon. Pérez Fernández believes that he went there because either while travelling, or shortly beforehand, he became concerned about the question of black slavery. In Lisbon he wanted to find out about the legality of the slave trade and slavery in Africa. There he was able to look at the royal Portuguese chronicles on the issue³⁴. Las Casas, however, never went to Africa. It was his reading and the information he obtained from Portuguese and Spanish Dominicans about their experience in Africa that he used to write the chapters.

These eleven chapters have two moments of particular importance: first, in Chapters 17 to 21, Las Casas is concerned with the Canary Islands, the dispute between Spain and Portugal for their possession and the behaviour of the Spanish towards the *Guanches* ~ the original inhabitants

³¹ ESTEVE BARBA, Francisco, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

³² PAGALDAY, José Ramon I., Fr., *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³³ PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, Isacio, Fr.. Estudo preliminar. In: CASAS, Bartolomé de las. *Brevíssima relação da destruição de África*. Lisboa: Edições Antígona, 1996. p. 22 - 35.

³⁴ PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, Isacio, Fr., *op. cit.*, 1998. p. 94.

of the islands. In the following chapters, 22 to 27, the focus turns towards Africa and the Portuguese actions along the western coast of the continent. In neither block does Las Casas limit himself to a mere description of the advance of the Spanish and Portuguese through the islands and lands of Africa.

In Chapter 17, Las Casas discusses the war of conquest. He says that it is greatly to be wondered that the Christians of today have fallen into such blindness. Despite having professed their respect for natural law and the Gospel in their baptism and after, in everything related to dealing with and the edification of other men the works of Christ and to invite, attract and win through peace, love, docility and examples of virtue, faith, education, obedience and devotion to the true God and Redeemer throughout the world of all infidels without distinction of sect, religion or corrupt customs, they have forgotten the form and model through which Christ gave and created the Church in the world. In their actions in the Canaries, Christians did not follow what should be the general rule of doing unto others what they wanted done unto themselves: without exception, whether Indians, gentiles, Greeks or barbarians, since they all belonged to the same Lord, as taught by St. Paul. It was not lawful, Las Casas said, to invade the lands where they live and where their kingdoms are, and disturbing them and conquering them, in other words, taking their goods, enslaving them and ruling over them, without considering that they are men and that they have rational souls. Therefore, the path of violence to win the infidels over to Christ follows a path that is condemned by the Gospel according to Las Casas³⁵.

In Chapter 18, Las Casas condemned the Portuguese attack on the islands as if they were Turks or Moors and raises doubts as to whether baptisms had been made in accordance with doctrine, since everything there was theft, violence and killing. As a result those who did not want to accept the faith were right due to the actions of the preachers and the Portuguese did not realise that in the eyes of God that sacrifice they offered him, so bathed in blood, was a sin³⁶. Furthermore, in Chapter 19, he would make more criticisms, condemning those who enslaved the *Guanches*, since it defamed the name of Christ and caused the Christian religion to rot and to cause aversion, raising obstacles to conversion. The justification that they were infidels used to invade their land, wage war against them, kill them, subjugate them or make them captives was, according to Las Casas, against charity, so, these French, Portuguese and Castilians committed terrible and serious mortal sins, in need of restitution. Not even the intention of bringing them to

³⁵ CASAS, Bartolomé de las. *Brevíssima relação da destruição de África*. Lisbon: Edições Antígona, 1996. p. 247 ~ 249.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 255 ~ 256.

the faith excused them, since God knew well that their intentions were full of greed and diabolical ambition to take possession of lands and free peoples³⁷.

In Chapter 22, concerned with the first discoveries of the Portuguese in Africa, Las Casas makes his vision about the limits of the just war even clearer. He mentions again the blindness that had fallen on mundane Christians which led them to believe that since they were infidels or unbaptised it was lawful to attack them, rob them, captivate them and kill them. Moreover, even Moors, and here Las Casas surprises us, should not suffer these actions, because they were not those from parts of the Barbary Coast and the Levant that had infested and done damage to Christianity, they were other people, different from them. Therefore, it was enough for the Moors not to take possession of Christian lands, which were not those of Ethiopia, nor to make, or have made, war on Christians, nor to have any obligations, so that the Portuguese, for the good of the salvation of their souls, would be obliged not to do them any harm, but rather to treat them peacefully, giving them examples of Christianity. In this way, they would love the Christian religion and Jesus Christ³⁸.

The Portuguese, however, in addition to not helping create affection for missionaries and religion, also created an opportunity for the Moors to go to war against the blacks, without a just reason to sell them like slaves. Las Casas alerted that any Christian should be fearful and prudent when dealing and trading with infidels³⁹.

In Chapter 25, Las Casas explains the three causes he considers just reasons for war. The first, he says, is when infidels attack, make war on, or disturb Christianity at the present moment or out of habit. He identifies these infidels: the Turks and the Moors from the Barbary Coast and the Orient against whom war can be waged even when they cease to do it, because it was known through very sad experience that their intention was to condemn Christians. This war against them could not even be called war, but rather legitimate and natural defence. The second cause would result if the Christian faith was evilly persecuted, harassed or prohibited. In this case the just war that Christians could undertake against any infidels could not be doubted. Las Casas also explained that he had used the expression *evilly* to show that this cause did not apply when infidels killed and persecuted Christians for evils and prejudices that they had unjustly received from them. He also went further, considering that the death of a missionary who did not have any individual guilt but who was a member of the nation that had offended the

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 274 ~ 275.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 298.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 298.

infidels not to be covered by the reasons he had outlined. The third cause of waging war against any infidels was if they had captured Christian kingdoms or other goods and would not return them. However, in this case Las Casas thought that it was proper to previously discuss and investigate the right of one and the guilt of the other^f, partially because it is not easy before the consistory and the judgment of God^f, to justify of a war aimed only at recovering a temporal good.

After considering the causes of the just war, Las Casas concluded that none of these three causes was present in the Portuguese experience in Africa. How could they be justified then? Las Casas had already warned that the Christian people could not wage war against any infidel, whether they are Moor, Arab, Turk, Tartar, Indian, or any other type^f. Therefore, how could they justify so many evils and offences, so many deaths and imprisonments, so many scandals and the loss of so many souls like those poor people, even though they were Moors? Just because they were infidels? This is certainly great ignorance and condemnable blindness^f⁴⁰.

