

Three Dominicans on Slavery

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484-1566)

Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639)

Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Apología o declaración y defensa universal de los derechos del hombre y de los pueblos*, ed. V. Abril Castelló, Edición paleográfica y crítica. [Valladolid] 2000.

Bartolomé de Las Casas, *In defense of the Indians*, translated by Stafford Poole (DeKalb : Northern Illinois University Press, 1992)

"Enslavement is useful for both who are conquered in that they are kept alive by the victors ... and for those who won in that it encourages them to fight harder; and the fact that some are strong fighters is expedient for the conservation of humanity as it keeps evil at bay."

Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Politic.*, lib. 1 l. 4 n. 5

The *servitus* is a
«separation or *commenda* through which
the Indians are suppressed by the
Spaniards and die or live a life harder than
death, divided into sections, as if they
were cattle (*armenta vel pecora*), namely
distributed among the Spaniards and
assigned up to a certain number in order
to serve them.»

Las Casas, *Apologia*, Praefatio, p. 4

Pope Paul III, *Sublimis Deus* (1537)

«... it is necessary to confess that man is of such nature and condition that he is capable of receiving faith in Christ and that everyone who possesses human nature is apt for receiving such faith.»

A. LAIRD: *Humanism and the Humanity of the Peoples of the New World: Fray Julián Garcés, 'De Habilitate et Capacitate Gentium', Rome 1537. A Study, Transcription and Translation of the Original Imprint in the John Carter Brown Library, «Studi Umanistici Piceni» XXXIV, 2014, pp. 183–225.*

“The slave by nature serves through reason whereas the animal serves through passion ... The slave by nature ... cannot help in deliberation or other activities of reason; yet in corporeal things he can serve in more ways than the brutish animal, because of reason.”

Thomas, *Sententia Politic.*, lib. 1 l. 3 n. 14

"It is for master and slave, if they are worthy to be such, by nature mutually convenient that one is master and the other slave. Hence there can be friendship between them, because conversation regarding what is expedient for both is the concept of friendship. But those who are not related to each other by nature it is the opposite, because they have no friendship for one another, and it is not expedient for them that one be the master and the other the slave."

Sententia Politic., lib. 1 l. 4 n. 14

“Barbarians in the proper and strict meaning of the word, are those who, either because of their evil and wicked character or the barrenness of the region in which they live, are cruel, savage, sottish, stupid, and strangers to reason.

They are not governed by law or right, do not cultivate friendships, and have no state or politically organized community.

Rather, they are without ruler, laws, and institutions.”

LAS CASAS, Apología, chapt. 2, p. 22; *Defense*, p. 32.

«Begone, Aristotle! From Christ, the eternal truth, we have the command ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’»

«Ualeat Aristoteles! A Christo enim qui est Veritas Eterna habemus: Diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum, (Matthei 22°).»

LAS CASAS, Apología, chapt. 3, p. 29

Defense, p. 40.

«... no one considers it disgraceful to wait at the tables or to serve in the kitchen or elsewhere.»

«Thus anyone who is assigned any particular task performs it as though it were a high honor.»

«They keep no slaves [*schiavi*], since they are sufficient unto themselves – they even abound.»

Campanella, *La Città Del Sole: Dialogo Poetico. The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue*, trans. Daniel J. Donno, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981, p. 63.

“But not so with us, for there are three hundred thousand souls in Naples and not fifty thousand of them work, and these work so hard that they destroy themselves. Meanwhile, the idle ruin themselves in pursuing idleness, avarice, and usury; and they ruin still others by keeping them in impoverished slavery [*in servitù e povertà*] or making them parties to their vices. As a consequence, the public services are not sufficiently attended to. The tasks of the fields, of the [military] camps, and of the crafts are badly performed if at all.”

CAMPANELLA, *La Città Del Sole* [transl. Donno], pp. 63–65.

“When a slave as such belongs to another, ..., any man who not naturally belongs to himself but to another is naturally a slave. And this man belongs not naturally to himself, who can only be governed by another.” ...

"A Slave is an active, animate, and separate tool of another man. As such, the slave is distinct from a voluntary and free helper; ..." and as "existing man [a slave] is distinct from a separate possession [that is, a mere object]."

Thomas, *Sententia Politic.*, lib. 1 l. 2 n. 14

“Even if there is diversity of race (*generis*) at the beginning, having lived together for ten years turns them into the same race. Let alone that the oppression of servitude reconciles even enemies against the tyrant. All citizens are tyrants to them, although some of them are political allies and leaders.”

Campanella, *Quaestiones de Politicis*, qu. 3, art. 1, in *Quaestiones*, p. 98

“Every human being is equal to every human being with respect to divine, natural, and civil commutative law; one is subject or superior only in issues of distribution that are given in unequal manner to those who are charged with various and unequal functions (*functiones*) as is evident in the structure (*structura*) of a body and the functions (*functiones*) of the members, in government and serfdom.”

Campanella, *Afor. Pol., Politica*, cap. 2, n. 9, p. 152

“Citizens are called not only those who take part in government but all who live together and exercise any practical art of the republic (as any member exercises any function in the body). Everyone else is either a guest or a refuse (*excrementum*) of the republic, as many noblemen are in our times.”

Campanella, *Afor. Pol., Politica*, cap. 4, n. 15, p. 161.

