

**POWER AND TRANSLATION IN *BREVÍSIMA RELACIÓN DE LA DESTRUCCIÓN
DE LAS INDIAS*
BY BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS¹**

Juan José Ojeda Castillo
Universidad de Salamanca (España)
ojeda@gmx.net

Abstract

This project intends to analyse the translation done into English in 1583 of one of the most significant works of the Dominican friar and scholar Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*. Both the English and French translations became during the sixteenth century a best seller that promoted the so called black legend. Although the intentions behind the tract by Las Casas were of a very different nature, namely to instruct the missionaries that were to leave Spain for the new world, the book became, in the hands of politicians and policymakers, a sophisticated weapon in the struggle for hegemony over the new world. The translation into English, done from the French translation –and especially the prologue to the reader– reveals many of the political intentions and strategies to undo the enemy by using one of their own.

Keywords: translation, Dominicans, Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*

Resumen

Este proyecto se propone analizar la traducción al inglés que, en 1583, se hizo de una de las obras más significativas del fraile dominico Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*. Tanto la traducción francesa como la inglesa se convirtieron, a finales del siglo XVI, en un best seller que ayudó a promover la llamada leyenda negra. A pesar de que las intenciones del tratado de las Casas eran de naturaleza muy diferentes, pues estaban relacionadas con la instrucción de los misioneros que salían de España hacia el Nuevo Mundo, la obra se convirtió, en manos de políticos y legisladores, en una sofisticada arma de propaganda en la lucha por la hegemonía en el Nuevo Mundo. La traducción al inglés, llevada a cabo desde la francesa, y especialmente el prólogo al lector, pone de manifiesto muchas de las intenciones políticas y de las estrategias para anular al enemigo usando al propio enemigo.

Palabras clave: traducción, dominicanos, Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*

1. Introduction

1.1. Bartolomé de las Casas: the maker of the new and the old world

In *Historia universal de la infamia* Jorge Luis Borges saw Fray Bartolomé de las Casas as the ultimate cause of all the good and bad attributes of the American continent, from the “mythological size of Abraham Lincoln” and the acceptance of the word *linchar* in the dictionary of the Academy, to the death of five hundred thousand people in the American Civil War and the unbearable rumba El Manisero. Through that “infinite number of events” that, according to Borges, would have been the result of Las Casas feeling sorry for the Indians, and asking Carlos V in 1517 to allow African slaves

¹ Este estudio se enmarca en el proyecto de Investigación I+D *Catalogación y estudio de las traducciones de los dominicos españoles e iberoamericanos*, con referencia FF12014-59140-P, aprobado por el Secretario de Estado de Investigación Desarrollo e Innovación, Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad, según Resolución de 30 de julio de 2015.

to be brought to the new world so that they could liberate the Indians from the extenuating labours of the mines, the American continent would have been forged in the way we know it today: a melting pot of peoples and cultures, unique in its multiethnic background. But beyond the role that Las Casas could have played in that petition --which is probably one of the many myths created around his figure-- and in the line of what Jonathan Hart has called “one of the great moments in which the tectonic plates of past and present shifted (...), the Columbian discovery in the western Atlantic and its aftermath” (2013: 42), it is possible to add even more events to that “infinite number” on the list imagined by the Argentinean writer. These events, however, would have contributed not only to the making of America, but to the very formation of the identities of the old European continent as well. One of the most interesting aspects dealt with by Jonathan Hart is the way in which, from Columbus onward, the rivalry among the main European nations “in claims to the new world”, made them use the writings of authors like Las Casas in order to develop “the Black Legend”, in which Spaniards, who had become too powerful in their enterprise of the new world, were portrait as horrible colonizers with unlimited resources to bring pain, misery and death to the original inhabitants of the new world, “behaviour the French, English and Dutch claimed they would avoid in setting up new colonial models” (Jonathan Hart, 2013: 44). Within that dichotomy of good versus evil, civilized colonizers versus uncivilized ones, the new emerging powers, united under the common cause of the reformation --especially in the case of England and the Low Countries-- “defining new ways of looking at themselves in Europe and North America, in fact as empires” (Jonathan Hart, 2013: 44), wrought their identities.

1.2. The circumstances behind the original publication of *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*

Bartolome de las Casas, or rather one of his writings, *Brevísima Relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, became a key element in the “war of propaganda” (Jonathan Hart, 2013: 44) that, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, benefited the abovementioned nations. The tract came to represent the faithful testimony of an author who, in spite of his catholic orthodoxy, was taken by the rival nations of Spain as a kind of adopted reformist. As Andrew Hadfield has pointed out, the tract, which catalogues all the atrocities committed by the Spaniards following the geographical order in which the process of colonization had been taking place, from *De la isla Española* to *Del Nuevo reino de Granada*, is arranged in “a repetitive, almost mnemonic structure, ideal for propaganda” (1998: 42). *Brevísima relación*, however, was not conceived as a book of its own, but as part of a variety of thoughts, ideas, and facts which were exposed orally first and later on put in writing in the period between 1542 and 1552, certainly one of the most intensive and productive in the life of Las Casas. The events that took place within that period are fundamental to understand not only *Brevísima Relación*, but the very reasons behind Las Casas’ fight. During the Junta de Valladolid, celebrated at

the end of 1542, Las Casas put forward a number of accusations and complaints related to the *injurias* perpetrated against the native people of the new world –whom he considered *vasallos de su majestad*. Together with the complaints, and in order to put an end to what he saw as an injustice against the Indians, twenty *remedios* were proposed. *El octavo remedio*, demanding nothing less but the abolition of the *encomienda*, is undoubtedly the most radical one. Without putting an end to the *encomienda* system, the result of the junta, the so called *leyes nuevas*, limited its power by making it non inheritable. It did not take too long, however, until the *colonos*, whose growing power on the other side of the Atlantic was becoming dangerous even for the crown, managed to revoke the law. Las Casas wrote then *Doce reglas para confesores*, “que por el camino espiritual y con la excomuni3n como arma, restauraban el esp3ritu y vigor de las leyes nuevas” (Jos3 Miguel Mart3nez Torrej3n, 2006: 22). It is within this context that *Brev3sima Relaci3n* was also written, and the manuscript presented only to Prince Philip, in whom Carlos V had delegated all issues related to the new world. As Saint-Lu has very well highlights, *Brev3sima Relaci3n* cannot be considered as an isolated element, but part of a whole, “pieza no disociable de un sistema m3s amplio y m3s complejo” (2011:12) made up by the different writings of that decisive decade, among them, *Octavo Remedio*, *doce reglas para confesores*, and the *Dispute of Valladolid* . Although some of the events of the *Brev3sima Relaci3n* appear also in *Historia de las Indias*, the assumption made by Andrew Hadfield that the former is “a shorter version” of the latter, “produced for a wider audience in order to bring home the horrific treatment of the native Americans by the conquistadores” (1998: 92), does not have a solid foundation when taking into account the circumstances of the publication, in 1552, ten years after it had been given to Prince Philip. The fact that it was printed with no privileges or licences is an important detail that has lead historians, such as Jos3 Miguel Mart3nez Torrej3n, believe not only that it was intended as a “reproducci3n policopiada para distribuci3n gratuita” (2006: 26), but that the real intention of las Casas, far from the expectancy of “reaching a wider audience” was simply to distribute enough copies among the missionaries he was recruiting in Seville in 1552, and for whom *Brev3sima Relaci3n*, together with the other writings “constitu3an una parte sustancial de su introducci3n al mundo indiano y a sus cuestiones palpitantes” (Jos3 Miguel Mart3nez Torrej3n, 2006: 27)