In addition to Las Casas' *only way* of conversion, it is interesting to note how the vision of the world of the *reconquista* appears in his vision ~ the struggle to retake the lands conquered by the Muslims ~ and, at the same time, how he moves away from its most superficial dimension. War could be waged against those who attacked Christianity, and these were obviously Muslim, but the fact of being Muslim was not in itself a justification for subjugation and enslavement. More was necessary. Las Casas thus condemns the blindness that failed to see that in Africa what was found was not a mere reproduction of the struggles in the Mediterranean between Christianity and the Muslim religion. A new situation existed with new characters. *Guanches* and blacks, like the Indians in America, required, according to the Dominican, a peaceful means of evangelisation.

According to J. F. Marques, from Las Casas' point of view three geographic zones of action can be identified in Africa. The first was the region of the diocese of Ceuta and Tangiers, land of Muslim culture and faith. These were isolated city-fortresses, where the Catholicism brought by the missionaries was always besieged by the Moors. The second zone occupied the extreme south of Mauritania, incorporating the kingdom of Benin⁴¹. Here Arab influence had penetrated with some success. Before the Portuguese expansion, an interior Muslim mercantile expansion had had an impact, according to A. Vasco Rodrigues, on the cultural sphere and the world of beliefs. It was the Muslim ~ merchant, warrior or preacher of Islam -, traditional enemy

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 322 ~ 326.

⁴¹ MARQUES, João Francisco. A religião na expansão portuguesa. Vectores e itinerários da evangelização ultramarina: o paradigma do Congo. *Revista de História das Idéias*. Coimbra, vol. 14, 1992. p. 125 ~ 126.

of the Portuguese, who was their competitor in this region⁴². Thus, the Portuguese found the idea of monotheism present in many coastal areas of Western Africa but having come from the Moors, with the principles of the Koran exercising a powerful influence on these populations before Portuguese Catholicism. The third zone identified by J. F. Marques covered the kingdom of the Congo and the southern coast of Africa. The arrival at the kingdom of the Congo after half a century of expeditions exploring the western coast of Africa and Gulf of Guinea revealed to the Portuguese an area in which there was no Islamic influence. Nonetheless, it was with the mentality of the *reconquista* that the Iberians threw themselves into maritime expansion and thus, according to David Brion Davis, both in Portugal and Spain the traditional tendency to associate Africans with Moors prevailed and thus to the threatening infidel, even when obviously there had been no contact with Islamism⁴³.

The different images constructed in relation to Africa and America are worth noting here. David Brion Davis perceived the tendency of conquistadores and missionaries to find the old ideal of uncorrupted nature in the New World. The Native American seemed to enjoy the innocence and happiness of a time before the fall of man⁴⁴. Converting them to the Christian faith did not require slavery. The same did not apply to blacks. As a result a whole body of legislation was created to protect the Indians from colonising exploitation, but this was not done in relation to blacks. It can perhaps even be said that, unfortunately, the impediments to indigenous slavery contributed to the growth of the demand for black slaves. Evidence of this can be seen by the fact that other Indian advocates, such as Bishop Diego de Landa of New Spain, were defenders of black slavery. Discrimination against blacks and Indians involved two different weights and led to an understanding that blacks were born to the slaves and were essentially inferior to both whites and Indians⁴⁵.

Gomes Eanes de Zurara, one of the chroniclers of Portugal cited by Las Casas in this part of the *History of the Indies*, was, according to Saunders, one of the main advocates of the ideas that Africans were slaves because of sin. According to the scholastic philosophers after sinning men could fall into a servile state, so slavery could be justified because it could transform the

⁴² RODRIGUES, Adriano Vasco. *Aculturação artística e social no Reino do Congo resultante da evangelização após a chegada dos portugueses*. In: *Atas do congresso internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a sua época*. Porto: Universidade do Porto/Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1992. v. 5. p. 553.

⁴³ DAVIS, David Brion. *O problema da escravidão na cultura ocidental*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001. p. 209.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 195 ~ 196.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 199.

blacks into Christians and could allow them enjoy a higher level of material existence. For Saunders in the sixteenth century the supreme justification for the slave trade was that slavery was seen as an efficient method of bringing the light of faith to blacks⁴⁶.

Nonetheless, Las Casas was less concerned with the discourse legitimating the slave trade than with a critique of Iberian actions in Africa. And even while he uses the information of Gomes Eanes de Zurara in his text, he also criticises his insensitivity, stating that the purposes of the Portuguese crown do not excuse the sins of violence, the deaths and the damnation of those who died without faith in the sacraments and the captivity of those present there did not justify such as injustice^f. However, Las Casas believed that this was an error of the time in which Gomes Eanes de Zurara was writing and prayed to God that this had not lasted and did not still exist at the time he himself was writing⁴⁷.

Las Casas, therefore, in his *History of the Indies*, criticises in first place Iberian actions, especially Portuguese, in Africa. He saw in these the basis for Spanish actions in America. For him, a 'blindness' that had fallen on Christians and made them believe that war against infidels was legitimate even if they had not attacked Christianity or put it in danger. Therefore, I believe that his work was temporal and his argument is close to the mid-sixteenth century criticism of slavery, focussing on how these processes occurred and preoccupied with normalising the relations included there. This discourse, whether framed by clergy or not, did not advocate the end of black slavery, but was disturbed about how Africans were imprisoned in order not to put at risk the legitimacy of slavery in America. Las Casas anticipates, however, this criticism when, in his discussion of the just war, he finds imprisonment in Africa the reason for the injustice of the Iberian practice of enslaving blacks. In the seventeenth century this controversy was heightened. The work of Alonso de Sandoval represents the new approach to the question.

Sandoval and the Jesuit esteem for the blacks

Alonso de Sandoval was born in Seville, like Las Casas, in 1576. When he was still a boy he emigrated to Peru with his parents, where his father took up the position of accountant of the Royal Treasury in Lima. He studied in the seminary of San Martín de Lima, where he learned about theology and moral arts. He could read in Latin. In 1593 he joined the Company of Jesus.

