

SKLAVEREI · KNECHTSCHAFT · ZWANGSARBEIT

Band 16

Pius Onyemechi Adiele

The Popes, the Catholic
Church and the Transatlantic
Enslavement of Black
Africans 1418-1839

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SKLAVEREI · KNECHTSCHAFT · ZWANGSARBEIT

Untersuchungen zur Sozial-, Rechts- und Kulturgeschichte

Herausgegeben von Elisabeth Herrmann-Otto

Band 16

Pius Onyemechi Adiele

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of Black Africans 1418-1839



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**In Memory of my most cherished parents:
Late Mr. & Mrs. Damian and Helina Adiele**

and

Mr. Patrick Adiele (Papalolo)

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Foreword

This Book in your hand is a fruit of many years of intensive studies in Germany which began as a Licentiate work in Church History at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the famous University of Münster. It was further developed and accepted as Doctoral Dissertation in 2014 by the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the renowned University of Tübingen under the title “The Popes, Catholic Church and the Transatlantic Enslavement of Black Africans 1418-1839.” As a work that covers many historical epochs of papal relations with the Catholic kings of Portugal and Spain in the years of papal universal monarchy, European discovery, colonization of the West African Atlantic Coasts and the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans, this work could be likened to a baobab tree, which no one person alone can embrace with his two hands. With this in mind, I humbly appreciate the numerous assistance received from a retinue of intellectual best minds among German Church historians, theologians as well as historians of Iberian Maritime History across Europe, whose ideas helped this work to attain its present scientific status.

First and foremost, I thank the Almighty God for His infinite mercy received during the course of making these studious researches that gave birth to this academic piece. My unalloyed gratitude remains with my late Bishop Victor Chikwe, who inspired me to undertake this study but could not live to see the fruit of his inspiring support. The same applies to my most respected and dear parents Damian and Helina Adiele, who inculcated in me the spirit of hard work, resiliency and determination needed to undertake such a demanding work.

My unmitigated thanks go to Prof. Dr. Andreas Holzem, who with an Argus eye and high level of competence supervised this work and kept encouraging me during the difficult phases of archival researches in both Rome, USA and Portugal; to Prof. Dr. Hubert Wolf (Münster), with whom I began this work at its cradle stage and who in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Holzem and Prof. Dr. Thomas G. Bauer (Münster) firmly supported the idea of carrying out a research at the Vatican Secret Archives (ASV) as well as the Portuguese National Archives (ANTI) and wrote a credible attestation that recommended me to the Officials of these two important Archives for this work. This suggestion of theirs together with those of Prof. Dr. Ludolf Pelizaeus (Mainz), Prof. Dr. Peter Hannenberg (Lisbon) and Prof. Dr. Johannes Meier (Mainz) was a breakthrough in the quest to ascertain the role of the Catholic Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans and holds the very key to the success of this work.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Reinhard Seeliger (Tübingen) for his technical suggestions and valuable critical inputs made in this work; to Prof. Dr. Michael Theobald (Tübingen) for reading part of the Manuscript and to Prof. Dr. Nicole Priesching (Paderborn) for making helpful suggestions. In view of the publication, I greatly appreciate the competent suggestions and technical inputs made by Prof. Dr. Elizabeth Herrmann-Otto (Trier), who after reading the Manuscript accepted to publish it in her very prominent international historical Book Series. The same applies to Dr. Peter Guyot of the Georg Olms Publishing Company for proofreading this work and for showing great interest in publishing it.

My unalloyed thanks go to the Prefect of the Vatican Secret Archives (ASV) Bishop Sergio Pagano and to the Director of the Archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (ACDF) Monsignor Alejandro Cifres for granting me unhindered access to the requested secret Files of their most valued Archives. The same gratitude applies to the Director and Staff of the Portuguese National Archives in Lisbon for their immense support; to the Director and Staff of the Archives of Loyola Marymount University of Los Angeles; those of the Claremont University of California and the United Nations Library in New York, who granted me every available access to their Archives of Special Collections. I acknowledge with deep appreciation the extraordinary assistance received from Lucy Castellano, who was driving me to the Libraries and Archives of Claremont University and others in California in search of materials for this work. I also feel highly indebted to Dr. Ilona Tahir, Dr. Stephan Janker, Severin Krauth, Michael Sikora, Stephan Krieg as well as Günther & Kerstin Schöffner for their overwhelming technical support in the development and formatting of this work.