1.3. The translation into English

The reasons behind the publication, between the end of 1552 and the beginning of 1553, of those writings that had emerged as a result of --or as a protest of-- the junta de Valladolid (1542) and the controversy of Valladolid (1550-1551) become clear when taking into account the hope put by Las Casas on the new *3rdenes mendicantes*, who, unlike the missionaries who had been in the new world since the beginning of the colonial enterprise, were not under the influence of the *encomenderos*. It was for these new 3rdenes that *Brev3sima relaci3n*, as well as the other writings, could serve as a crucial tool of instruction. At the same time, considering that the tract was such a potential weapon for

propaganda, the fact that it was not “produced for a wider audience” would explain, up to a certain degree, the inevitable question asked by Hadfield: “Why was a translation not published in English until 1583, thirty years after the work’s appearance in Spain?” (1998: 93). When it comes to understand the vicissitudes books had to go through at the time, the publication and translation of navigation manuals could shed some light on the translation of *Brevísima Relación* into English. Although Las Casas’s work is not a navigation manual, “its influence on the early English colonisation efforts is undeniable” (De Schepper, 2012: 85). There are a few interesting parallelisms between las Casas’ work and *Breve compendio de la sphaera y de la arte de navegar*, by Martin Cortés, “the first Spanish navigation manual to be translated into English” (De Schepper, 2012: 71). While the former was written in 1542 and published in 1552, the latter was written in 1545 and published in 1551. However, the tract by Cortés was translated into English only ten years after its publication in Seville, in 1561. Considered as the most significant manual in the field, Cortes’ tract was taken to England in 1558 by an English sailor, Stephen Borough, who had been “granted access to Seville’s Casa de Contratacion”, a crucial institution “where all transactions that had to do with trade between the Crown and the Indies were duly noted” (De Schepper, 2012: 190). The school of navigation was part of the Casa de Contratación, and it was there where Borough was introduced to cutting edge knowledge in the field of navigation. De Schepper’s explanation, is that, “after the marriage of Spain’s King Philip and England’s Queen Mary” there was a period of friendly relationship in which even exchange of important knowledge was possible between the two countries. I would also suggest that this period of good terms and cooperation could explain why, even if *Brevísima relación* was available to other people than the missionaries, a translation into English of las Casas’ tract would have certainly not been the best politically correct action towards the Spaniards at the time. However, in the aftermath of the diplomatic failure between Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, and Queen Elizabeth I over Francis Drake’s circumnavigation (1577-1580) “and his disregard of Spanish claims on the bases of crosses Magellan had planted” (Jonathan Hart, 2013: 51), the situation changed. As Hadfield points out, “it is not without significance that *Brevísima relación* (...) appeared in 1583 when the first concerted efforts to establish colonies in the New World were being made by the English” (Andrew Hadfield, 1998: 97).

1.4. Ambiguities, inconsistencies and gaps when dealing with the English version of *Brevísima Relación*

In his interesting and revealing analysis about English colonial literature, Andrew Hadfield manages to draw a clear connection between the use of the black legend and the necessity of “the rival European powers” of Spain to develop colonies “in the Americas” (1998: 96-97). For him, the translation of *Brevísima Relación* into English would have come at the best time, “when the first concerted efforts to establish colonies in the New World were being made by the English, backed up by a significant

number of exhortatory and propagandist treatises” (Andrew Hadfield, 1998: 97). Significantly enough, Las Casas’ work, as Hadfield remarks, is translated and published in England after the publication of Richard Hakluyt’s first book, *Divers Voyages touching the discoverie of America* (1582), and his influential *Discourse of Western Planting* (1584), in which Hakluyt draws a very clear connection between the spread of Protestantism and “the need to supplant Spain’s empire in the New World” (Andrew Hadfield, 1998: 101).

However, when it comes to analyse Las Casas’s translation into English, although he does refer several times to the original title, *the Spanish Colonie*, translated by “the yet unidentified M.M.S.” and published in 1583 (Andrew Hadfield, 1998: 92), there are ambiguities and inconsistencies in his claims. When referring to the original Spanish version of *Brevísima relación*, for example, Hadfield states that “with its catalogue of horrifying and brutal incidents, and series of vivid representations of appalling cruelty” Las Casas “seeks to expose” the rupture between the “the secular and the spiritual arms of the Spanish state in the Americas” (Andrew Hadfield, 1998: 92), and goes further to offer the reader in a footnote more information about the “vivid representations”, explaining that “the illustrations were not reproduced in the English translation” (1998: 92). The “illustrations” are certainly not in the English translation of 1583, but they are not to be found in the original Spanish published in 1552 either, as Hadfield suggests. And they are not even in the 1579 French translation by Jacques de Miggrode, the one used for the translation into English. In fact, fifteen years since the publication of *The Spanish Colonie* had to go by, until the brothers De Bry, in a sophisticated Latin edition of *Brevisima relacion*, which was printed in Frankfurt am Main in 1598, incorporated the “illustrations” and “vivid representations” Hadfield refers to, to las Casas’s work for the first time.

The fact that Hadfield does not realize that *The Spanish Colonie* is not a direct translation from Spanish, but from the French version of Jacques de Miggrode, is clearly expressed when he states that “the prologue to the text, faithfully translated from las Casas’s Spanish ...” (1998: 98), and later on, when mentioning the importance of “M.M.S.’s (...) faithful English reproduction of las casas’s *Brevísima Relación*” (1998: 99). But beyond the assumption that the translation into English has been done from the Spanish original –or maybe because of that assumption—what is remarkable is the way in which Hadfield mixes what could be considered as the different layers of the English version of *Brevísima relación*: the prologue to the reader, written by Jacques de Miggrode for his French version of las Casas’s work –and translated into English and other languages for their respective editions--, the prologue of the original Spanish version by Las Casas, the dispute of Valladolid, and the *Brevísima Relación* itself. There are quite a few examples in which Hadfield clearly merges these different layers. One of them is when, answering the question of why *Brevísima relación* had not been translated before 1583, he claims that “one obvious reason is stated in the preface to the translation itself” (1998: 93), and, after given a brief summary of the prologue to the reader, Hadfield claims that

“the text can be read as having an urgent European dimension, namely, a plea for the defence of the protestant low countries against the encroachments of the Spanish empire within Europe” (1998: 93). He believes that “such a reading is strengthened by the fact that the actual text of the *Brevísima Relación* is appended by a number of other relevant works; a letter from Las Casas to Philip explaining his motives in publishing his works; and a summary of the debate at Valladolid” (1998: 93). Far from being the reading intended by las Casas (for whom the main audience should have been his missionaries and Prince Philip), it seems that the reading done by Hadfield is precisely the reading that Jacques de Miggrode, the French translator, wanted Europeans to do of the *Brevísima relación*.

Another example in which Hadfield merges the different elements of the English version of *Brevísima Relación* is when, referring to comments clearly made by Las Casas about the injustice committed by the Spaniards upon the Indians and the way the former would be punished, he continues with one of the ideas expressed in the prologue by de Miggrode, “when Spain was invaded by the moors, a claim which repeats the threat that god will eventually punish the wicked, even if they succeed in the short term, made in the epistle to the reader prefacing the text” (Andrew Hadfield: 1998: 94). Hadfield mixes an idea which is used by Las Casas from the very title of *Brevísima Relación* and all along his work, the idea of destruction with its biblical resonances, which has a long and strong tradition “en la historiografía española medieval, donde se aplica con resonancias apocalípticas a la invasión musulmana” (André Saint-Lu, 2011: 27), with the idea expressed by de Miggrode in his prologue to the reader that the wicked would ultimately be punished by God, even if they succeed in the short term. Once again, the ideas of the different components of the English translation merge together in the mind of the reader. Together with the inconsistent use of terminology when referring to the different elements that assemble the English version of *Brevisima relacion*, these are only some of the many examples of ambiguity, misunderstanding, and even contradictions, to be found in the few scholars who, for one reason or another, have approached the English translation of *Brevísima relación*. Interestingly enough, however, while Hadfield does not seem to be aware of details which are quite important to understand the voyage of Las Casas’s work into English, he shows a very different attitude when dealing with Jose Acosta’s *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590). Sentences such as “Grimstone is generally a faithful translator of Acosta”, “there are no significant marginal annotations to guide the reader”, and footnotes in which details on how the direct speech of the original version has been altered into indirect speech in Montezuma’s reply (Andrew Hadfield, 1998: 110), shows how meticulous he has been in the case of Acosta’s translation into English.