⁴⁶ SAUNDERS, A. C. de C. M.. *História social dos escravos e libertos negros em Portugal* (1441 - 1555). Lisbon/Imprensa Nacional/Casa da Moeda, 1982. p. 66 - 68. David Brion Davis also discusses this explanation of the origin of slavery linked to sin. DAVIS, David Brion, *op. cit.*, p. 81 ~ 109. Höffner says that this idea that the root of slavery was in sin was definitely deep-rooted in Catholic theology^f. HÖFFNER, Joseph, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁴⁷ CASAS, Bartolomé de las, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

In 1605 he arrived in Cartagena de Índias, rarely leaving the city from thereon. The following year he accompanied Diego de Torres to the region of Urubá. Afterwards writing a report about the mission⁴⁸. In 1607 he took part in another two missions: one with Fr. Juan António Santander to Santa Marta and the other with the Dean of the Jesuit college, Fr. Perlin, to the regions of the Antioquia mining area ~ Cáceres, Remedios and Zaragoza. In 1617 he went to Lima and returned to Cartagena in 1619. The same year he translated the *History of the life of Fr. Francisco Xavier*, written by the Portuguese João de Lucena and printed in Lisbon in 1600. He was the Dean of the Jesuit college in Cartagena when he died in 1651.

In the two years he spent in Lima, he looked for documents and a bibliography and probably began to write his *opus magnus* *Naturaleza, policia sagrada y profana, costumbres y ritos, disciplina y catecismo evangélico de todos etíopes* which he completed in 1623. The book was printed in Seville in 1627, though it was better known by its Latin title *De instauranda thiopum salute*, as it appeared in the royal privilege in 1625, recognising his authorship, and in the title of the second edition of 1647⁴⁹. Like the book itself, the title seemed to be inspired by the work of another Jesuit, José de Acosta, author of *De procuranda Indorum salute*, a treatise about evangelisation in America that dealt with the indigenous populations of Peru, published in Salamanca in 1589⁵⁰.

De instauranda is considered to be one of the most important texts for African and Afro-American ethnography published in the period. It is possibly the first work with coherent concerns for producing a plan of action for governing slaves⁵¹, since in the sixteenth century discussion were centred on the legitimacy of enslaving blacks. In its very first pages, Sandoval said that the subject of the work was directed to highest and among the divines the most divine

⁴⁸ *Relación de la misión y primera en Urubá que el padre Diego de Torres, viceprovincial de la Compañía de Jesús del Nuevo Reino y Quito, hizo la provincia de los indios infieles de Urubá por el año de 1606, scripta al padre Estebán Páez, provincial de Perú, por el padre Alonso de Sandoval que fue su compañero, em ARSI, Nuevo Reino y Quito, Epistolario general, Historia I.*

⁴⁹ The first edition was entitled *Naturaleza, policia sagrada i profana, costumbres i ritos, disciplina i catecismo evangélico de todos etíopes* [...] The 1647 edition was given the title *De instauranda thiopum salute. Historia de thiopia, naturaleza, policia sagrada y profana, costumbres, ritos y catecismo evangélico de todos los Etíopes con que se reataura la salud de sus almas, dividida en dos tomos: ilustrados de nuevo en esta segunda impresión con cosas curiosas y indice muy copioso* [...].

⁵⁰ SANDOVAL, Alonso. *Un tratado sobre la esclavitud*. [De instauranda thiopum salute] (introdução, transcrição e tradução de Enriqueta Vila Vilar) Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987. Introduction: p. 25 - 36. Cf. also SARANYANA, Josep Ignasi (dir.). *op. cit.*, p. 252 ~ 255.

⁵¹ Rafael de Bivar Marquese attributes to the Dominican Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre, author of a history of the French Antilles published between 1667 and 1771, the first systematic approach to the question to be published in Europe. Nevertheless, I believe that primacy can be given to the work of Alonso de Sandoval. MARQUESE, Rafael de Bivar. *Feitores do corpo, missionários da mente: senhores, letrados e o controle dos escravos nas Américas, 1660 ~ 1860*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2004. p. 26.

purpose of saving souls and, among them, the most destitute were the Ethiopians, whose rudeness, nudity and bad smell used to make the most feverous missionary give up. But this, he warned, was not the greatest difficulty, but rather the exact exercise of their catechism, investigating their baptisms and revalidating the invalids, administrating the other Sacraments and making them capable of validly and properly⁵² receiving them.

His work is divided into four books, each preceded by a summary of his argument⁵³. In the first book, the Jesuit gives an extensive description of the principal African nations, their origins, customs and traditions. Ethiopian nations that the Portuguese nation commonly discovered who, according to Sandoval, unlike Las Casas were so meritorious in this part of the Catholic Church⁵⁴. However, like Las Casas, Sandoval never went to Africa and based his information on letters and documents to which he had access. In the second book, the origins, customs, beliefs, traditions and particularities of various kingdoms and peoples from southern India and the Philippines were discussed, all classed as blacks by Sandoval. Later on he discusses the hardships blacks suffered in America: mistreatment by the Spanish and the difficulty in obtaining access to the sacraments, prevented by their owners. He also advanced rules of behaviour for slaves and masters. The third book consisted of a methodological catechism taken from his own personal experience. Here he examines the ways of administering baptisms and catechism. In the last book, Sandoval provides an apology for the actions of the Company of Jesus, especially in relation to blacks.

⁵² SANDOVAL, Alonso de. *De instauranda Æthiopiæ salute*. Madrid: Por Alonso de Paredes, 1647. Preface. Two editions of Alonso de Sandoval's texts were used here. In the analysis of the first three parts, the 1647 edition was used, reproduced on the CD Afro-América: textos históricos. Introdução e seleção de Enriqueta Vila Vilar. Coleção Clássicos Tavera, dirigido por José Andres-Gallego. Fundação Histórica Tavera. Series II, vol. 7; for Book IV, the 1627 edition with an introduction, transcription and translation by Enriqueta Vila Vilar, published by Alianza Editorial in 1987 was used.

