

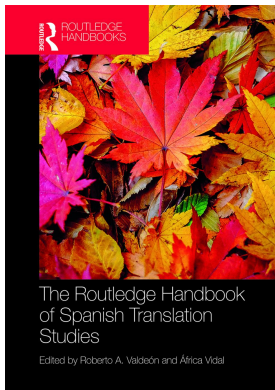
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### **Translation and the Spanish Empire**

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### 3

# TRANSLATION AND THE SPANISH EMPIRE

*Roberto A. Valdeón*

## Introduction

Antonio de Nebrija's observation that language and empire go hand in hand has become a classic for most writers interested in exploring the connections between language, translation and empire (Rafael 1988, 23; Durston 2007, 32; Mignolo 2003 [1995]; Valdeón 2014a, 25). When, in 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail to find an easier route to Asia, he was aware of the importance of languages. Consequently, in his first voyage, he took two interpreters, Domingo de Jérez and Luis de Torres, who would eventually prove useless (Giambruno 2008, 30). Columbus acknowledged this in the writings that have come down to us. In his third letter, for example, he recorded that he had taken a few Indians by force in order to be informed about the lands (1870, 12). Later he returned to Europe with some natives that he had kidnapped with a view to teach them Spanish before returning to the Caribbean. This has been called "the primal crime in the New World" (Greenblatt 1976, 563), which was performed in the interest of communication. For his part, Rafael (1988, 26) reminds us that Spanish still uses "dominate a language" when we refer to speaking a foreign language well, although this can be applied to other European languages.

Translation was also present in the act of taking possession. After the Vatican granted Spain and Portugal the right to conquer the continent, it was decided that the conquistadors would claim possession of the lands by reading the so-called *Requerimiento*, a bewildering document that encouraged the listeners to surrender or face a just war. For some, the text was not translated (Mackenthun 1997, 13), while others believe it was (Gose 2008, 40; Lamana 2008, 101). In either case, the *Requerimiento* had recourse to language to claim the lands and, therefore, their inhabitants, for the European conquerors. The document, which has been described as a blend of "legal fiction and perverse idealism" (Greenblatt 1976, 573), is reminiscent of various biblical passages (Early 2006, 103) and reflects the ideology of its time (Hanke 1938, 34). Las Casas was particularly critical of the text, although his words have been often quoted (Restall 2003, 87) or misquoted when he wrote that he did not know whether to laugh or to cry at the Requirement. The full quotation reads like this: "cosa es de reír o llorar, por mejor decir, que creyesen los del Consejo del rey que estas gentes fuese más obligadas a recibir al rey por señor" (Las Casas 1956, 216). In other words, he posited that it was not possible to convert Native Americans by reading the text to them (1956, 216), and that it was difficult to believe

that the members of the Council took for granted that it was. In any case, the document and the debate over its validity are telling of the importance of language and translation not only during the initial years of the conquest.

### Historical perspective

The importance of translation during the colonial period in Spanish America is well documented. Spain's heavily bureaucratic nature, which has remained to this day, means that the various branches of the colonial administration have left a wealth of documents that provide a clear picture of the vital role of translation during that period, both in the metropolis and in the colonies. As language and translation policies were not stable, laws were passed either to promote the expansion of Spanish or the use of local languages, depending on the political trend of the period. These regulations were often at the same time, but they had to be reissued, as they proved largely ineffective because of the distance between Spain and its colonial possessions. For example, the so-called Laws of Burgos (1512–1513) called the settlers to teach Spanish to the natives. To that effect, schools first and universities later were established both in New Spain and the Andean region. As the conquest progressed, this had unexpected consequences as the children of the local aristocracy were able to use the language of the conquerors and their own (Mignolo 1989, 69).