All these inconsistencies may very well be a reflection of the fact that, in its history as a book, *Brevísima relación* has always been manipulated and recreated for the purpose of the publisher, the patron, or the policymaker in charge at the time. The French translation of Las Casas by Jacques de Miggrode is an essential episode in that history, not only because it was the first translation into

French, but because apart from being the model for the translations immediately undertaken in other languages, it also imposed, in a very intelligent way, a certain reading of Las Casas. A reading in which, as I have pointed out in the case of Hadfield, implies that the different texts that conform what could be seen as a perfect artefact of ideas and writings put together at different times for different purposes, merge under the almost absolute power of the omniscient voice of the narrator of the prologue. In the following pages, by focusing on the human beings behind both the first translation into French and the first translation into English of *Brevísima Relación*, as well as on the crucial prologue by Jacques de Miggrode and its power in the reader, I would try to fill some of the gaps around the ambiguities and inconsistencies already mentioned.

2. The Human beings behind the English translation

2.1. M.M.S.: The Invisible Translator

When it comes to analyse the biographical details of the people involved in the first English translation of *Brevísima Relación* of 1583, the translator himself is bound to be considered as one of the main protagonists. However, one of the most striking things when opening the translation kept at the British Library, is the apparent contradiction of what we could call a first and a second title-page. In the first title-page, we are given information about the source language the tract has been translated from, as well as the name of the Spanish author and his position: *The spanish colony, or Briefe Chronicle of the Acts and gestes of the Spaniardes in the West Indies, called the newe World, for the space of xl.yeeres written in the Castilian tongue by the reverend Bishop Bartholomew de las Casas or Casaus, a Friar of the order of S. Dominicke*. Immediately after, we get to know who the translator of the book is. Instead of a complete name, however, the reader is given three initials: And nowe first translated into English, by M.M.S. Although giving initials instead of a whole name seems to have been something common at the time, especially if the translator was a woman, in the next page, which is addressed “to the reader”, we are given information which does not coincide exactly with that of the first page. To begin with, the title is slightly different: *Spanish cruelties and tyrannies, perpetrated in the West Indies, commonly termed the newe found worlde*. Although organized in a different way, the information given after the title does not add anything new to the first page: Briefly defcribed in the Castilian Language, by the Bifhop Tryer Bartholomew de las Cafas or Cafaus, a Spaniarde of the order of Saint Dominick.

The surprise comes when the reader is given not only a complete name that has very little to do with the previous initials, but also a significant statement for a book printed in England: faithfully tranflated by Iames Aliggrodo, to ferue as a prefident and warning, to the xij, prouinces of the Iowe Countries.

In her recent PhD dissertation *Published Translations of Navigation Manuals and their Audience in the English Renaissance, 1500-1640*, Susanna L.B. De Schepper mentions briefly the 1583 English translation of Las Casas, addressing the abovementioned apparent contradiction. Since assuming that James Aligrodo is the author of the translation seems to be the easiest, but leaves us with the mystery of the initials M.M.S. and the warning to the Low Countries, De Schepper resolves the problem by “accepting Aligrodo, not as the English translator, but as the author of the paratext” in which his name appears (De Schepper, 2012: 86). She believes that the paratext does not even belong to the English translation, and that it was intended for another book, of which Aligrodo would have been the translator, *Tyrannies et cruautez des Espagnols, perpetrees es Indes Occidentales, qu'on dit Le Nouveau monde*, the French translation done by the Flemish Jacques de Migrode (De Schepper: 2012:86). Her conclusion is that the “whole address to the reader is a translation of de Migrode’s French paratext, implying that the English translator used this French version as an intermediary, rather than going to the original Spanish of Las Casas” (De Schepper: 2012:86). Her explanation, however, seems to be rather confusing, since it does not explain the real role of Aligrodo, leaving him in a kind of no man’s land, or rather no man’s language. We know that he was not the translator of the Spanish original version into French, because, as De Schepper herself states, that was done by de Migrode. The only plausible explanation is that, while M.M.S. was the translator of the tract *Brevisima relacion* from French into English, James Aligrodo was the translator of the address “to the reader” from the original French by de Migrode into English. The one thing that De Schepper does not seem to question is that M.M.S. and James Aligrodo may not be the same person. It may not even be too risky to say that they, too, have different styles when writing in English. Interestingly enough, while the translation into English of the *Brevisima* itself is always done --so long the translator does not wish to make certain changes in order to highlight or to disguise certain passages-- in a sense for sense way, the translation of the prologue “to the reader” does not always show that attitude. M.M.S. follows, no doubt, the old Ciceronian precept of rendering the source text in such a way that it makes perfect sense in the target language. Since the translations and ideas of the big translation theorists of the sixteenth century had already been published a few decades before the translation of the *Brevisima Relacion*, the concept of free or sense for sense translation would have probably been very much in used and demand at the time. In fact, we could even go farther, suggesting that James Aligrodo and Jacques de Migrode could be the same person. Although this hypothesis may be reinforced by the easy assumption that what seems to be, for instance, at the beginning of the translation into English of the prologue from the French by de Migrode, a double negation easily made by a French native speaker when writing in English, is in fact a very common structure used at Elizabethan times, that could be, as we will see later on, tricky even for the scholars dealing with that period.

De Schepper also mentions that the English translation of the *Brevisima Relacion* has been attributed to Mark Sadlington, who was a Cambridge graduate, and that the additional “M.” of the initials in the

first title-page might point to “Master” or “Magister” (De Schepper, 2012: 86-87). According to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB), in which he is recorded as a Church of England clergyman and schoolmaster, Sadlington must have been a young man –only his death in 1647 is recorded in the dictionary—at the time he undertook the translation of Las Casas- he graduated with BA in 1581 and proceeded to MA in 1584 (which would mean he was not “Magister” in 1583, when the translation was published). The first thing mentioned by the ODNB is that “a translation in 1583 of a work by Bartolome de las Casas, *Chronicle of the Acts and Gestes of the Spaniard*” (in fact, *The Spanish Colonie*), has been attributed to him, and also that The Arraignment and Execution of Eualde Ducket, alias Hanns, originally attributed to him, “is now thought to have been written by Anthony Munday” (ODNB). Interestingly enough, when one reads the 500 words entry dedicated to Mark Sadlington by the ODNB, especially if a comparison is done with the one dedicated to Anthony Munday (7,500 words) or the one to Richard Carew (2,000 words), the impression we get is that we are just given a kind of curriculum vitae of a man who does not seem to have had any big political ambition. A year after the publication of the Spanish Colonie, he became “the first and only holder” of a fellowship created at Peterhouse, where he was listed as head lecturer in 1588 and from which he resigned in 1590. In 1591 he went on to secure a position of master of St Olave’s Free Grammar School in Southwark and in 1594 he was admitted as perpetual curate of All Hallows-the-Less. On 2 October 1588, however, Sadlington, who according to the same source “perhaps shortly after resigning his fellowship married Jane, of whom nothing is known except that she survived him”, was supported by none other than Sir Francis Walsingham (20,695 words in the ODNB), who “wrote to the corporation of Colchester, Strongly recommending Sadlington’s appointment as master of the grammar school there (ODNB).