⁵³ There are differences between the first and second editions. The title of the book was changed, as has already been mentioned, while the titles of the different parts were also changed and the content was revised by Sandoval in the interval between the two editions. In the first edition, the first book was entitled *De las principales naciones de Etiopes, que se conocen en el mundo, y de sus condiciones, ritos y abusos; y de otras cosas notables, que se hallan en ellas*; while in the second it was called, *De los mas principales Reinos, y Provincias de Negros que se hallan en la Etiopia Occidental, o interior de la parte tercera del mundo, que ocupa el Africa. En que se trata con gran latitud de su esclavitud*. The second book was initially called *De los males que padecen estos negros y de la necesidad deste ministerio que los remedia, cuya alteza y excelencia resplandece por varios títulos*; changed in the second edition to *De los mas principales Reinos, Provincias e Islas de Negros que se hallan en Etiopia Oriental, o sobre Egipto, de la parte segunda del mundo que ocupa el Asia. Y de la predicación en toda ella del Apostol Santo Tomé*. In the 1627 edition the third book was called *Del modo de ayudar a la salvacion de estos negros en los puertos de adonde salen y adonde llegan sus armazones*; in the 1647 it was named *De muchas cosas monstruosas, singulares e muy maravillosas que los Autores cuentan hallarse en los Reinos destos Etíopes Y demás tierras de Negros. Y de las vidas de sus Santos y Varones ilustres que se han podido rastrear*.

⁵⁴ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1647, p. 2.

In the first book the fundamental question that appears to have motivated Sandoval to write his work appears: why was Africa so ignored by evangelisation for so long? Sandoval was concerned with reversing this situation, guaranteeing the blacks in America the knowledge of religion. As a result he argues that black slaves in America should be given the opportunity to be evangelised and to remedy the errors they were subject to in their nations of origin.

For Sandoval black slavery was justifiable. He uses the causes of legitimacy stipulated in the *Siete Partidas* laws⁵⁵ drawn up by Alfonso X of Castile between 1256 ~ 1263⁵⁶. According to the *Siete Partidas* slavery was considered to be the most perverse and despicable thing that could exist among men. However, at the same time, it could be allowed when it originated from war, when someone sold themselves, or when someone was born as a slave. Having thereby accepted the institution, the laws were concerned with regulating it to guarantee the rights given by God to the slave⁵⁷. Sandoval considers the question of the justification of enslavement a thorny one and leaves it to the scholars who so learnedly and correctly have written about this point⁵⁸. One can see in his work his affiliation with, for example, the conclusions of the treatise *De iustitia et iure* by the Dominican Domingo de Soto in 1553, and *Suma de tratos y contratos* by the Dominican Tomás de Mercado written in 1569 and the six volume work *De iustitia et iure* by the Jesuit Luis de Molina, written between 1593 ~ 1609⁵⁹.

Also in his first book, Sandoval raises the question of whether the torrid zones can be inhabited and relates the black colour of the Africans to their descent from Cham. According to the author, the black skin colour comes from a predominant, inherent and intrinsic quality with which Cham was created by God, an excess of heat. His descendents were given this skin colour as a mark of the man who had laughed at this father with such insolence⁶⁰. Sandoval notes that according to St. Ambrosias the name Cham means *calidus*, in other words heat. Cham's offence

⁵⁵ ANDRÉS-GALLEGO, José, GARCÍA AÑOVEROS, Jesús María. *La Iglesia y la esclavitud de los negros*. Pamplona: EUNSA, 2002. p. 56.

⁵⁶ GRUZINSKI, S., BERNAND, C., *op. cit.*, p. 627.

⁵⁷ PALACIOS PRECIADO, Jorge. *La esclavitud de los africanos y la trata de negros*. Entre teoría y la práctica. Tunja: Publicaciones del Magister en Historia ~ UPTC, 1998. (Nuevas lecturas de Historia, 2) p. 9.

⁵⁸ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op. cit.*, 1647, p. 74.

⁵⁹ ANDRÉS-GALLEGO, José, GARCÍA AÑOVEROS, Jesús María, *op. cit.*, p. 57 ~ 59; BOXER, Charles R.. *A Igreja e a expansão ibérica (1440 - 1770)*. Lisbon: Edições 70, 1989. p. 49.

⁶⁰ According to the biblical story, Noah after drinking wine got drunk and was lying naked inside his tent. One of his sons, Cham, saw him naked and laughed at him. His other two sons, Sem and Japheth, got a blanket and covered him without looking at their father's nudity. When Noah awoke he heard about what Cham had done and cursed him. (Gen 9, 18 ~ 27) *A Bíblia de Jerusalém*. São Paulo: Paulinas, 1989. p.43 ~ 44.

against his father not only resulted in his dark skinned descendants, but also turned them subject to captivity, to perpetual slavery⁶¹. As the book of Genesis says: Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be for his brothers (Gen 9, 25)⁶².

Sandoval criticised the vision that freedom was part of natural law, since if it were, neither positive law nor the laws of men would be lawful. He said that nature never ordered for men to be free and this allowed men the right to introduce servitude without contradicting natural rights⁶³. He provided examples of situations when freedom was lost: due to theft; out of serious necessity, when men sold themselves and their children; and as a result of defeat in war, when cities or provinces were subjugated to the laws of another Republic. Examples offered by classical authors and the Holy Scriptures. Slavery was presented as lawful and Sandoval asked if it was just for men to lose their lives because of their crimes, or instead should they not lose their freedom, something worth less than life⁶⁴?

Thus, Sandoval says that slavery suits the world, because equality of men is prejudicial and cannot preserve the world. According to St. Augustine, he believes it necessary that some command and others obey, some are lords and others subjects. And to ensure that the reader understand this clearly, Sandoval uses the metaphor of the human body, saying that the interior parts of the human body are served by the outside parts. The heart as the king of the body was served by all the other parts served and like an absolute lord sent its vital spirits to all other parts vivifying them and governing them: so that there is no part of the whole body, either inside or outside that is not organised for the conservation of such a principal member⁶⁵.