### *Translation and the administration of the colonies*

However, as commoners continued to use their own language (Klor de Alva 1989), the religious orders learned native tongues in order to evangelize them. The missionaries were, in fact, largely responsible for the appropriation of local languages (Payàs 2010; Bastin 2013). The grammars and lexicons they wrote served to train other missionaries and priests, and to translate religious texts into the so-called *lenguas generales*, that is, the languages the Spanish considered the most widely spoken. This “tyranny of the alphabet”, as has been called (Mignolo 1989, 68–9), had serious consequences for the linguistic landscapes of the continent: other less common languages would eventually disappear, while Nahuatl in Mesoamerica and Quechua in the Andes were used as a lingua franca in their respective areas to be used among and with the natives. Run by the church and supported by the state, schools and universities were founded throughout the empire and, as the need for interpreters and translators increased, local languages were taught. Thus, educational institutions such as the University of San Marcos in Lima and the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Mexico were the first universities and colleges in the Americas. In the Philippines, on the other hand, the situation was different. Tagalog had a writing system called *baybayin* (Rafael 1988, 39), but the Latin alphabet eventually replaced it as well. Similarly, in nineteenth-century Equatorial Guinea, the Spanish missionaries used a Latin-inspired phonetic version of native languages (Castillo Rodríguez 2015).

In addition, the need for translators and interpreters led to the passing of a number of laws and regulations that described the duties of these mediators as well as their rights. These laws helped to shape a professional ethical code pertaining to their salaries, presents and the relationship of the interpreters with the colonized and with the colonists. They aimed to curb the abuse against the native population as well as to ensure the faithful reproduction of texts. For example, interpreters were not allowed to entertain Indians in their homes and town mayors could only select interpreters if they had been properly trained, had passed a state exam, and had been approved by the Indian council (Aguirre and Montalbán 1846, 230–1). Colonial rulers were also concerned with this issue. For instance, in the Andes viceroy Toledo passed

similar laws (Toledo 1867, 250) and even appointed a *lengua general* (or interpreter general) who accompanied him during his visits to the provinces. However, the fact that these laws were passed in the sixteenth century and reissued on several occasions indicates that abusive situations remained a problem (Valdeón 2014a, 81–82).

Interpreters were indeed necessary in all the spheres of the colonial system. They were particularly useful in the courts, as the local elites started claiming their rights shortly after the arrival of the Spanish (Ruiz Medrano 2010, 12). As interpreters were needed, Indians occupied this position at first, but later Spaniards would perform this function (Ruiz Medrano 2010, 24). In fact, interpreters of both native and European origin attempted to use their linguistic skills to climb the social ladder, i.e. many received pecuniary compensation as well as lands or political positions. In other cases, their knowledge of both Spanish and native languages, in addition to their familiarity with the judicial system of the colonizers, allowed some natives to file claims against the conquerors. The extant documents also prove that native languages were long used after the conquest, as wills, municipal records, land transactions and so on were written in the local languages, often accompanied by translations into Spanish (Anderson, Berdan, and Lockhart 1976, 225). Some of these translations were carried out a long time after the original texts had been written. Anderson, Berdan and Lockhart note that one of the most distinctive features of these documents is the very different narrative conveyed: whereas the originals talk about the “people from” and added the specific place, the Spanish versions replaced it by the generic word “indios” (1976, 226).

Translators were also needed during the visits to the provinces, which served to compile the *relaciones*, a series of reports that provided the administration with all kinds of information about the colonies. This was used for taxation purposes but also to gather valuable information about many other aspects of the colonies such as their natural history, geography, cosmography, and so on (Barrera Osorio 2006, 92). In the Andes, the Europeans needed the assistance of the so-called *kipu-keepers* in order to interpret the *kipus*, a device consisting of knotted strings that stored all kinds of information (Brokaw 2010). These devices had to be *read* by the *kipu-keepers*, then interpreted into Spanish and finally the information was written down by the Spaniards for the purposes of the administration, but also to keep a historical record of the lands, e.g. Cieza de León in his *Crónica del Perú* (Valdeón 2012b). Interpreters were instrumental in retrieving all this information, both in Mesoamerica and in the Andes. Gaspar Antonio Chi, for instance, assisted the Spaniards during this process and, for this reason, as is the case with so many other interpreters of the time, he has been considered a traitor to his people (Kartunnen 1994, 113).