2.2. Sir Francis Walsingham: the man of state

Francis Walsingham, principal secretary between 1581 and 1553, nick named by Elizabeth I “the Moor” --which according to the ODNB “marks he’s admission into what was the true elite of Elizabethan England, the queen’s intimates”—was certainly one of the most powerful men of his time. According to William Camden, a prominent historian of the seventeenth century, Walsingham was, together with Burghley, one of the “pillars of the Elizabethan State” (ODNB). He describes him as someone “with the interests of the realm at heart” (ODNB). “Protestantism, a vigorous foreign policy, exploration and empire, suppression of Catholicism in England, destruction of Mary, queen of Scots, union of Scotland and England, and the necessity of espionage” (ODNB), are some of the causes in which he believed. By 1571 Walsingham, who also believed Spain was the biggest threat to England interests, had become very much involved in the plan devised by the supporters of William of Orange and the Huguenots, in which an alliance between England, France and the protestant princes of

Germany would support a revolt against Phillip II's strong man in the Netherlands, the Duke of Alba. Once the Spaniards had been driven out, the territory would be divided between the allies (ODNB).

It is difficult to say whether Francis Walsingham was involved in any way in the commission of the translation and publication of *The Spanish Colonie*. The small tract, however, a repertoire of all the atrocities the catholic Spaniards were committing in the name of the king and in the name of religion, recounted by Las Casas, a catholic and a Spaniard himself, came certainly as a formidable battle horse in the fight for some of the causes Francis Walsingham devoted himself to: the safeguard of Protestantism, the abolition of Catholicism in England (and beyond), and the expansion of an empire whose main enemy had become too strong both in the old continent and in the appealing new world.

What is there in common between Sadlington, who seems to have moved within the reduce space of everyday family and working life, and Francis Walsingham, one of the most influential and powerful aristocrats of the Elizabethan court? When trying to answer the question it is almost inevitable not to think of the translation of the *Brevisima Relacion* as the most plausible reason for the relation between the two men. By supporting his candidature for the post, Walsingham seems to have shown loyalty to the invisible translator whose complete full name does not even appear in the first English edition of Las Casas. In this respect, it is interesting to notice the definition given by the ODNB in its own webpage as "the national record of men and women who have shaped British history and culture, worldwide, from the Romans to the 21st century". The translation of the *Brevisima Relacion* seems to have been much more than a mere translation, and Walsingham, the most visible of all men in the political arena of the time, did not seem to forget the great service that the grammar school master, still as a student in 1583, did to his country when translating one of the most useful political weapons in the war of propaganda against Spain.

Although there is not much work available dealing with the translation of the French version of Las Casas into English, the tendency observed is that those authors who have devoted their effort to the subject show a certain inclination to approach the English translation of *Brevisima Relacion*, as if the prologue "to the reader" had been written by the English translator, James Aligrodo/M.M.S. When comparing *The Spanish Colonie* of 1583 with the translation into French by Jacques de Migrode, it is clear that the English translation, with certain changes (either by changing or by ignoring something in the text) used the French translation to render the text into the English language. This is not something extraordinary or unusual in anyway, since, at the time we are dealing with, the two most familiar foreign languages in England were French and Latin.

The prologue of *The Spanish Colonie* is also a direct translation; in fact a very faithful translation of the prologue "Au Lecteur" of the French version by de Migrode. The words of the prologue, a fascinating and revealing piece of writing, should therefore not been attributed to the English

translator. Although James Aligrodo/M.M.S. may very well have felt the words of de Miggrode as his own, since they reflect in a very explicit way a disdain against Spain and its foreign policy both in the old continent and in the new world. Any attempt to study and understand the only edition of *The Spanish Colonie* would be therefore incomplete without looking into the figure of the extremely elusive Jacques de Miggrode.

While looking for the invisible M.M.S. is a task rewarded when we come across the significant link between Mark Sadlington and Francis Walsingham, who supported the former in the letter of recommendation, Jacques de Miggrode is a much more difficult character to trace down. Paradoxically, although his complete name is known, the only source we seem to have to understand what Ortega y Gasset called the man and his circumstance is his own translation of *Brevisima Relacion*, with all the small and big changes that he inflicted to the original version of Las Casas. But above all, his own writing, the texts that he incorporated to his French version. By adding his own writings to a book by another author –and therefore with a different circumstance—de Miggrode changed the original version of Las Casas, making *Brevisima Relacion* somehow a work of his own.

3. Jacques de Miggrode or the translator as creator.

3.1. The construction of the perfect Renaissance artefact

As seen in the introduction, *Brevisima Relacion* had been originally a complaint viva voce of the *afrendas* committed by the Spanish in the new world and that the Dominican friar put in writing at the request of the junta where the complaint had been made, and presented probably as a manuscript to prince Philip in 1542 in Valencia. It was originally a cry against the crimes and injustice being committed beyond the ocean in the name of the king, and was presented to the highest authorities in the conviction that they could do something to change the situation. This original intention, full of hope and trust in his own people, became in the hands of de Miggrode not only a horrible repertoire of all the cruelties and torments Spaniards were able to perpetrate using God and fatherland as an excuse, but also another cry, as firm as the one by Las Casas, but not addressed to the Spanish authorities to change the situation in the new world, but to the citizens of the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries, to whom he dedicates the translation (or rather the whole book) urging them to awake and to confront the enemy.

By incorporating his own preface to the reader, a sonnet, and an epilogue entitled “Le tranlateur” to his translation, in which he also adds subtle but extremely significant changes to the original, de Miggrode makes of *Brevisima Relacion* something of his own. This becomes quite apparent from the dedication to the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries, for we do not really know whether what de Miggrode is dedicating to them is the translation or the book itself.

The originality of having forged a hybrid made of the recollection of “afrentas a los indios” narrated by Las Casas and his own perception of the reality through his own writing seems to have had a positive and decisive effect in the translation of *Brevisima Relacion* into other Languages, since most of them, beginning with *The Spanish Colonie*, uses de Miggrode’s prologue “To the reader”. This is also the case of the first German translation of 1597 (Juan Duran Luzio, 1992), in which not only the translation by de Miggrode, but the entire artefact put together by him, is used by the German translator as a base: it has the same prologue, “In den Leser”, as well as the sonnet and the epilogue, “Der Dolmetscher an den Leser”.

The English translation of 1583, which contains the prologue to the reader, does not contain, however, either the sonnet, which comes after the prologue and before the epilogue by Fray Bartolome in the French translation, nor the epilogue, “Le translateur”. Not to consider them, even if it is briefly, and even if both the sonnet and the epilogue are not present in the English translation, would certainly result in a poor research, since the voice of M.M.S./James Aligrodo in the prologue “to the reader” of *The Spanish Colonie* is in fact the voice of Jacques de Miggrode filtered through the English translation. Furthermore, the epilogue “Le translateur”, together with the prologue, is most likely to be the only source we have to be able to get a grasp of who the man and his circumstance were. As in the case of Mark Sadlington, Jacques de Miggrode did much more than a translation from Spanish into French. By putting together *Tyrannies et Cruautez des Espagnols*, he created a very powerful weapon in the cause of the revolt against Spain’s hegemony in the Low Countries. In fact, he had gone far beyond: he had served in a silver plate what in the political and social context of England in 1583 and in the hands of the intelligentsia of principal secretary Francis Walsingham, was to become one of the most sophisticated instruments in the struggle to gain a share in the Spanish dominated new world.