The use of the metaphor of the human body, linked to Aristotelian thinking, was used by Christian thinkers in the Middle Ages to describe the Catholic Church. Medieval thinking was dominated by the existence of a universal order where each part cooperated in a different form in the realisation of the cosmos. In the seventeenth century this metaphor continued to be used, especially in relation to the hierarchical order of the social and political world. Early-modern society saw itself as a body and as such its constitution came from nature⁶⁶. Mario Cesareo, however, believes that many factors made the body a symbolic and instrumental space

⁶¹ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1647, p. 16 - 21.

⁶² *A BÍBLIA de Jerusalém*. São Paulo: Paulinas, 1989. p. 44.

⁶³ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1647, p. 84.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 1647, p. 85.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 1647, p. 92.

⁶⁶ HESPANHA, Antonio Manuel, XAVIER, 'ngela Barreto. A representação da sociedade e do poder. In: MATTOSO, J.. *História de Portugal*. Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1993. Vol. 4: O Antigo Regime (1620 ~ 1807). p. 122.

privileged by discourse and colonial religious practice. These were the massive absence of the ecclesiastical institution and the individual character of the evangelising enterprise; the missionary experience as the limit situation rising above the body through physical debility, the proliferation of illnesses, etc.; the establishment of relations with the natives who blatantly exposed their nudity; the prominence of individual powers and interests in regard to the defective juridical institution; the general crisis of the European epistemological mark; and finally the importance of the suffering body of Christ as the fundamental model in the Catholic tradition. All these factors point to the body as a symbolic space where tensions between mercantile reality and the utopian project of the mission crossed⁶⁷.

Sandoval also believed that, as Aristotle noted, the ignorant and lacking in intelligence should due to reason, serve the wise and discrete, so that the latter could govern them and teach them how to live in a virtuous way. This idea when applied to blacks made slavery an effective means for the knowledge of the true faith and an improvement in their living conditions. For who could be so blind as not to realise the mercy of God towards the ignorant through slavery. For Sandoval this blindness consisted in not perceiving that through slavery blacks were led to the power of Christian lords who would give them the light of the Gospel, baptising them and keeping them in the Faith and achieving the salvation of their souls. And if they were free? Would they not lose miserably⁶⁸?

In the Scriptures Sandoval found an argument to link the black slavery in an unredeemable form to the Word of God, eternal truth, to reprehend ingratitude, natural evil and the worst customs of the people of Israel, it will raised your feelings and your sins, comparing them to the sons of Ethiopia, then the greatest condemnation used when displeased with someone: *Are you not as the Children of the Ethiopians to me, oh children of Israel?* (Am 9, 7). Sandoval says that in the divine words the words *black* and *Ethiopian* are used often as synonyms of sinner and evil⁶⁹.

However, while Sandoval did not contest the validity of slavery and sought a way to legitimate black slavery, he was concerned with the way blacks were imprisoned in Africa and the slave trade. For Luis de Molina, who like Las Casas denounced the increase in the number of blacks enslaved with the arrival of Portuguese ships in the ports and rivers of Africa, the slave trade was licit if the purchase, in the impossibility of inspecting the conditions of imprisonment,

⁶⁷ CESAREO, Mario. *Cruzados, mártires y beatos*. Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1995. p. 21 ~ 22.

⁶⁸ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1647, p. 86.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 88.

was made in good faith. Sandoval would agree with this idea and give less responsibility to those who bought from third parties, since the commitment to investigate and to prohibit the purchase of improperly subjected slaves belonged to the original traders⁷⁰. He thus inclined to the opinion of Fr. Luis Brandão, Dean of the São Paulo Jesuit college in Luanda. Luis Brandão, in a letter dated 1611, confirmed to Sandoval that the Jesuits there and in Brazil bought slaves for their own service without any scruples. And if anyone could have scruples about this purchase, it would be the inhabitants of those parts, never those who bought them from the merchants elsewhere. The merchants, according to Luis Brandão, bought the blacks in good faith and one can very well purchase from those merchants without any scruples and they can sell them: because it is common opinion that someone possessing something in good faith can sell and buy⁷¹. Furthermore, no black would say that they had been imprisoned legally, but few were captured unlawfully or unjustly condemned. For the Jesuit dean, losing so many souls as left Africa, of whom many reached salvation, to have some erroneously imprisoned, without knowing who they were, does not seem so much to be against the will of God: few were imprisoned unjustly and many slaves were saved and for good reasons enslaved. The slave trade was thus justified, since it led to the propagation of Catholicism. For the Council of the Indies, even if the origins of black slavery were not strictly legal^f, the slave trade could not be interrupted without putting at risk the survival of the colonies and, consequently the propagation of the true faith^f⁷².

Sandoval devoted no less attention to setting out rules for relations between masters and slaves. For him slave owners had duties. While slaves had to obey, Sandoval, using the metaphor of the human body again and comparing slaves to feet, recommends that their masters treat them with consideration, allowing them rest and giving them the honours they deserve for their service. Sandoval says that it is true that the feet of the body are feet^f, but to walk they are as important to the body as eyes to see and because they are feet do not cut them off, do not mistreat them, but to the contrary, seek to shelter them, clean them and cure them when sick with as much care as your own flesh, and part of your body^f. In the same way, masters should treat their own slaves as if they were their feet, treating their service with consideration⁷³.

Slaves were recommended to obey their temporal lords and the masters to treat their slaves according to natural law⁷⁴. Do to others whatever you would have them do to you.

⁷⁰ ANDRÉS-GALLEGO, José, GARCÍA AÑOVEROS, Jesús María, *op.cit.*, p. 46 - 59.

⁷¹ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1647, p. 100.

⁷² DAVIS, David Brion, *op. cit.*, p. 222 - 223.

⁷³ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1647, p. 75.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 76.

This is the law and the prophets (Mt 7, 12)⁷⁵. And, drawing on St. Ambrosias, he says that the low status and condition of a man is not an impediment for him to be esteemed, in the same way that royal lineage is not a guarantee of praise. On the other hand faith was, because the slave and the freeman were the same thing in Christ and each one would receive the reward for the good or bad they had done. Before God slave and freeman had the same weight and thus the greatest dignity of everyone, he concluded, was to serve Christ⁷⁶. Therefore, as shown by the above, governing slaves properly was important for the purposes of colonisation and the evangelisation of the blacks. But it was also important for Christian slave owners, since in the eyes of God the effort to win souls and souls as miserable and wretched as slaves destitute of everything good was of great value⁷⁷.