### *The evangelization of the indigenous peoples*

As mentioned, the religious orders soon realized the importance of using the local languages and of linguistic mediation. However, the official policies regarding the use of vernacular languages, of Spanish and of translation practices varied greatly during the long period of colonial rule. In the early part of the sixteenth century there was a tendency to accommodate native terms to explain core Christian concepts. The missionaries had attempted to integrate native religiosity in order to spread Catholic precepts (Sousa, Poole, and Lockhart 1998, 41). In Spain, though, many opposed the use of native languages in the evangelization process. This included institutions such as the Council of Indies and individuals like Antonio de Zúñiga, a member of one of Spain’s most influential families. Zúñiga wrote an epistle to Philip II and called for the imposition of Spanish throughout the colonies. He suggested that the natives

should be given a one or two-year period to learn the language or else be placed in a state of semi-imprisonment (1855, 94).

The ambivalent attitude towards the role of translation and of local languages came to an end, at least officially, during the Third Lima Council, held in 1582–1583. Summoned by Archbishop Toribio de Mogrovejo, it served not only to organize the church in the area but also to recommend the use of local languages as an evangelization tool. In fact, the meeting led to the publication of the *Doctrina Cristiana*, a trilingual catechism in Spanish, Quechua and Aymara. The document, regardless of its proselytizing intent, provides invaluable insights into the policy of the church as regards translation issues, as discussed in the introductory “Epístola de la traducción” [Epistle on translation]. This preface quoted Saint Paul to justify the importance of using a language that the listeners could understand and acknowledged that some Christian concepts were difficult to comprehend (*Doctrina* 1584, Epístola). For this reason, translators were expected to take care of how these notions were rendered into native languages. Then approved translations were supposed to be used by all the priests in the area in order to avoid conflicting renderings of the same text or concept. Other booklets, such as catechisms and confessionals, were also printed at the time and were in use until well into the nineteenth century. Particularly interesting are the confessionals written by the Jesuit Horacio Carochi, as they served as guidebooks for the priests to understand not only the language, but also the cultural background behind the native answers to the questions that priests were supposed to ask during the sacrament of confession. Benito Rinaldini and Fernando de la Carrera also wrote model confessionals for priests.

Although the Third Lima Council accepted the need of translation for conversion, it was also agreed that certain concepts had to be kept in Spanish, assuming that, as Rabasa states (2011, 24), translation was a faulty language. Consequently, when translating key Christian terms the missionaries retained original words such as *Dios*, *Virgen*, and *Espíritu Santo* (Durston 2007, 214–15). This approach, which was later applied to the translation of religious texts in the Philippines (Rafael 1988, 29), followed the footsteps of earlier missionaries such as Domingo de Santo Tomás, who had written grammars and lexicons to facilitate the understanding of native languages and the translation process. Domingo de Santo Tomás’s own *Gramática o arte de la lengua general de los indios de los Reynos del Perú*, published in Valladolid in 1560, was accompanied by a sermon booklet that was meant to facilitate the communication of Christian concepts to the Indians. The *Plática para todos los indios*, as the sermon was called, reflects Domingo de Santo Tomás’s views on translation, as every Spanish line is followed by a line in Quechua in bigger font, thus highlighting the importance of the target language. This practice was, in fact, common at the time (Salas García 2013, 79–81), as was the preservation of a number of Christian concepts that were considered untranslatable. Santo Domingo only preserved the words *Dios* [God], *caballo* [horse] and *cristiano* [Christian], whereas other key concepts were rendered in the Quechua language (see Taylor 2003, 22–25 for a discussion of Santo Domingo’s transformations). These and other similar texts were supposed to have been destroyed after the Third Lima Council in order to avoid religious controversies, but their survival allows researchers to investigate the way in which translation and translation policies evolved during the colonial period.