3.2. Le translateur: the intricacies of the translator’s work

Although the epilogue “Le translateur” is placed by de Miggrode at the end of his translation of *Brevisima Relacion*, it offers the reader invaluable information about the translator himself. It makes sense, therefore, to start analysing his original writing with this piece, placed by de Miggrode at the end of the *Brevisima* and before the other three treatises by Las Casas also translated by him. The first thing revealed by the translator is that he had already started translating Las Casas not in French, but in “Brabanconne”, when suddenly, “estoit achevé de traduire, estant prest a ester imprimé; voicy venir en mes mains le mesme traicté en langue Brabanconne” (page 142 in the original). By what he says, de Miggrode seems to have had access almost by chance to what must have been the first translation done not only into Dutch, but into any language, printed either in Brussels or in Antwerp in 1578 (Juan Duran Luzio, 1992). De Miggrode does not seem to be disappointed by this finding. On the opposite, he seems to have been relieved from a task he had already gone one third through:

...oultre mon Esperance; & toutesfois a mon tresgrand contentement, pour me voir deschargé du reste de la mesme version Brabanconne ou Flamengue, de laquelle i en auoye desia fait un tiers; desirant aussi servir au public en ma langue, apres qu'auroye fait ce qui me sembloit estre le plus expedient ou necessaire; qui estoit de tourner premierement lesdites tyrannies en tel langage, qui est le plus usité & cognu de ceux la qui cherchent d'apprendre & cognoistre quelque chose par lecture (page 142 in the original).

Apart from revealing a certain position or privilege that allows him to see a copy of a book before being printed, de Miggrode puts forward not only his linguistic skills and abilities to move freely in a few different languages, but also that his language, and we can only assume he means his mother tongue, is French. This information is useful to place him, or at least to reduce the margin of possibilities in which he could be placed, within what no doubt must have been at the time the complicated political, social, and linguistic jigsaw of the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries he addresses. Furthermore, it sparks the question of why did he not translate Las Casas in French in the first place, especially taking into account, as he puts it, that French was the language of culture and the one people engaged with when they had the desire to learn or acquire information in a more sophisticated way. To have started the translation into “Brabanconne”, and not into his own language, which also seems to have been the lingua franca of the Low Countries, is a very significant act. An act, however, that becomes clearer in the light of what he says in the prologue, in which he calls for the union of the seventeen provinces, criticising those who seem to have shown a maverick attitude, either by not getting involved in the common cause of the entire region, or by taking positions which go off that very common cause. The audience he addresses in “langue Brabanconne” seems to have been, therefore, the one that these first translators of Las Casas –including the francophone de Miggrode– had an especial desire to reach. Taking into account that between 1578 and 1664 there are fifteen translations into that language (André Saint-Lu, 2011: 60), we can only assume that, making sure the Dutch could read in their own language the “tyrannies” that Spaniards were able to perpetrate was very much in the political agenda of the time.

Another important statement made by de Miggrode is that, in spite of being tired of writing about and listening to “m’ennuyant d’escrire & ouir tant & tant defois, des choses si tristes” (page 142 in the original), he decided to go on with the translation of another three works by Las Casas “du mesme argument” (page 142 in the original) contained in “& que i auoye en un mesme volume” (page 142 in the original). The tyranny et craute contained another three Works by Las Casas, as does the original Spanish version; one of them the crucial *El octavo en orden es el siguiente*, also known as *Octavo remedio*, in which Las Casas demanded the abolition of what had been from the beginning of the Spanish colonial Enterprise the cornerstone of the political and administrative system.

The reason for doing so, as he explains, is because although the other three tretises “ausi consistent les autres trois traictés le plus en disputes, & en allegations Latines, tirees du droict escript & des Saintes lettres; du vieti & nouveau Testament; & de Saints Peres, & des Docteurs scholasticques: Toutes

lesquelles choses, outre leur prolixité, on ne pouvoit bonnement faire servir a tous hommes” (pages 142-143), “ladite copie Brabanconne contient ausi quelques autres choses fidelement extraictes & tirées de deux traictés des trois susdis” (page 143). De Miggrode highlights the fact that he is not only translating from the original Spanish source, using a volume in which these three other works are contained, but also that he wishes “faisans bie a nostre propos; pour me conformer aucunement a ladite copie a fin de ne rendre nos peines & bons desseings suspects a qui pourroit voir une telle diversité de copies” (page 143). By making so explicit that having different copies or permutations of copies of the same book, could awake suspicion of “nos peines”, “our sorrows” and “bon desseings”, “good intentions”, he is putting forward what seems to have been an important issue for the editors involved in the translation and adaptation of *Brevisima Relacion* from the first translation into Dutch to the sophisticated editions by de Bry and others.

De Miggrode uses the epilogue to explain the intricacies of his labour, the decisions he had to make from the very beginning, when he had to confront the fact that the translation into “brabanconne” had already been done and was soon to be available. Unlike the natural disappointment any translator would probably feel when someone else has completed the translation of a book in which he has been working and of which a third has been completed, he does not seem to be disturbed in anyway, all the opposite, and goes on to undertake the translation into the language that the culture community uses. He is, however, very subtle in the way he puts it: “Which is the most used and known by those who wish to acquire knowledge by reading”. But, above all, the epilogue gives him the opportunity to express the necessity to explain the way in which the work by Las Casas does not consist only of the *Brevisima*, but of other works “that our author has done of the same theme”. Interestingly enough, the same year the translation of the *Brevisima* appears in German. It does not only follow de Miggrode’s translation, but contains also the prologue, the sonnet, and the epilogue, being therefore a perfect mirror image of the French version into the German language. By 1579 Las Casas has been translated into the three main languages of the Low Countries –Dutch, French, and German- and de Miggrode seems to have played a fundamental role in setting the main lines of the infrastructure that the work by Las Casas was to follow in order to give it a solid credible foundation. In this editorial enterprise to make available Las Casas in the three main languages of the Low Countries, de Miggrode seems to have occupied the role of middle person, looking at the work of the previous translator –whose translation he had access before the book was printed- and making sure that his own translation and assembly of the book is not very different from the one in Dutch. At the end of the epilogue, he explains that he has also added some prologues and epilogues which were originally written by “our author” and doctor Gines de Sepulveda, “Lequel Sepulveda auoit voulu defendre & excuser lesdites tyrannies des espagnols ; & contre qui les deux desdicts trois traictés ont esté expressement escrits” (page 143). De Miggrode is referring to the famous controversy that, as mentioned in the introduction, took place in Valladolid, an event that must have trespassed the Spanish frontiers and that must have

stimulated the interest of a debate in which, using the old Aristotelian and scholastic paradigms of the old world, the identity of the people of the new world was being put into question by one of the most influential scholars of the time, Juan Ginés de Sepulveda. By doing so, there is no doubt de Miggrode was also doing something else: he was giving credibility to his own translation. At the same time, as we can also see in the prologue, the use of the plural contributes to get the reader involved in what seems to be presented as a project in which all the people of the Low Countries should get together.

De Miggrode completes the epilogue with the following words:

Ces seules prefaces ou prologues donneront sommairement, mais suffisamment a entendre le contenu desdits traictés & tout cd qui s'est autrefois solemnelement passé en Espagne, y tenant la main l'empereur mesme, a fin de conserver & maintenir en repos & bonne paix les Indiens qui restoyent: soing & estude vrayement digne d'un Prince si magnanime, si sage & si clement, comme a esté cognu par tout le monde l'Empereur Chalres le Quint de bonne & louable memorie (page 144).

At first sight the words praying the emperor Charles the V may seem somehow puzzling. By doing so, however, de Miggrode is at the same time not praying –not even mentioning in any way- Prince Philip, who at the time de Miggrode translated the book, in 1579, had been Philip II for twenty three years, and not the young prince to whom Las Casas dedicated his *Brevisima Relacion*. While the former was very likely to be remembered in the Low Countries and was probably seen as one of their own –after all, he was born in Ghent and did not even speak Castilian when he arrived in Spain in 1517- the latter may have been seen as a distant monarch, who would have control of the destinies of his subjects from El Escorial, without ever travelling to the places under his domain, without being able to speak any of the languages of the Low Countries, but, above all, a monarch under whose jurisdiction the counter-reformation had reached its highest level of severity. El tribunal de la sangre, for instance, an extreme measure to suffocate any intention of independence and also a way to reaffirm the supremacy of the most traditional side of Catholicism, had been installed in 1568, ten years before the first translation into Dutch was completed. Taking into consideration the historical context, highlighting the figure of Carlos V, who was probably a more moderate monarch when it came to religious matters, is a very significant act, that contributes to undermine a figure whose presence, at the time the translation appeared, must have been not only an unavoidable but also an omniscient one. But, as mentioned, considering the tract had been dedicated to who was at the time a young prince in charge of all issues related to the new world, the omission is even more significant.