The defence of slavery was interconnected with religious concepts and this amalgam, which had been developed in Antiquity, existed in Judaism and Greek philosophy. From this viewpoint slavery, to a certain extent, could be seen, as has already been mentioned, as a punishment resulting from a natural defect of the soul that impeded virtuous conduct. It was also seen as a model of dependency and submission. But in another sense, slavery was the starting point for a divine mission. Since it was through the corrupted body of Adam that Christ redeemed humanity⁷⁸, blacks could be led to the path of eternal salvation through slavery.

The author is also concerned with the preaching of the apostle St. Thomas in the Orient and also in America. He also talks about the conversions resulting from the missionary work of St. Francis Xavier whom he considers to have followed in the steps of St. Thomas. He also gives some information about the kingdom of Prester John. In the areas he is concerned with Sandoval located both the antiquity of the presence of the Christian religion and the pioneering work of the clergy. He also dealt with the monstrosities present among men in Africa and Asia, before going on to talk about the wonders of nature. In this topic he discussed the strategy of missionaries in America to prove the presence of the demon, seeking through the recreation of fantastic myths about Africa to prove the need to evangelise the blacks arriving in America⁷⁹. For Sandoval spiritual help should start in the African ports where slaves are loaded and the ports where they arrived in America, notably Cartagena, his own region. Cartagena was one of the main ports of entrance for Africans to the continent and together with Vera Cruz, in New Spain and Porto Belo

⁷⁵ A BĪBLIA de Jerusalém, *op.cit.*, p. 1850.

⁷⁶ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1647, p. 77.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 80.

⁷⁸ DAVIS, David Brion, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁷⁹ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1987, introduction: p. 37.

on the Panamanian isthmus, was one of the three ports authorised by the Spanish Crown to receive merchandise, including slaves.

One of the most difficult issues for missionaries, which preoccupied Sandoval appearing, as has already been shown, in his opening pages, was checking the validity of the baptisms of the Africans arriving in America. Domingo de Soto believed that baptism could not be imposed by force and that neither could infidels be subjugated by arms to spontaneously embrace baptism. The Dominican Fernando de Oliveira held a similar position as he shows in his *Art of War on the Sea*, published in 1555, where he stated that there could not be a just war against those who had not been baptised. Attacking them and enslaving them was real tyranny⁸⁰. Sandoval believed that the majority of the blacks arriving in Cartagena had not been baptised. Some may have received the water of baptism over their heads, but few had validly received this sacrament, the door to salvation⁸¹. Las Casas, as has been seen, was also concerned with this point, and also questioned if the baptisms made in Africa had been preceded by the proper doctrinal instruction.

Sandoval also discusses the difficulty of catechising blacks with the help of interpreters who either get tired of translating and change the words or are not present during catechism. If there is no time for a detailed catechism due to a threat of death or other causes, Sandoval notes that it is necessary to teach six truths before baptism: 1. God exists; 2. God is a remunerator; 3. God is the one creator of everything; 4. God is grace and forgives; 5. the immortality of the soul; 6. what sin is⁸².

In the third book when looking at questions linked to the conversion of the blacks, Sandoval deals with another theme: the recognition of famous characters and black saints. The author provides the stories of the Queen of Sheba, Baltazar one of the three magi, St. Iphigenia princess of Ethiopia, St. Elesbaan king of Ethiopia, Antonio and Benedict, priests from the Seraphic Order, amongst others⁸³. In this way he shows the potential of blacks to embrace the Christian faith and points towards an important evangelisation strategy: the diffusion of the cult of these saints among blacks as a form of approximation to the Catholic religion, through the possible creation of ties of identity.

Finally, the fourth book is concerned with highlighting the great esteem that the Company of Jesus always had for blacks and the efforts which it had expended on their

⁸⁰ Charles Boxer doubts the influence of Fernando de Oliveira on his contemporaries. BOXER, Charles R., *op.cit.*, p. 48 ~ 49.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 421.

⁸² SARANYANA, Josep Ignasi, *op.cit.*, p. 254 ~ 255.

⁸³ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1647, p. 478 - 501.

evangelisation. In this book Sandoval argues that he wants to speak with his fellow priests, but privately and domestically⁸⁴. Here, changing the focus of his analysis, Sandoval seeks to demonstrate to his brother Jesuits how much the Company was tailored to the ministry of blacks. Or even predestined, as shown by the fact that St. Francis Xavier was born in Navarra the same year as the discovery of India, 1497, so it could be understood that God had predestined him to bring the Gospel and sow the Faith in those faraway regions inhabited especially by blacks⁸⁵.

Sandoval also developed three other arguments to show the great esteem of the Company for the salvation of the Ethiopians. The first was that when the Company had no more than ten brothers, it believed that the task of restoring the Faith in Ethiopia was so important that it designated two of these ten to work in these region, leaving only eight for the rest of the world⁸⁶. Furthermore, the esteem of the Company for blacks was so high that for its mission to Eastern India, whose inhabitants Sandoval says are all black or mulattoes, it sent its most important brother, Fr. Francisco Xavier. Therefore, it gave to those it most esteemed the ministry of the person it most appreciated.

Sandoval's second argument was that the Company, which had closed its doors to dignities and bishoprics, requiring its members to take an oath to neither seek nor accept these offices, make it acceptable there. Since it became clear that the permission to accept these would not be given for honour, but for horror, not for rest, but for work, not for freedom but for certain captivity, not for a life of delicacies, but for certain and rigorous death. As a result the doors that neither Princes, nor kings, nor many Popes could open, the poor and wretched blacks were the first to open: because the Company holds them so dearly that it forges for them the key of such importance⁸⁷.