I will not fail to acknowledge the benevolences received from my friends without whom this work would not have seen the light of the day. Among them are Margarete Weber, Doris Opitz, Josef Funk, Raphael & Hannelore Sailer and Hedwig Benz. I thank Bishop Gebhard Fürst of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart for accommodating me in his Diocese and for accepting to make a part payment for the publication of this work through the Social Organ “Referat Weltkirche” of his Diocese.

Last but not the least, I thank my most cherished brothers, sisters, in-laws and their precious families for what they are to me and for their moral and prayerful support, which had accompanied me all through life. My dear ones such as Chiko Ehiri, Vero Ahamefule, Chizo Ogbonna, Drs. Justin Anaele, Sylve Ihuoma, Cletus Imoh, Ben Nwachukwudaku, Columbus Ogbujah, Johannes Holdt, Justin Emeziem, Jochen Werner, Florian Holstein, Anita Wochner, Hans-Gerd & Mechthild van Schelve, Alfred & Lydia Werner. All my German friends and parishioners past and present (especially Dotternhausen) and others

too many to be enlisted in this work, are herewith duly thanked and acknowledged. I am very grateful to all of them and to all those who will read this wonderful compendium on the role of the Catholic Church and her Popes in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Lauchheim, June 2017

Pius Onyemechi Adiele

I. Introduction

1. Agitating Issue and Goal of this Work

1.1 Preliminary Thoughts on the Subject of this Work

The Transatlantic slave trade, during which the Black Africans were enslaved, is widely known as the worst type of enslavement and the wildest type of man's inhumanity to man in the history of humanity with its attendant consequences on the lives and image of the people of the Black continent. The course of its operation spanned a total period of more than four hundred years. These were for Black Africa, not only lost centuries but also centuries of organised international condemnation and murder of millions of her innocent and defenceless sons and daughters, years of political crisis, economic setbacks, social unrest and developmental stagnation in all its ramifications. These were years when the "Requiem" for Black Africa was not only composed by the Church and her Catholic kings - the so-called "athletes of Christ"¹ especially the kings of Portugal and Spain, but also they were years when the said "Requiem" was sung to the hearing of the whole world by the Christian slave merchants and their home governments in both Europe and America. These were indeed years when the bottomless pit of the denial of the humanity of Black Africans was dug with the shovel of racism, religion and superiority complex of the White race over the Black African race as propounded and propagated by some Western Christian philosophers, theologians and racist anthropologists from Europe and America, such as Charles Montesquieu, Friedrich Hegel, Georges Cuvier, Josiah Priest, Chas. Carroll, Josiah Nott, George R. Gliddon etc. Little wonder then did the Nigerian born Theophilus Okere, professor and director of "Whelan Research Academy" in Owerri (Nigeria) describe these years as: "Four hundred years of European, Christian cruelty, of papally and theologically sanctioned inhumanity that afflicted on Africa a loss in men, in happiness, freedom and dignity."²

True enough, the Transatlantic slave trade was not the only slavery that existed in the history of man's inhumanity to man. The knowledge of the history of slavery has been able to reveal that there were other enslavements in the history

¹ The term "Athletes of Christ" is a recurrent phrase used by pope Nicholas V in "Romanus Pontifex" of 1454 to address king Alfonso V and Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal while issuing to them the Apostolic authority contained in the two Bulls with which he called the Atlantic enslavement of Black Africans into being.