4. The prologue: To the reader

4.1. The voyage from French into English

Although, as mentioned above, the prologue entitled “to the reader” in the first English edition and translation of *The Spanish Colonie* (1583) is in fact a translation of the prologue “Au Lectour” written by Jacques de Miggrode for his French translation of Las Casas in 1579, the general tendency of the few scholars who have dealt with *The Spanish Colonie*, has been to identify James Aliggrodo/M.M.S. not just as the translator of the prologue, but as the author himself. De Miggrode’s idea of incorporating his own prologue –as well as the other two texts- in his translation, explaining why and how he had come to translate Las Casas tract, was certainly a superb one. His explanations, as well as his criteria to add the other writings of las casas which had also been added to the previous Dutch translation –and ultimately to the German translation the same year de Miggrode published the French one- made of him a kind of coordinator of the translation of las casas in the linguistic area of the Low Countries, given all the translations a coherence and congruity de Miggrode thought was fundamental for the credibility of “their good cause”. Whether what seems to have been a perfectly coordinated editorial strategy happened by chance and due to the good sixth sense of de Miggrode when switching from “brabanconne” to French, or whether it was something premeditated, we do not have enough evidence. In any case, the coherence implemented to what seems to be a very delicate artefact, and the awareness of credibility put forward by de Miggrode, was undoubtedly to be transferred, together with the prologue, to the translation done on the other side of the channel by James Aliggrodo/M.M.S.

While in the case of the epilogue “the translator”, which does not appear in *The Spanish Colonie*, its reading and commentary can only be undertaken using the 1579 French original by de Miggrode, when it comes to the prologue “Au lectour”, we find that it has not only been translated, but very faithfully rendered into English. A comparison between the French original source and the English target text reveals the good skills of the English translator who, only in few occasions, for reasons which are not easy to see at first sight, decided to leave aside part of what we find in the original version. The importance conceded to the prologue by de Miggrode can be seen even before the reader, to whom the piece is addressed, engages in the reading of the book. By skimming through the first pages, one of the first details that catch our attention is that the prologue by the translator is even longer than the two prologues by Las Casas, the *epitome* and the dedication to Philip II. Most important, however, is the fact that the prologue, a very well constructed piece of writing, also contains what, at the time of an early second generation reformists, must have been a very powerful message. The prologue “to the reader”, therefore, contributes to overshadow the prologues by Las Casas in more than the length, conditioning the reader to read a book that could very well have been conceived as a tract for the education of a prince, to a mere recollection of the atrocities committed by his subjects.

4.2. The bible, its references, and the power of the word

When talking about the novel by Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, which takes place at the end of the nineteenth century, Adorno used to remark that the problem for a modern reader is that the musical culture contained in it, and which was available to any cultivated reader of that period, was not the same anymore for a modern reader in the years after the second world war, when the novel came out. When reading the prologue by de Miggrode, written no doubt for a reformist audience surrounded by the culture of the bible, a contemporary reader may very well find himself with the same problem addressed by Adorno, but in biblical terms. Certainly, one of the impressions after reading and comparing the original prologue and the English version, is that the bible is looked at as an authority on its own right, from which examples could be taken so that they could serve “as a mirror” to understand a myriad of aspects in the everyday life of human beings, from life and death to good and evil, from joy and sorrow to even, as de Miggrode expresses in the prologue, the understanding of the turmoil events which were taking place in the Low Countries at the time he was translating *Brevisima relacion*. Apart from the well documented information the author possesses about both ancient and modern history, as well as what would have been at the time contemporary issues, one of the main characteristics of the prologue, which is bound to call the attention of any modern reader, is the extraordinary abundance of biblical references displayed along the text. Although an in-depth exegesis of the biblical sources used by de Miggrode, would take a kind of culture that not even scholars approaching the prologue seem always to possess, and would probably be a dissertation of its own, the biblical examples used by the Flemish translator are certainly very significant and extremely useful, since they help us to understand the way in which de Miggrode –and by extension also the English translator—saw himself and his people, whom he was calling for unity, before the Spanish invader.

As mentioned, the prologue is much more than an introduction to the work of Las Casas. From the rhetorical point of view, it is a thoroughly forged document, in which the way the message is presented becomes as important as the message itself. This way of developing the prologue, contributes no doubt to reinforce the content. Jonathan Hart makes a very interesting point when he observes that, in the sentence that introduces the prologue, a kind of golden rule, which by itself has a very biblical flavour, “the unidentified English translator sees his work as prophetic warning: Happie is hee whome other mens harness doe make to beware”(2013: 48). And then continues to state that “in the tradition of biblical prophecy, this prophet begins with “Gods iudgementes”. Only “mans wisdom”, and not the power of angels, is able to enter the depth of these judgments”. (2013: 48)

The prologue, which seems to be divided in three parts, begins with the reference from the Old Testament mentioned by Jonathan Hart: “Gods iudgementes are fo profound as mans wifdome, no not the power of Angels is able to enter into their depth”. The sentence, however, should not be understood in the way Hart seems to understand it, namely, that while the power of angels is not enough to understand the judgments of God, man’s wisdom is able to do so. On the contrary, what the

biblical sentence states is that neither the wisdom of men, nor the power of angels is able to understand God's judgments. Although the analysis and observations done by Hart are extremely useful, the misunderstanding of this sentence, either because of the confusion of the double negation in Elizabethan English, or because of the lack of biblical knowledge I mentioned above, could lead to a complete misreading of the prologue. What seems to be a somehow obscure biblical allusion thrown at the reader for no apparent reason from the very beginning, is retaken exactly half way through the prologue to give him a (rhetorical) answer of why God has let Spaniards get away with everything they have done. In other words, beginning the prologue in medias res does give the author, ultimately, the opportunity to highlight his point in a kind of rhetorical crescendo which reaches its highest level when the parallelism between the denunciation of the atrocities committed by the Spaniards in the new world and the atrocities committed by them in the Low Countries, is drawn. Furthermore, the biblical sentence that implies the inscrutability of God's will, is used a third time towards the end of the prologue, once de Miggrode has prepared, as we would see, his readers for the ultimate message of his prologue.

Three steps can therefore be observed in the way de Miggrode builds his prologue, and his argument, and the biblical sentence mentioned serves as a kind of leitmotif, that helps to introduce each of these three steps, which ultimate message is get together, stop fighting among yourself, and fight the Spaniards to the death. After the first time the biblical quotation is used, the extremely skilful de Miggrode addresses the reader directly, in what could almost be visualized as a reformist preacher addressing his audience from the pulpit:

Thou shalt (frendly Reader) in this discourse beholde so many millions of me put to death, as harly there have been so many spaniardes procreated into this worlde since their first fathers the Gothes inhabited their Countries, either since their second progenitors the Sarazens expelled and murdered the most part of the Gothes, as it seemth that the spaniardes have murdered and put to death in the Westerne Indies by all such meanes as barbarousnesse it selfe could imagine or forge upon the anueld of crueltie.