To demonstrate the third argument Sandoval reports a series of cases of Jesuits who were imprisoned or killed in missions in Ethiopia, Guinea and other provinces in black nations. Despite these actions on the part of blacks, the author says that the Company did not desist from sending its men, nor from defending blacks, or converting them to Christ, becoming the glorious mother of glorious martyrs and perhaps for this it esteems so much the ministry of blacks, because it gave the Company its first martyr and for such an honour, it wants to pay with the ceaseless work of its sons even to shed blood for salvation like real Jesuits⁸⁸. Therefore, Sandoval argues,

⁸⁴ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, op.cit., 1987. p. 505.

⁸⁵ ibid., p. 506.

⁸⁶ ibid., p. 515 ~ 516.

⁸⁷ ibid., p. 518.

⁸⁸ ibid., p. 520.

Jesuit acceptance of martyrdom, delivering themselves totally, the sacrifice of everything in favour of the conquest of souls, is a mark of distinction of the Company. As Antonio Vieira would write years later, the Dominicans lived for the Church, the Jesuits died for it⁸⁹.

Sandoval finished the book providing reasons for the Order to give salvation to blacks. He notes that the vocation of the Company of Jesus is to go to different parts of the world looking for souls in need⁹⁰. Thus, with Christ being the merchant for whom the Jesuit priests worked, and India being the land of goods, the Jesuits, according to Sandoval, were able in a sea of a thousand difficulties^f to discover pearls of great value (which are the souls redeemed with their blood) from the coarse and ugly shells of black bodies^f⁹¹. In an earlier passage in the second book, he wrote that nature makes some unable to study science and gives these corporal strength and ability to work and serve: and this is who the wise ancients called the sons of the earth, saying that they are like oaks and stones that work without tiring^f⁹². The sacrificial Christian body, therefore, implies an instrumental mercantile body that creates material wealth, salvation and eternal life⁹³.

What seemed to most concern Sandoval, and something that he saw as a reason of shame, were the actions of the Moors in the perversion of these nations of blacks^f. Since the Moors had run so many risks and applied themselves so much to this task for a corruptible and quickly vanishing prize and reward^f, Sandoval asked, why do the Jesuits not do it for a prize and reward that is so big and which will last forever^f? It would be, Sandoval says, a shame if they were beaten by the Moors in the enterprise of saving souls⁹⁴.

Sandoval thus reached the end of his book raising the question of the struggle against the Moors once again and the duty to spread the true Faith through the world. Not at this moment to justify black slavery, but to remember the missionaries of the still present dispute over space with the traditional enemies of the Catholic faith.

Christianity, slavery and colonial order

The image constructed in the sixteenth century of America, an idyllic world inhabited by natural men, differed from that of Africa. In Africa how the people lived and their

⁸⁹ *apud.* BOXER, Charles R., *op. cit.*, p. 88 ~ 89.

⁹⁰ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op. cit.*, 1987. p. 608.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 610.

⁹² SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op.cit.*, 1647, p. 93.

⁹³ CESAREO, Mario, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁹⁴ SANDOVAL, Alonso de, *op. cit.*, 1987. p. 612.

political and social organisation mattered little. Europeans had known about the blacks for a long time, preceding overseas expansion, conquests and colonising experiences. They were known through the Bible and the writers of Antiquity, or even through travellers coming from Sub-Saharan Africa. They were regarded as having rejected the Catholic faith, thus any connection between them and the image of innocent savages was improbable. When Las Casas petitioned for black slaves in America, he had this vision of Africa and blacks in mind.

In relation to the Indians, very early on Las Casas recognised their humanity and the excellence of their political and social organisation. Nevertheless, despite everything that he did in defence of the Indians, they continued to be objects of evangelisation. Innocents against whom no violence should be committed, but rather they should be caringly and peacefully led to conversion to the one true religion. No matter how much his behaviour changed - and it should not be forgotten that he was an *encomendero* - and now matter how many radical positions he many have assumed, his vision of the Indians was linked to the expansionist interests of the Spanish crown. The construction of his discourse articulated the notion of the just war, coming from the Middle Ages, with the image of the *Reconquista* still being very alive because of the wars against the Moors in the Mediterranean and in the Iberian peninsula until shortly before Columbus reached America, and the spirit of the mission⁹⁵. Francisco López de Gómara, a critic of his work wrote in 1552 that there could not be a good conquest without colonisation and if the land was not conquered, people would not be converted⁹⁶. Las Casas might perhaps invert this proposition, stating that evangelisation was the first step towards conquest. A peaceful conquest that would lead to the incorporation of new territories into the Spanish Empire⁹⁷.

While Las Casas initially defended black slavery without reservations, in the middle of the 1540s he changed. In his *History of the Indies* he says he reconsiders his repeated requests to bring black slaves to America between 1516 and 1543⁹⁸. A few years later, he concluded that black slavery was as tyrannical as the enslavement of the Indians, with the reason for one being the same as the other⁹⁹. His position reflected his criticism of what he identified as a continuity of

⁹⁵ Cf. NEVES, Luiz Felipe Baêta. *O combate dos soldados de Cristo na terra dos papagaios: colonialismo e repressão cultural*. Rio de Janeiro: Forense-Universitária, 1978.

⁹⁶ LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA, Francisco. *Historia general de las Indias*. apud. ELLIOT, J. H.. *A conquista espanhola e a colonização da América*. In: BETHELL, L. (org.). *História da América Latina*. Volume 1: América Latina colonial. São Paulo/Brasília: Edusp/FUNAG, 1997. p. 135.

⁹⁷ Todorov says that Las Casas shared the colonialist ideology, in other words he defended the submission of America to Spain. TODOROV, *op. cit.*, p. 168 ~ 173.

⁹⁸ PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, Isacio, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 188.

⁹⁹ XIRAU, Ramón, *op. cit.*, p. 18; HÖFFNER, Joseph, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

the tyranny of the Portuguese and Spanish on both sides of the Atlantic, with violence against the Indians having been preceded by violence against the *Guanches* and blacks.