In the Philippines, Tagalog was the most widely studied language (Sales 2016), as it was spoken in the highly populated areas of Luzon, in the south west of the country (Rafael 1988, 26). The Dominican priest Francisco Blancas de San José wrote a monumental work, *Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala*, first published in 1610, with subsequent editions in 1752 and 1832. The book, inspired by Latin and Spanish grammars, was used by the missionaries for conversion. In 1679, Father Agustín de Magdalena produced another grammar of Tagalog entitled

*Arte de la lengua tagala sacado de diversos artes*, which was also based on the grammatical notions of Latin and Spanish. Thus, Tagalog was shaped following European linguistic conventions in order to be used for translation purposes, which highlights the existence of a hierarchy of languages (Rafael 1988, 27).

The translation of the Christian doctrine into native languages has been compared to the Pentecostal flame (Rafael 1988, 32) or to the foundation of the church at the Pentecost (Durstun 2007, 147), as it allowed the priests to spread the word of God among the natives. But the work of the various religious orders across the empire had other far-reaching consequences. Priests and friars were responsible for the Hispanization of the indigenous peoples. Thus, they founded and were in charge of schools and universities where local languages were taught. As mentioned, they wrote the grammars and lexicons needed to train translators, to translate religious texts and, in general, to communicate with the natives at various levels. In order to do this they imposed Western-style literacy and, in the long run, they contributed to the disappearance of many local languages and traditions. But, as Mannheim (1991) claims, the call to evangelize was also a stimulus to learn about the others, if only to subjugate them.

Finally, it is worth noting that the church and the monarchy did not only work in harmony. The relationship between them was mutually dependent and often antagonistic, both in the Americas and in the Philippines (Rafael 2016, 24). We have to bear in mind that, very often, Spanish settlers and court representatives were more interested in profiteering than in converting the natives. In addition, as the laws concerning the teaching of Spanish and the use of translation changed over time, the mendicant orders were faced with everyday communication problems of different types.

### ***The Black Legend and the translation of Spanish chronicles***

Translation also played a fundamental role in Europe's national rivalries. Spanish chronicles of the conquest were translated into Latin, French, Dutch, English, German and Italian. One of the most famous documents dating from this period was authored by Bartolomé de las Casas, a former conqueror who later joined the Dominican order and wrote an indictment against the Spanish conquest of the Caribbean islands. *Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, as the book was entitled, cannot be considered a historical account but rather a critique of the Spanish treatment of the natives. In it Las Casas appealed to Crown Prince Philip to take action in favour of the Indian population. Although the text was not supposed to be published, it came out in 1552 and was rapidly translated into all the major European languages, including French, Dutch and, of course, English. The *Brevisima* was crucial in the creation and consolidation of the so-called Black Legend, whose aim was to depict Spain in the worst possible light. Las Casas's narrative was soon appropriated by Spain's rivals for their own colonial schemes (Lamana 2007, 133) by adulterating his original calls to improve the situation of the indigenous peoples (Hanke 1965). Among the many translations of the book, two English versions, *The Spanish Colonie* and *Tears of the Indians* (Hanke 1965; Bumas 2000) are worth mentioning. Of particular interest is the intersemiotic translation by Dutch engraver De Bry, who gathered the most atrocious stories in Las Casas's tract in a series of illustrations that have continued to appear in retranslations of his work until the present (Valdeón 2014b, 2012a).