² Okere, Unpublished Lectures.

of humanity such as: the enslavement of the Jewish people by the Egyptians, the Indians of the West Indies by the Spanish Christians, the ancient Athenian and Roman slavery of people of other races, as well as the unfortunate Arab enslavement of North and Sub Saharan Africans. But the Transatlantic slave trade is different from all these. Its history has indeed made it to be unique in itself. Unique in the sense that skin color was a great factor to reckon with in determining who was to be a slave of this trade. This fact alone reveals the racial character and cruelty of this slave trade. It was the only slave trade in human history that made the Black man its only victim and reduced him to a chattel. It was the only slave trade that carried its victims in ships of different sizes and shapes bearing the names of Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, St. Thomas, St. George and other Saints of the Holy Roman Catholic Church.³ Its uniqueness lies once more not only in the cruelty of its perpetrators but also in the magnitude and intensity of its execution. Expressing the cruelty of this trade, T. Okere said in a very lamenting tone: “Never before, nor since, has there been a commercial traffic in human beings of that magnitude, intensity and duration, involving such distances between four continents and lasting over four hundred years. Never did commerce ever involve so much contempt, so much cruelty and so much inhumanity tolerated or even supported by some of the highest moral minds and authorities, championed by the most Catholic countries of Europe.”⁴ In his own reaction to the cruelty of this slave trade, the recently proclaimed Saint of the Catholic Church pope John Paul II once described this baneful trade as “an enormous crime and an ignoble commerce.”⁵ And comparing the evil nature of this slave trade with the cruelty of the Holocaust perpetrated against the Jewish folk by the Nazi regime, the German born sociologist and economist Alexander Rüstow (1885-1963) described this trade as follows: “It is by difference the most cruel and bloodiest chapter of documented events in the history of the world before 1933.”⁶

This most cruel and bloodiest crime is the first ever recorded injustice which the Black Africans and her sons and daughters suffered from the hands of the leadership of the Catholic Church. To talk about it today, is to talk about the very landmark of the tragic and regrettable event in the history of the Black man on earth. It is to talk about the forceful deportation of millions of Black Africans in an inhuman and degrading manner in ships of human cargoes of all

³ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 305.

⁴ Okere, *Unpublished Lectures*.

⁵ Pope John Paul II, Homily delivered on the Island of Goreé- Senegal, Feb. 22, 1992, in: Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. 119. Cf. Clarke, *Columbus and African Holocaust*, p. 20.

⁶ Rüstow, *Ortsbestimmung der Gegenwart*, Vol. II, p. 313. Cf. Hertlein, *Christentum und Mission*, p. 121. This citation reads in German as follows: “Es ist mit Abstand das grauenhafteste und blutigste Kapitel der schriftlich überlieferten Weltgeschichte vor 1933.”

sizes and length across the dangerous Atlantic Ocean in a journey of no return to the so-called New World discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Millions of these innocent poor victims of this slave trade died while crossing the Atlantic waters. Those of them, who landed safely to their land of perpetual enslavement were reduced to chattels and forced by their fellow human beings to work under very excruciating and unbearable inhuman conditions never seen before in the history of human labour and commerce and were worked to death in their millions just for the economic advantage of their white slave owners.

Unfortunately indeed, the perpetrators and masterminds of this cruelty and Holocaust against the Black Africans were not just the white planters and settlers of the Caribbean and North American islands in the New World, but mainly the Catholic kings and princes of both Spain and Portugal as well as the governments of other major European enslaving Christian nations such as Great Britain, France, Holland, Sweden, Denmark etc. Also in recent times, renewed interest in this area of study has revealed that the most respectable and Holy Office of the Church and the highest moral authority in Christian living the world over - the popes did not only join in the band wagon of those who masterminded this cruel act against the Black African race but also blessed, gave approval to it and effected the actualisation of this enslavement through the Catholic kings of both Spain and Portugal respectively. Today, this kind of revelation found expressions here and there on the pages of some historical books and Magazines. For instance, in the April 2000 Edition of the "New African Magazine" which carried the reports of an alleged Church's involvement in the Transatlantic slave trade, this magazine stated as follows: "It is instructive that the earliest European slavers of Africa the Portuguese and Spanish sought and got the blessings of the pope in 1455."⁷ Following the views of the publishers of this magazine, Okere asserted that the Church supported the slave trade and gave her blessings to the evil of this long duration of Black African enslavement. This position is brought to limelight when he said: "Although these 400 years impoverished Africa to enrich Europe, they also have inflicted on Europe and Christianity guilt and shame eternal. So much for the role of the Church and Churchmen in initiating, encouraging and blessing the first major injustice that Europe inflicted on Africa."⁸