The information given is certainly more than enough not only to awake the interest of the reader, but also to shock him with the dimensions of a massacre in which "They (the Spaniards) have destroyed thrise so much lande as christendome doth comprehend". And therefore, "the posteritie shall hardly thinke that ever so barbarous or cruell a nation have bin in the worlde, if as you woulde say we had not with our eyes seene it, and with our hands felt it". As Jonathan Hart (2013: 49) puts it, "the translator/author has the reader join him as a friend in his opposition to Spanish cruelty". However, by making the connection between the atrocities committed in the new world and the "we" that has seen "with our eyes" and felt "with our hands", he is actually doing much more. He is building a bridge between what is happening in the far domains of the Spaniards, on the other side of the ocean, and the situation at home, where they are showing the same "barbarity and cruelty, the two characteristics he

attributes repeatedly to the Spanish” (Jonathan Hart, 2013: 49). Within the first lines of the prologue, de Miggrode manages not only to get the reader join him, but in a very subtle way he is able to make the reader condescend with him about the situation in the Low Countries. In this way, using the best tools of rhetoric, de Miggrode prepares the terrain. He confesses not to have loved the Spanish nation in general, “by reason of their intollerable pride” but, at the same time, he makes very clear that, having God as his witness, “hatred procureth me not to write those things, as also the author of the booke is by nation a Spaniard, and besides writeth farre more bitterly then my selfe”. Once again, as we saw in the epilogue “the translator”, credibility is paramount for de Miggrode, and he is very careful not to let the reader think that he is writing out of hatred. In a perfectly thought circular arrangement, he would finish the prologue by retaking the figure of the author to invoke the reader to read him.

4.3. Jacques de Miggrode: the artist behind the preacher

In what in the prologue of the English translation is clearly another paragraph, de Miggrode goes on to explain the two reasons that have made him published the “preface”, not without first dedicating it to “all the provinces of the Lowe countreys”:

The one, to the end, awaking theselus out of their sleep, may begin to thinke upon Gods iudgements : and refraine from their wickednes and vice. The other, that they may also consider with what enemie they are to deale, and so to heholde as it were in a picture or table, what stay they are like to bee at, when through their rechlesnesse, quarrels, controversies, and partialities themselves have opened the way to such an enemie : and what they may looke for.

To understand this important passage of the prologue –and the prologue as a whole-- in which de Miggrode gives his reasons for writing, also making visible for the first time his adherence to the reformist side of Catholicism, the concise introduction to the Dutch and Flemish painting of the 16th-17th centuries exhibition of the National Gallery of Art in Washington and available on line has been extremely useful. The exhibition is presented within the historical background of the “religious and political turmoil in the 1500s” (National Gallery of Art, 2013: online) that lead ultimately to the division of the Low Countries in different states. While the northernmost part of what de Miggrode refers to as the 17 provinces, had broken away from “Spanish control” in 1568 to become later on, in 1579 --the year the prologue and the translation were published— the Dutch Republic, a small “political entity” “which was still suffering from the effects of a long and arduous war with Spain”, and a “centre of Protestantism”(National Gallery of Art, 2013: online), the Southern part of the Low Countries, Flanders, with Antwerp as the main city, remained under the authority of Spain. In turn, the political division conditioned and drew the main lines of the artistic manifestations in these two regions. While Flemish artists “such as Rubens and Van Dyck glorified the Church and monarch with grandiose themes”, “the United Netherlands became a republic populated mainly by Calvinists”,

where protestant artists “like Rembrandt, conveyed morals and religious messages through concealed symbolism in landscapes, still lifes, and scenes of daily life” (National Gallery of Art, 2013: online)

In what no doubt is a very intelligent and attractive way to seduce his audience, the Flemish translator appeals to what can be characterized as two of the most significant aspects that all the provinces must have had in common, and that up to a certain degree, in spite of the linguistic and cultural differences between them, must have contributed to give them some cohesion: a moralizing position towards life, apparent in the way he addresses the readers in letting them know what they should expect if they don't observe their behaviour, and an extraordinary tradition of painting that, since the beginning of the 16th century –with figures like Hieronymus Bosh-- had been gaining strength and was to reach, “in the early 17th century”, under the names of the artists above mentioned, “one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of the visual arts” (National Gallery of Art, 2013: online).

While the former characteristic would take shape as de Miggrode builds his speech, the latter one is to be noticed from the beginning of the prologue, when de Miggrode addresses the reader not by using a verb such as “to read”, or even “to hear”, but “to beholde”: “thou shalt (frendly Reader) in this discourse beholde...” This taste for the visual becomes quite evident when he gives his reasons for writing the preface. He wants his readers to be aware of the kind of enemy they are dealing with, and the best way to do that is by obliging them to open their eyes, and see, as if it was a “picture” or “table” they were contemplating, the state they could reach if they did not get together in the common cause. After given such a vivid image of the atrocities committed by the Spaniards in the first lines of the preface, this is, however, the first time in the prologue in which, without explicitly using the name Spaniards, it is quite apparent that they are the common enemy of the Low Countries. The preface reaches at this point a kind of knot which would be disentangled by the moralizer who admonishes his people for their wrong doings, and, at the same time, by the artist, who, beyond rendering a book into his language, would put together, in the best Flemish tradition, a sort of landscape after the battle that should oblige them to react about the situation. Interestingly enough, this “picture” or “table” de Miggrode intends to paint, and which has very little to do with the “glorification of church and monarch” (Washington Gallery of Art, 2013: online) expected in the occupied city of Antwerp, was published, however, as we can see in the licence privilege of the first page, following all the legal necessary steps.

4.4. The theological debates: Around, and beyond Good and Evil

Embroidering the characteristics mentioned with an interesting display of biblical as well as ancient and modern history, de Miggrode introduces the reader in the theological debate of whether God “will graunt victorie to the righth, and will overthrowe the wicked” or, as others think, “that is unposible for the wicked to gette the upper hande in an evil cause”. At this point, while exemplifying the first

position, in which he uses the episode of Job, the English translator introduces the first amendment we find in the prologue when compared with the original french, by adding: “Where they concluded that for that Iob was afflicted, undoubtedly he was wicked”. This addition, however, does not seem to be done in order to alter the content, but in order to make the example clearer: since God punishes the bad and rewards the good, then Job must have been among the bad and that is why he is suffering. To demolish the logic of this position, de Miggrode goes beyond Job’s paradox –being used at about the same time by Fray Luis de Leon in *El Libro de Job*—and gives examples that make clear that God “sendeth no affliction but the wicked , as if hee aide not his crosse also upon the good: as Iob, the Prophetes, and Maryres: yea, his owne sonne Iesus Christ, and that for the mortifying of the fleshe, and more and more to quicken man in good living”. To support his argument, he adds the episode of Saint Paul, who was condemned to have the serpent around his hand after having survived a shipwreck off the island of Malta, an image the inhabitants of the emerging marine power must have been very accustomed to see not only in pictures, but also in real life. The second theological position gives de Miggrode the possibility of taking a step further the admonition he had already began in the first paragraph. Although there is a strong believe that the bad would never triumph upon the good, de Miggrode admits that “notwithstanding wee dayly see it fail out contrary”, and gives the example of the victories and conquest of the Turks over Christendom, that “have no foundation, but consist upon mere tyrannie and usurpation, for although Christians sinnes, especially the great abuse in Gods service, have bin the causes of our punishment”. The admonition acquires more and more consistency as the prologue advances, at the same time that the historical background that had made the situation get to the present point, as well as the biblical episodes chosen, also acquired a very significant and personal touch. He refers to “such a flock of Sarazins, that they devoured first Egipt, then all Affrick, & rooting out Christianitie out of the said countries seized upon al Spaine : yea proceeding forward”, and how they would have taken possession “so upone the rest of christedom, had not God raised up that mightie Duke of Brabant, Charles Martel, who defeating them, drive them beyond the Pirenean mountains”.