Las Casas's tract was one of the many works by Spanish chroniclers and navigators to be translated into other European languages. The letters written by Christopher Columbus and Hernán Cortés, López de Gómara's *Historia general de las Indias*, and Pedro Cieza de León's *Crónica del Perú* were translated at various times both during the Spanish colonial period and after Spain's empire had come to an end. Although many of the translators used the prefaces

and introductions to stress the violent nature of Spain's conquest of the Americas, some translators held other views. In the English version of *Crónica del Perú* (1709) John Stevens, the translator, expressed his admiration for the Spaniards, who, in his view, had opened the way for European expansion. Ideological manipulation was, as can be expected, a common feature of these versions, e.g. Stevens omitted most of the references to the "moralising digressions about the reasons for the conquest" (Zaro 2000, 120). The different views that the translators expressed in the paratexts that accompanied the translations of the chronicles depended on the political climate and on the alliances of their own time. The chronicles were often retranslated and old versions republished whenever the occasion called for it. At the end of the nineteenth century, as the United States of America was poised to become the new world power, the conflict over Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines would incite anti-Spanish propagandists to publish a text loosely based on Las Casas's *Brevísima* in the run-up to the Spanish-American war (Valdeón 2017).

### Research issues

Over the past two decades, a number of publications have studied the role of translation in the emergence and consolidation of the Spanish empire, both as regards the creation of the colonial machinery and the evangelization process of the natives. The appropriation of native languages for the evangelization of the Americas led to the eventual disappearance of a number of minority languages and varieties (often referred to as the *lenguas particulares*) and the promotion of certain languages (notably Quechua and Nahuatl) for communication and evangelization. However, this has received little attention as the topic "falls through the cracks" of history, anthropology and linguistics (Durston 2007, 1). Alan Durston has studied the variety of Quechua, in reality a family of languages and dialects, spoken in the former capital of the Inca empire and imposed as the standard *lengua general* by the Spanish.

The promotion of these languages and the teaching of Spanish is linked to the foundation of schools and universities. In Mesoamerica, for instance, these centres aimed to train native linguists that would translate European sacred texts in order to replace native ancestral beliefs, although some authors also posit that these schools may have, in fact, combined European humanism and Mesoamerican wisdom (Arencibia Rodríguez 2006, 264). The role that these centres played in the suppression of local culture as well as in the training of the ruling elites is of interest for the history of translation. In addition, considering the strategies used in the early translation of the Old and New Testaments into Nahuatl, Arcencibia Rodríguez has stressed that texts can provide insights into the changing role of translation in the spread of Christianity, as priests replaced words that were believed too complex or shocking for the natives (2006, 270). Like Durston, Arcencibia Rodríguez also stresses the Pentecostal view of translation as the gift of speech in order to spread Christianity (2006, 271). This meant that the various church councils and, in particular the Third Lima Council in the Andes, established a simplified variety of Quechua to be easily learned by the priests and used in the area (Durston 2014, 228–9). The language work carried out by Spanish missionaries (but also by their French, English, Portuguese and German counterparts) has been the basis of a subdiscipline referred to as missionary linguistics, which has thrived over the past decade and promises to provide more insights into the role of language and translation during the era of European empires. Missionary linguistics had not received much attention in linguistic circles until the twenty-first century, but it has burgeoned since the international conference held at the University of Oslo in 2003 (for an overview of the evolution of the discipline see Zwartjes 2012). As regards missionary linguistics and Spanish America, Zimmermann's work is particularly relevant for TS research, as he

has studied the use of Spanish religious terms in historic documents and religious texts (2009). The seventh international conference on missionary linguistics, held in Bremen in 2012, was devoted to translation theories and practices, and a collection of articles based on some of the presentation was subsequently published (Zwartjes, Zimmermann, and Schrader-Kniffki 2014). The book, which includes a section on Asian languages as well, attempted to fill the gap concerning translation and missionary linguistics, and also pointed to future avenues of research: the legacy of St Jerome and St Augustine in missionary translation, the role of translation in education, identities and acculturation and so on.