But initiating and blessing this enslavement is not the end of the road in the Church's accusation of involvement in this enslavement. Other areas of accusations of involvement of the Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans abound. In the first instance, the Church has been accused of having profited materially from the blood money accruing

⁷ Malanda, "The Pope Loves You," in: *New African Magazine*, April (2000), p. 14.

⁸ Okere, Unpublished Lectures.

from this traffic in human beings of Black African origin. The Portuguese missionaries especially the members of the Jesuits Order sent by the Church to evangelize the pagan natives of the West African Atlantic did not only take active part in this slave trade but also lived from it, gravely profited from it and depended heavily on it for their sustenance. Millions of the blood money accruing from this baneful traffic in humans were invested in providing infrastructures for the education and training of Priests and Seminarians belonging to the Jesuits Congregation and other women and men Religious Orders. More so, a greater portion of the stipends emanating from the mass baptism of Black African slaves hurriedly carried out by these missionary Priests before the embarkation of slaves for their journey of no return to the West Indies, was reported to have flown into the coffers of the Catholic Church in both Portugal, Spain and Rome. In the words of the historian Françoise Latour da Veiga Pinto: “The state religion (Catholic Church), which in Portugal was ruled by the Inquisition up to the 18th century, not only gave its moral sanction to the traffic in human beings through baptism but also made a profit out of it.”⁹ Also the historian Thomas Hugh recorded that: “The king of Portugal made two million reis in 1506 from the slave trade, from taxes and duties paid on each slave.”¹⁰

Secondly, the Church's attitude of injustice towards the Black Africans during this slave trade raises suspicion over her involvement in the enslavement of Black Africans. This fact is brought to the limelight in the manner of approach given to the enslavement of the Indians of West Indies whose enslavement was going on at a time when Black African enslavement was being perpetrated by the same European slave merchants and their home governments. Surprisingly indeed, the Indian enslavement did not last long before it received due attention and condemnation from the popes and the home government of the Spanish slave merchants and Conquistadors. Owing to the indefatigable efforts of the Church through her Apostolic Writings and Office as well as the determined efforts of her missionaries in the Caribbean islands led by Bishop Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484-1566) and sometimes called “the Apostle and liberator” of the Indians of the West Indies, the enslavement of Indians was denounced and abolished by pope Paul III (*1468, pontificate 1534-1549) in 1537. And by so doing, the Indians were timely saved from the evil acts of the Christian slave masters from the Catholic nation of Spain. But in the case of the enslavement of Black Africans, a changed attitude was conspicuously noticed. The aforesaid “Apostle and liberator” of the Indians turned a Judas Iscariot and a betrayer of the Black Africans overnight by becoming the very one, who

⁹ Da Veiga Pinto, “Portuguese Participation in the Slave Trade,” p. 138.

¹⁰ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 94.

suggested to the king of Spain and pope Paul III to replace the Indians in chains of slavery with Black Africans. The leadership of the Church and all other defenders of the enslaved Indians took a different view and approach altogether as far as the Black Africans were concerned. Their active engagement in the condemnation and liberation of the enslaved Indians turned into a deep silence and passivity. The papers and inks from the papal desks and Office in Rome used for the liberation of Indians from their enslavement got dried up by the wind as soon as it was the turn of the Black Africans. Rather than engaging herself in defending the Black Africans, the Church and her leadership declared them “enemies of the Christian faith” against whom wars are to be made and as those who should be punished with perpetual enslavement. But the agitating question troubling every mind that reads or hears about this injustice has been: Why this glaring injustice against the enslaved Black Africans by the Catholic Church and her popes? What led the Church and her popes to declare Black Africans enemies of the Christian faith and as those placed under perpetual enslavement?¹¹ Finding an answer to this mind boggling question is part of the driving force that motivated this academic study.