When discussing the historical reference at the beginning of the prologue, Jonathan Hart remarks that the “translator/author (...) asserts the crime of Spain and represents its bloody history, including the Goths’ suffering under the Sarazens, which pales beside the Spanish killing and devastation in the new world. M.M.S. admits a possible motivation for their barbarity and cruelty ...as if to tempt the reader into seeing it as a justification for that behaviour and then to dismiss it by way of a comparison that shows that they have destroyed an area more than three times the size of Christendom ...” (2013: 49). However, beyond the suggestive game of tempting and dismissing the reader suggested by Hart, it is difficult not to see a relation between what the “sarrazens”, “before the coming of the Turkes, namely soone after the time of Mahamet” had done, and what the Spaniards, whose second fathers, after all, were the sarracens, were doing not only in the new world, but also in Europe. If the parallelism

between the Spaniards and the Sarrazens is not explicit enough in the historical background offered by de Migrode, he is much more explicit in the next biblical episode, in which he describes the enemy taking control of the small towns near Jerusalem, putting the region under siege, and “the K. and the princes of Iuda had no more left then but the bare walles of Hierusalem”. The comment that, as a kind of moral, the author sends the reader after the biblical reference, is more than explicit: “yet were not gods people free from suffereing much, and from seeing the enemie enjoy the most part of their law : their comons did beare that wich nowe we know, & more then we would, that is what an enemy entring by force of armes into a land is able to do”. De Migrode does not only withdraw a parallelism between the city of Jerusalem being under siege and a situation that the author himself may very well have witnessed in the Low Countries, with the sack of Antwerp by Requesens, and later on with the triumph of Juan de Austria in the battle of Grenoble, a year before the prologue was written, (Juan Duran Luzio, 1992), but, as a kind of final but precise brushwork of the biblical episode, withdraw an unmistakable resemblance between the Israelites and the people of the Low Countries, who, in the artist’s palate, seem to become another chosen people of God.

The battles and victories of Nabucodonosor, with the desolation left behind in a kind of Masada that highlights even more the suffering of the Israelites, helps de Migrode introduce the key question: “who is hee therefore that dare accuse God of wrong, sith such tyrants be called the Axe in the Lordes hands, as the executioners of his iustice? Further wee see, that those that have the most right are by the wicked robbed, slaine, & murdered, which is nevertheless Gods doing. For it is said: Cursed be he that doth the Lordes Worke negligently, in which place the holy scriptures do speake of such ministers and instruments of God”.

At this point, Harts perseveres in misreading the leitmotif of the prologue: “It does take wisdom to see God’s judgment, which is the attempt M.M.S. is making as he builds up to his moral: “Those that have the most right are by the wicked robbed, slaine, and murdered, which is neverthelese Gods doing”. Doing God’s work negligently is another theme” (2013: 50)

In fact, as we can see when de Migrode –and by extension M.M.S.-- quotes for the third time the biblical reference used at the beginning of the prologue, what he seems to be building is a very different moral from the one mentioned by Hart. A moral which is presented by the preacher and by the artist in a perfectly logic discourse, first by taken from the bible the images and elements that lay the foundations of his argument: God uses the wicked as an axe to take revenge for his disobedience, but also as a way to test the good. Therefore, although man’s wisdom is not enough to understand God’s judgment, our only option is to accept it. However, in the same way that Pilatus should not be forgiven, even if he is a mere instrument, they should not forgive the Spaniards, neither for what they are doing in the new world, nor for what they are doing in the Low Countries. The people of the 17 provinces, who have failed to fulfil the common cause of a reformist church and the political union of

the territory, seem to be suffering the same fate as the chosen people of God. The “ministers” he is referring to in the above quotation are the ones that, as he is doing, would admonish them for their wrong doing. The prophetic drive that Hart sees at the beginning of the prologue is connected to the end of it when the artist presents another “table” painted by a Spaniard “who has the courage to accuse his people”, and in which, as in a painting by Brugel, they can see even more devastation and desolation.

5. Conclusion

In this work I have tried to look at the different aspects that could bring some light and understanding to the translation into English of one of the most interesting figures, and one of the most interesting books, of the sixteenth century. An unexpected surprise, however, when looking for information about the translation of Las Casas into English, is that there is not a lot done in that particular field. Since Las Casas is probably one of the best known characters associated to the new world and his fight for justice and equality, it would almost be assumed that a bigger amount of research had been undertaken. While the literature about him and his life seems to be substantial, though not always rigorous, the translations of his work, especially the most famous one, into English, seem to have been neglected by scholars until very recently, and when they approach it, they do so as a way to get somewhere else. This is the case of Andrew Hadfield, who, as seen in the introduction, puts forward very interesting ideas, especially when it comes to understand the role *Brevisima relacion* played within the fight of the emerging European powers in the colonial enterprise of America. It is quite remarkable, however, that Hadfield puts forward misunderstandings and assumptions which are normally part of the topics about Las Casas, such as the believe that the Spanish publication of *Brevisima relacion* was done with the pictures used by the De Bry brothers at the end of the sixteenth century, almost fifty years after *Brevisima* was published in Seville, for very different reasons as the ones pointed out by Hadfield. More interesting is the fact that his reading of *Brevisima* is the reading de Migrode would have liked his readers to do. This is the reason why I have tried to give a good background of Las Casas and the historical context in which he had to move. Without such a background, and without knowing that *Brevisima relacion* was a kind of rhetorical incentive intended in many ways to activate the other pieces of writing, we take the risk of believing that Las Casas would have allowed his tract to be published with images.

All these inconsistencies may very well be a reflection of the fact that, in its history as a book, *Brevisima relacion* has always been manipulated and recreated for the purpose of the publisher, the patron, or the policymaker in charge at the time. The French translation of Las Casas by Jacques de Migrode, on which I focus in the second half of my work, is an essential episode in that history, not

only because it was the first translation into what must have been an important language of culture, but because apart from being the model for the translations immediately undertaken in other languages, it also imposed, in a very intelligent way, a certain reading of Las Casas. A reading in which, as I have pointed out in the case of Hadfield, implies that the different texts that conform what could be seen as a perfect artefact of ideas and writings put together at different times for different purposes, merge under the almost absolute power of the omniscient voice of the narrator of the prologue.

Bibliographical references

- Durán Luzio, J. (1992) El asombro ante el horror: El primer traductor francés de la Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias, de Bartolomé de las Casas. *Revista de estudios hispánicos*, 1992 (19), 81-94.
- De las Casas, B. (1583) *The spanish colony, or Briefe Chronicle of the Acts and gestes of the Spaniardes in the West Indies, called the newe World, for the space of xl.yeeres written in the Castilian tongue by the reverend Bishop Bartholomew de las Casas or Casaus, a Friar of the order of S. Dominicke*. General Reference Collection G.7104. British Library.
- De las Casas, B. (1579) *Tyrannies et cruauitez des Espagnols, perpetrees es Indes Occidentales, qu'on dit Le Nouveau monde*. General Reference Collection 1446.a.2. British Library.
- De Schepper, S. L. B. (2012) *Published Translations of Navigation Manuals and their Audience in the English Renaissance, 1500-1640*. PhD. University of Warwick, Centre for the Study of the Renaissance.
- Hart, J. (2013) *Textual imitation: making and seeing in literature*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mancall, P. C. (2007) *Hakluyt's promise: an Elizabethan's obsession for an English American*. New Heaven, Yale University press.
- Martínez Torrejón, J. M. (2006) *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias de Fray Bartolomé de las Casas*. Universidad de Alicante.
- National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. (2013) *Dutch and Flemish painting of the 16th – 17th centuries*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/dutch.shtm> [Accessed 01 September 2013].
- Saint-Lu, A. (2011) *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*. 17th ed. Madrid, Ediciones Cátedra.
- Simon Adams and Alan Bryson and Mitchell Leimon, 'Walsingham, Sir Francis (c.1532–1590)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [online]. Available: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28624> (30 September 2013)

Stephen Wright, 'Sadlington, Mark (d. 1647)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [online]. Available: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24467> (30 September 2013)

Valdeón, R. A. (2012) Tears of the Indies and the Power of Translation: John Philips' Version of *Brevisima Relacion de la destruccion de las Indias*. *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 89 (6), 839-858.