The crucial role of translation in native resistance against European rule is another area of interest. While authors like Cheyfitz (1997) have tended to regard translation as a metaphor of violence, translators and interpreters also use their skills to their advantage (Valdeón 2014a, 220–4). Doña Marina, Cortés’s interpreter, has indeed been used as a metaphor for the violation of the lands and of native women, although this view has been regarded as very partial (Valdeón 2013) and probably ideologically motivated. Many interpreters were natives, but others were Spanish or mestizo. In spite of the regulations approved by the administration as regards their duties and salaries, both indigenous and native interpreters had their own private agendas as a consequence of the times they lived through. These also evolved over time as we move from the period of the conquest to the colonial era. Thus, the native elites became familiar with the Spanish administration, and used that knowledge to claim properties and rights. Extant documents, like Mesoamerican primordial titles, provide evidence of the complex relationship between languages and cultures. These documents were often used in litigations against Spanish rule (Haskett 2005).

The use of translated Spanish chronicles as propaganda to promote alternative empires in the Americas and beyond has also been studied by a number of scholars. Among them, the translation of Bartolomé de las Casas’s *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* has attracted the most attention. Philip W. Powell, a professor of history at the University of California Santa Barbara was particularly critical of the Dominican monk, whom he blamed for the spread of the Black Legend. In his book *Tree of Hate*, which can hardly be described as politically correct by twenty-first century standards, Powell described Las Casas as an immortal zealot (2008, 30–36), the “most powerful weapon of Spain’s enemies” (2008, 32). However, the narratives projected by the translations of the book (thoroughly studied by Marieke Delahaye 2010), have been called into question by many researchers (e.g. Bumás 2000) and unveil the rivalries between Spain as a global power and the emerging empires of the period, which coveted Iberian possessions in the Americas. Although the study of the source text and its innumerable translations has produced a considerable bulk of publications, the interest in Las Casas’s tract continues to attract considerable attention (Bumas 2000; Hart 2001; Mancall 2008). Valdeón has studied the first English translations (2012a) and one of the most recent translations of the book (2014b), as well as the propagandist use of Las Casas in the years before the Spanish-American war (2017).

On the other hand, and not unrelated to the above, Barbara Fuchs (2013) has recently worked on the importance of the translation of Spanish texts for the development of English as a language and also as a nation. Fuchs stresses the relationship between what she terms as *copia* as a metaphor taken up by English early modern writers preoccupied with the poverty the English language (2013, 15): they believed it was necessary to draw on the Spanish language and to adapt it to their own vernacular. Fuchs adds that the influence of Spanish was greater and more fruitful than those of other languages (2013, 16). Fuchs’s book opens an important avenue of research in order to explore the relationship between language, translation, *copia* and appropriation, both as regards languages and ideology, during the colonial period.



### Future directions

As translators have become more central in TS, future studies could delve into the role of translators and interpreters in the Americas, but also in Europe. The many references to the interpreters in the chronicles could provide a historical perspective not only of that role, but also of how the chroniclers perceived it. On the other hand, the voices of the many translators that rendered the chronicles into other languages could throw light on the controversial relationship between the Spanish and their European rivals. Luckily, the names and work of most of these translators have come down to us. For example, Clements R. Markham, an explorer and geographer who travelled through much of South America in the nineteenth century, translated many of the chronicles.

Apart from the Americas, the importance of translation during Spain's colonial rule in Africa and Asia are also worth exploring. As it also happened in the Americas and in the Philippines, Susana Castillo Rodríguez (2013) has studied the role of the missions in the spread of Spanish in Equatorial Guinea, as well as the conflict with English in the area. Castillo Rodríguez (2015), who has just started delving into the linguistic policies in that part of the world, has shown that, like in other regions ruled by Spain, the missionaries were the first to describe the structure of native languages. This knowledge was used for the purposes of conversion and was related to the European feeling of superiority over the black population. Comparative studies of language and translation policies and practices among the various regions of the Spanish empire on the one hand, and between those of other European colonial powers on the other, could also provide insights into the intersections between language, translation, and empire.