But that is not all about the motivating force of this academic inquiry: One and a half centuries had passed since (after) the Transatlantic slave trade ended and the activities of the Catholic Church throughout the duration of this enslavement have been kept in the dark. The crux of the matter is the continued attitude of the Catholic Church and her leadership even after this slave trade ended long ago in refusing to acknowledge her guilt and accepting responsibility for her involvement in the enslavement of Black Africans during this slave trade. This refusal has led the Church's leadership to down-play the gravity of the Church's complicity in the enslavement of Black Africans, thereby initiating and promoting the culture of amnesia and joining the governments of the enslaving nations of Europe and America in spreading widely the propaganda that Black Africans themselves are the architects of their enslavement and therefore are to be blamed for the shame and the evil of this slave trade. And as a proof of this fact, more than 95 percent of all the academic inquiries made so far by the Western Christian authors and historians in the history of enslavement of peoples since after the discovery of the New World focused attention solely on the enslavement of the Indians of the West Indies but little or no attention has been paid to examine the Church's role in the enslavement of Black Africans. Those of them, who reflected on this subject matter, treated it in passing. And some, in their bid to shield the Church from culpability and the shame of this baneful traffic in humans ended up with

¹¹ The two papal Bulls of pope Nicholas V in 1452 and 1454 respectively described Black Africans together with the Saracens as enemies of the Faith that should be punished with perpetual enslavement. See, Appendix A, No. 6 in this Book.

producing apologetic writings rather than producing an in-depth academic work on this very subject matter. A few examples here will help to grease the road in driving home this point.

The work of an American born Catholic theologian and historian Joel Panzer titled “The Popes and Slavery” which appeared in 1996 is a case at hand here. This work, in a bid to wash the hands of the popes clean from the shame of enslavement of Black Africans ignored to mention the many Apostolic Letters with which the popes of the Church not only called this enslavement into being but also continued to propagate its existence.¹² Even long before Panzer wrote his work, many of the popes who wrote in condemnation of the enslavement of the Indians of the West Indies continued to wash the hands of their predecessors innocent of the guilt of this baneful traffic on human beings of Black African extraction. Very astonishing in this attitude is the Apostolic Writing of pope Gregory XVI which fortunately condemned the enslavement of Black Africans with the Bull “In Supremo Apostolatus” of 1839. Before dedicating a few lines of condemnation to the enslavement of Black Africans in this Bull, the pope made a list of the papal Bulls issued by his predecessors, extolling and commending their efforts in fighting against enslavement of peoples wherever it existed. And in the process of doing so, he ended up remaining silent and ignored to acknowledge the existence of a good chunk of evidence of an almost hundred years of continued support of this enslavement by his other predecessors with the help of their papal Bulls in initiating, blessing and supporting the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans, all in the name of avoiding the shame of this trade which his predecessors brought to bear on the image of the papal Office and that of the entire Catholic Church.

Even in Latin America, the very land of enslavement of Black Africans as well as the place, where the graves of those millions of the enslaved and dehumanized Black Africans are still lying till today, this culture of amnesia towards the Black African enslavement has been greatly promoted and the attitude of the Church in washing her hands clean of the Black African enslavement remained unchanged. While reflecting on the history of the evangelization of this continent both during the second and third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopacy in Medellin (1968) and in Puebla

¹² Joel Panzer listed in the Appendix of his aforesaid Book the Bulls with which the popes condemned the enslavement of Indians as a proof of his thesis that the Church defended the enslavement of all peoples under unjust enslavement in history. One had expected him also to have mentioned the papal Bulls such as “Dum Diversas,” and “Romanus Pontifex” of pope Nicholas V in 1452 and 1454 respectively and those of his successors up to the papacy of pope Leo X in 1514, which supported and blessed the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans. The contents of these papal Bulls, whose inclusion was avoided in the said Book by the aforesaid author have been properly handled in section III of this present Book. Also the Latin copies of these papal Bulls have been provided in the Appendix A and B of this Book.

