

Analysis of the short account of the destruction of the indies

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One of the stated purposes for writing the account was Las Casas's fear of Spain coming under divine punishment and his concern for the souls of the native peoples.

The account was one of the first attempts by a Spanish writer of the colonial era to depict the unfair treatment that the indigenous people endured during the early stages of the Spanish conquest of the Greater Antilles, particularly the island of Hispaniola. Las Casas's point of view can be described as being heavily against some of the Spanish methods of colonization, which, as he described them, inflicted great losses on the indigenous occupants of the islands. His account was largely responsible for the adoption of the New Laws of 1542, which abolished native slavery for the first time in European colonial history and led to the Valladolid debate. The book became an important element in the creation and propagation of the so-called Black Legend - the tradition of describing the Spanish empire as exceptionally morally corrupt and violent. It was republished several times by groups that were critical of the Spanish realm for political or religious reasons.

The first edition in translation was published in Dutch in 1578, during the religious persecution of Dutch Protestants by the Spanish crown, followed by editions in French (1578), English (1583), and German (1599) - all countries where religious wars were raging. The first edition published in Spain after Las Casas's death appeared in Barcelona during the Catalan Revolt of 1646. The book was banned by the Aragonese inquisition in 1659. [77 This passage visually describes the situation during Spanish conquest of Latin America. It's brevity does not diminish its content.

Bartolome de Las Casas tells what he saw through his own eyes, all the terror, inadmissible but tolerable, illegitimate but approved. First sentence, the salutation, shows how the writer, Bartolome, respect and honour the addressee to whom he rights, Philip, Prince of Spain. „...“

to the most high and most mighty Prince of Spain... ” The idea is clear from this line, Bartolome in a way fears the prince and it might be assumed that he can not speak completely free, as if he would be if he would speak to his friend. And the humbled tone can be felt all through out the passage. Further three sentences describes the scale of the conquest.

It can be seen that although author does not think that conquest or at least the scale of it is rightful, he has to approve it. And he does so by covering everything with the religion „... the first Christian settlements..

. “, as if Christianity would allow to conquer anything you want. The description of the islands and their wealth, the idyl of this world, sounds a little bit exaggerated „...“

as I saw for myslef... “. Further, Bartolome states that everybody on this earth are equal by the law of God „..

.. God made all the peoples of this area... “.

He describes how good, generous, trustworthy indigenous people are by revealing their personality traits. Then the author starts a long metaphore, which tells prince how wrong the Spanish actions towards natives are. The

metaphore, in my opinion, is used to understate what is trying to be said.

The desire of conquistadors is compared to the laws of nature „...“

Spanish fell like ravening wolves upon the fold... “.