On the other hand, comparative studies on the role on translation in the colonies could be of interest. Even though in the Anglophone world some authors have claimed that there was a clear difference between the religious policies and goals of the Spanish, the Portuguese, the English and the French empires in the Americas, the truth is that all of them attempted the conversion of the natives in one way or another. In fact, authors like Cañizares-Esguerra (2006, 1–29) found important similarities between the evangelization processes carried out by the Catholics and the Protestants in the Continent. In the same way as the Spanish friars and priests wrote grammars and lexicons of native languages, so did English missionaries in North America. For instance, John Eliot, a Puritan educated at Cambridge, used a native Indian to help him translate prayers and sermons. In 1663 he published the first translation of the Bible into a native American language, *Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God*, and in 1666, he published a grammar of the Algonquin language, entitled *The English Grammar Begun*. Both titles are indicative of the relationship between local languages and English, and are reminiscent of the hierarchical relationship between Spanish and local languages in South and Central America.

The study of the representation of mediators in the chronicles (and how it was translated into other languages) could provide relevant insights into the role of interpreters during the conquest and the colonial period. Italiano (2016, 51–72), for instance, has recently analysed Cabeza de Vacas's *Naufragios*, paying particular attention to the position of the interpreters amidst a group of Europeans stranded among Native Americas in the sixteenth century. The chronicles were translated and also adapted by historians for their own accounts of the conquest. The transformation of the representation of interpreters in the works of early Anglophone historians and translators could, thus, inform us of the relationship between imperial rivals. For instance, William H. Prescott in the United States and Robert B. Cunningham in the United Kingdom have used the chronicles extensively in their own work, providing a

picture not only of the complex relationship between the Anglophone and the Hispanic world, but also of Cunninghame's critical view of Prescott's work (1915, 87).

Another important area of research could consider which texts were translated and why. As mentioned, many of the Spanish chronicles were rendered into the major European languages at some point or another. Las Casas's *Brevísima* was, of course, a favourite that kept turning up whenever it was necessary to build up a case against the Spanish. However, it was not by any means the only one. Translations of the works by Cieza de León, José de Acosta and so on were very popular at various points. Thus, the reasons for the publication of these versions could be studied against the historical background in which they were produced. On the other hand, even though the historical accounts of the English conquest, or *planting*, are fewer, it is worth considering why these texts were not translated during the colonial period. Two such texts are John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia*, published in 1624, and George Percys' 1612 *Trewe Relacyon*, which provide clear evidence of English cruelty in the English colonies. These texts were not translated into Spanish. Thus, while the English used many Spanish chronicles as propaganda, the Spanish did not seem to be interested in this type of ideological warfare.

Comparative studies could also contribute to enlightening the relationship between the Spanish empire and other colonial projects, as well as between the Spanish language and literary traditions and those of other nations. As mentioned, Barbara Fuchs (2013) has opened a line of research concerning the influence of translations of Spanish texts upon the English language and culture that could provide further insights into the complex set of relationships between England and Spain in the early modern period. Following on the footsteps of Hanke (1965 [1949]), some contemporary authors (Cañizares-Esguerra 2006; Hart 2001) have begun to question well-established narratives concerning the differences and similarities between Spain and other European colonial empires. Varela (2014, 30), for instance, mentions the case of John Smith's version of his encounter with Pocahontas and Juan Ortiz's experience as a case in point. Additionally, it could be worth exploring the extent to which some of these accounts have, in fact, been fictionalized and how translation scholars may have contributed to this fictionalization process (for a discussion of the fictionalization of Doña Marina, Hernán Cortés's interpreter, see Valdeón 2013). Although less known than the Spanish texts on the conquest, research into the relationship between the Spanish chronicles and the accounts of other imperial projects written in other European languages could prove equally enlightening. One project based at the University of Leuven in Belgium ("Colonial ambitions, imperial interests", directed by Wim Coudens, Lieve Behiels and Johan Verberckmoes) could yield significant results in this sense.