(1979), the issue of the enslavement of Black Africans was neglected especially during the Medellin Conference in 1968 which completely failed to make a mention of this enslavement in its concluding document.¹³ But in the third Puebla Episcopal Conference which at last accepted to mention this enslavement in its concluding document in 1979, the much this Latin American Episcopacy could dedicate to the centuries long enslavement of Black Africans on their very soil was just a footnote attention given to it in the following wordings: “It is to be regretted that the issue of the enslavement of Black Africans was not the subject of the evangelizing and liberating work of the Church.”¹⁴ And by so doing, the Latin American Episcopacy proved herself a part of the culture of amnesia promoted by the Catholic Church in which the Black Africans are forgotten and the remembrance of their enslavement kept in the dark corners of history.

The same culture of amnesia was again manifested on the eve of the third millennium of the history of the Catholic Church when the Church under the pontificate of St. John Paul II began the process of healing the injuries which she inflicted on peoples and nations in the past. In this process of healing the wounds of the past, the pope, despite the strong pressures and opposition from the Roman curia, thought it wise to say sorry in form of apology to all nations and injured peoples, whose image and history had been battered by the Catholic Church doctrines and attitude of Christians in the past. In a document issued in preparation for this healing process, the pope said as follows:

It is appropriate that as the second millennium of Christianity draws to a close, the Church should become more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children, recalling all those times in history when they departed from the spirit of Christ and His Gospel and, instead of offering to the world the witness of a life inspired by the values of faith, indulged in ways of thinking and acting which were truly forms of counter-witness and scandal.¹⁵

And in another document of the Church titled “We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah,” which was written four years later for the same reconciliatory purpose through which the Church made a concrete step towards healing the wounds inflicted on the Jewish peoples and others in the past, the Church

¹³ José Oscar Beozzo, “Dieu Au Visage Noir,” *Spiritus* 125(1991), Francia, 369-370. See also, Enrique Bartolucci, “Las Culturas Negras y sus Vínculos con el Evangelio,” in: CELAM, *Grandes Temas de Santo Domingo: Reflexiones desde el CELAM Documentos* 132, p. 319, Bogota 1994.

¹⁴ Puebla Document, in: *Die Evangelisierung in der Gegenwart und in der Zukunft Lateinamerikas: Dokument der III. Generalkonferenz des lateinamerikanischen Episkopates in Puebla, Stimmen der Weltkirche*, No. 8, Bonn 1979.

¹⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter, Tertio Millennio Advenientes*, November 10, 1994, 33; AAS 87(1995), 25.

stated thus: “The 2000th anniversary of the Birth of Jesus Christ calls all Christians, and indeed invites all men and women, to seek to discern in the passage of history the signs of Divine Providence at work, as well as the ways in which the images of the Creator in man has been offended and disfigured.”¹⁶ It was on the strength of these two Pontifical documents that the victims of the Church's Inquisition, the condemnation of Galileo Galilei, the execution of Jan Hus, the injustice committed against women, the Holocaust against the Jewish folk and a host of other crimes of the past were remembered and apologies dully rendered to victims in an official manner. But when it came to the fact of remembering the victims of the enslavement of Black Africans, this culture of amnesia in forgetting to talk about the Church's guilt in the Black African enslavement was once more glaringly manifested. The case of the Black African enslavement received no mention and no attention in these two official documents of the Church written for this purpose. The much that the enslavement of Black Africans could receive was in a Homily which the aforesaid pope delivered during the Holy Mass he celebrated on the island of Gorée in Senegal in 1992 during which the pope said among others: “How can we forget the enormous suffering inflicted, the violation of the most basic human rights, on those people deported from the African continent? How can we forget the human lives destroyed by slavery? In all truth and humility this sin of man against man, this sin of man against God must be confessed.”¹⁷