Therefore, the chapters of the *History of the Indies* can be linked to the discourse contesting the manner in which the slave trade took place. Following the lead of Las Casas, the Dominicans in the sixteenth century expanded the discourse criticising the slave trade and/or the discourse legitimating slavery. In addition to the already mentioned Tomás de Mercado, Bartolomé de Albornoz, author of *Art of Contracts*, published in 1573 in Valencia was also of importance. While Tomás de Mercado considered the trade a mercantile business that had to be subject to certain rules, Albornoz was responsible for perhaps the toughest attack on the absence of just causes for black slavery in his time. Like the work of Tomás de Mercado, Albornoz is part of the Spanish moralising school that emerged with the beginning of mercantilism, to guide the moral life of merchants and traders. In addition, it had the objective of helping ministers of the sacrament of confession, and so could also be included in the genre of confessionals¹⁰⁰. The Dominicans thereby assumed in the sixteenth century a critique of the way the slave trade took place, fanning the flames of the debate about the regulation of the slave trade and exploitation of the servile labour of blacks. This theme would gain greater strength among the Jesuits in the following century.

Sandoval, I believe, represents another moment in the discourse legitimating black slavery. His work mixes legend, history and ethnographic facts, and constitutes a wide-ranging treatise on Africans, and a chronicle about slavery and the slave trade in New Granada. His criticism follows the Dominicans and Jesuits who had already dealt with the question and preceded the Jesuits who worked in Portuguese America and very probably influenced their own works in the middle of the seventeenth century. According to David Brading, the principal objective of *Instauranda* was not to denounce slavery, something he allowed, nor to denounce Spanish mistreatment of blacks, but to describe and defend their methods of catechism and attract other Jesuits to embrace their ministry. David Brading says that it was vocation that distinguished the Jesuits in relation to the Mendicant orders, their sacrifice for the task of gaining souls, while Sandoval exhorted his brothers to look for glory in the exercise of the mission to the blacks¹⁰¹.

As a result *De Instauranda* can be said to represent the concern with governing slaves, combining the interests of Spanish colonisation and Catholic missionary expansion. In 1663 the Dominican Juan de Castro believed that slavery resulted in an institution that created benefits: for

¹⁰⁰ SARANYANA, Josep Ignasi (dir.). *op. cit.*, p. 408.

¹⁰¹ BRADING, David A.. *Orbe indiano*. De la monarquía católica a la república criolla, 1492 ~ 1867. México: FCE, 1991. p. 192 ~ 193.

blacks the possibility of sharing in the faith; for colonists, because slaves were better suited to work; and to the Crown, because the slave trade facilitated the preservation of the overseas territories¹⁰². Ronaldo Vainfas emphasises that Sandoval's work, like that of the Jesuits in Portuguese America, appeared in a moment of expansion and the increase of the importance of slavery for the colonial economy and the parallel hardening of black resistance to slavery, with the Brazilian *quilombos* being examples of this. The fear of sedition thereby directed the impulse to regulate relations between slaves and masters in favour of colonial order¹⁰³. The symbolic economy of salvation required, as M. Cesareo has stated, a political economy to institutionalise it¹⁰⁴.

More than this, Sandoval's work is a testament of the Jesuits' Christian slaveholding project. In 1599 the Jesuits Alonso de Medrano and Francisco Figueroa arrived in the New Kingdom of Granada with the archbishop of Santa Fé, Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero, bringing with them a rigorous plan of evangelisation. Satisfaction with the Jesuits' work with the peoples of the Andes led the archbishop to ask for a Jesuit college to be founded there and for more missionaries to be sent to consolidate the Jesuit presence in that space¹⁰⁵. The region, however, imposed other challenges: according to Sandoval the biggest was attracting the attention of missionaries to the blacks arriving in the port of Cartagena. Thus his efforts were concerned with systematising his missionary experience, according to the Jesuit evangelisation project. This project, in Luis Fernando Restrepo's words, through a rigorous application of the sacraments and working in native languages, intended to create modern, disciplined and productive subjects. It was intended to create the ideal subjects that the state and the colonial economy required¹⁰⁶. Also in relation to the Jesuits' Christian slaveholding project, I think that one can add the objective of the conformation of social order by legitimating of the institute of slavery through its Christianisation. The spiritual conquest in the terms proposed by Gruzinski, supposes the

¹⁰² *apud*. PALACIOS PRECIADO, Jorge, *op. cit.*, p. 11 - 12.

¹⁰³ *Cf.* VAINFAS, R.. *El proyecto de una esclavitud cristiana: ideas jesuíticas en Brasil y Cartagena de Indias durante el siglo XVII*. Medellín, X Congreso de Historia de Colombia, 1997. mimeo. VAINFAS, R.. *Deus contra Palmares*. In: REIS, J.J., GOMES, F. dos S.. *Liberdade por um fio*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996. p. 60 ~ 80. Paulo de Assunção also, in reference to Portuguese America, discusses the relationship between Jesuit activity and the colonial economy. *Cf.* ASSUNÇÃO, Paulo de. *Negócios Jesuíticos*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2004.

¹⁰⁴ CESAREO, Mario, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁵ RESTREPO, Luis Fernando. Los límites de la razón occidental: la naturaleza muisca y los proyectos intelectuales de los jesuitas en el Nuevo Reino de Granada, siglo XVII. In: MILLONES Figueroa, Luis, LEDEZMA, Domingo (eds.) *El saber de los jesuitas, historias naturales y el Nuevo Mundo*. Frankfurt/Madrid: Vervuert/Iberoamericana, 2005. p. 176.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 174.

humanist project of creating a new man . Christianisation inscribed in the social fabric and in the bodies of the individuals the basic rules of colonial Christian society. Alongside the conquest of souls, a conquest of bodies took place with a public dimension involving participation in ethics, education, traditions, customs and Christian values¹⁰⁷. In the case of blacks their Christianisation would correspond to an adjustment of their social place inscribed by slavery.

The works of Las Casas and Sandoval represent two different moments in the debate about black slavery and the slave trade. In the former, the connection between the idea of a just war and the legitimacy of the slave trade, on the one hand, and the legitimacy of the Spanish presence in America is emphasised; in the latter the Iberian colonising project and, specifically the Jesuit missionary project and the governing of slaves, is stressed. In both the adaptation of projects and theories forged in Spain to the vicissitudes presented by the colonisation of America and the harmonisation of Castilian imperial plans and those of the Catholic church. They are thus works that still need to be looked at by those interested in the legitimating discourse of black slavery through colonisation projects and missionary plans in Iberian America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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