The analysis of the (translated) texts and paratexts, the agents involved in their production, the relationship between these translations and other nations and how the former contributed to shaping the latter are issues that have only begun to be explored. Future studies could provide insights into why some texts were retranslated centuries after the first versions were produced, while others were not translated until the twentieth or twenty-first centuries. For instance, Cieza de León's *Crónica del Perú* was retranslated in the second half of the nineteenth century by Clements R. Markham. Clements's introduction was highly critical of the Spanish conquest at the time even if Spain's empire was long gone. Interestingly, information concerning British massacres of indigenous peoples in the different parts of the globe, e.g. Tasmania, was available, but Markham chose to ignore it: like so many authors before and after his time, he may have resorted to a critique of the Spanish conquest as a consolation myth. On the other hand, the first version of Juan de Betanzos's *Suma y Narración de los Incas* was published in 1996. His work was largely unknown until the twentieth century.

Researchers could delve into the reasons why certain works were published, translated and retranslated with some regularity, while others were not. They could also contribute to the study of the chroniclers' views on the use of translation and interpreters for the compilation of information. Betanzos, for instance, spoke of his duty to be faithful to the words of his witnesses, which he rendered into Spanish without adapting them to European writing conventions (Cañizares-Esguerra 2001, 75).

In addition, during the past decades, we have witnessed a renewed interest in the chronicles, particularly in the United States, where academics from various disciplines have produced translations and retranslations of many of these works. In at least one case, this had given way to parallel versions of the same text, published almost simultaneously in 2005. Titu Cusi's native account of the conquest of Peru was translated by Ralph Bauer (*An Inca Account of the Conquest of Peru*) and by Nicole Delia Legnani (*A 16th Century Account of the Conquest*). A year later, Catherine Julien rendered the text into English anew. This translation was entitled *History of How the Spaniards Arrived in Peru*. On the other hand, in the 1950s Toribio de Motolonia's chronicles had become available in English thanks to two parallel translations. Research into these and other texts could delve into the motivations for these translations, the translatorial approaches (bearing in mind that some of the American translations of many of the chronicles were not carried by language specialists or trained translators), the significance of these texts within the American context as American academics are trying to reevaluate the role of Spain in the formation of an American identity, an issue that has become even more complex during Donald Trump's polemical presidency.

Finally, the study of the motivation for the translation of certain documents may illustrate the complex relationships between the powers of the time. While Las Casas's *Brevísima* has gone through several revisions since it was first published, the accounts of English cruelty in the Americas written by those involved in it have remained untranslated until recent decades. These texts, written by settlers like John Smith and George Percy, are rarely quoted in research (Mackenthun 1997, 263) and some had fallen conveniently into oblivion and were not published until, at least, the late nineteenth century.

### Recommended reading

Hanke, Lewis. 1965 [1949]. *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Although this is an old book, it is probably the first attempt to provide a solid study of the role of Bartolomé de las Casas in the struggle for justice, regardless of the way in which Anglophone writers may have used his work throughout the centuries. Hanke, a specialist in Las Casas, provides an intelligent critique of the English translations of the chronicles, which were used to support an English empire.

Mackenthun, Gesa. 1997. *Metaphors of Dispossession. American Beginnings and the Translation of Empire, 1492–1637*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

This is an excellent study of the role of language and translation during the early colonial period. Although Mackenthun often uses the term translation as a metaphor, she analyzes many of the texts that served as the basis for the European colonial projects in Americas, comparing and contrasting Spanish and English approaches to empire vis-à-vis Native Americans.

Payàs, Gertrudis. 2010. *El revés del tapiz. Traducción y discurso de identidad en la Nueva España (1581–1821)*. Madrid: Vervuert Iberoamericana.

Based on the author's doctoral thesis, this book provides a comprehensive view of the history of translation in New Spain. Particularly interesting are the passages devoted to the production of the grammars and lexicons by the Spanish mendicant orders and their impact upon local languages, as well as those concerned with the changing policies as regards their use.

Valdeón, Roberto A. 2014. *Translation and the Spanish Empire in the Americas*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

An overview of how translation was used during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Spanish America, both by the state and by the church. It also surveys the contribution of the translations of the Spanish chronicles to the narratives of other colonial empires. It provides many references to the work done in various disciplines over the past decades.

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