And six years later, at the dawn of the new millennium, when the time was ripe for the actual confession of the sins of the children of the Church as manifested in the aforesaid documents of the Church, the confession of this crime against the Black Africans was neatly avoided and ignored. The very pope, whose Office wrote these documents forgot so quickly to remember the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slavery as well as to include the crime committed against them as “a sin of man against God that must be confessed.” What an irony and what a great amnesia! At least, the memories of what the pope saw on ground during his visit to this island of Gorée in 1992 which served as the entrê pot of slaves before their departure to the New World, should have deeply touched his heart and moved him to set up a commission that would have produced a document similar to the one issued in 1998 which addressed the Holocaust against the Jewish folk. But unfortunately, the contrary was the case.

¹⁶ Document of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, “We Remember”: A Reflection on the Shoah, March 16, 1998, in: <http://www.vatican.va/roman-cu>, visited on November 10, 2013.

¹⁷ Pope John Paul II, Homily delivered on the Island of Gorée in Senegal, February 22, 1992, in: Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. 117.

Based on this fact of negligence, one is wont to ask at this juncture: Is there any scandal of the faith committed in the past with the backing of papal authority and support which needed to be confessed that is greater than the scandal of the children of the Church during the 400 hundred years of enslavement of Black Africans and the reduction of the image of God in them to those of chattels and animals? Is this evil of the Black African enslavement not considered as an injustice committed against a people? Is the Black African race not worthy enough to deserve a document through which the Church can address the mistake and injustice of her past committed against her people? When would the Church and her leadership be ready to make a shift in this kind of discriminating attitude towards the Black Africans?

Over and above all this, the attitude of the Church to keep the remembrance of the Black African enslavement in the cooler of oblivion has not changed even at the present moment. Instead, this attitude continues to be noticed in some of the renowned Universities and places of higher learning in Europe. For instance, at an international Conference organized by the Centre for Global Systems in collaboration with the Inter-cultural Competence of the Lawyers' Alumni and the Centre for African Affairs of the Julius-Maximilian University Würzburg in Germany under the theme "Slavery as a Global and Regional Phenomenon" from 27th June to 29th June 2013, this attitude was clearly manifested. At this intellectual Summit which dwelt more on the topic of the Black African enslavement, none of the chosen topics listed for discussion focused attention on the part which the Church and her leadership played in the enslavement of Black Africans.¹⁸ And as one of the participants of this Conference, I raised the issue of the conspicuously missing topic that should have reflected the part which the leadership of the Catholic Church played during this enslavement. To my greatest surprise, the president of the organising body of this Conference and as well a professor of Law at this University gave a reply that beat my imagination by replying to the hearing of all participants that the inclusion of such topics was purposely avoided in order to escape censorship and query from the Catholic authorities and Patrons of the aforesaid University. But why should such a discussion be classified as a "Tabu" and as "a no go area" in an intellectual discussion of this nature dealing on the issue of the enslavement of Black Africans even in the famous Land of Reformation? Is this action at this present time not a re-birth of the practice in vogue in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when those that attempted to raise a voice of protest against the enslavement of Black Africans either in form of literary works or Homilies were termed enemies of the Catholic Church and

¹⁸ See the organizing body of this Conference and the listed topics for discussions in: <http://www.presse.uni-wuerzburg.de>, visited on March 8, 2014.

their works proscribed and condemned to the Index of prohibited works in the Vatican Secret Archives? How long would it continue to remain in the dark that the Catholic Church and her leadership took active part in the horrendous Black African enslavement? And when will a meaningful academic inquiry commence to investigate historically and objectively the part played by the Church and her leadership in the theatre of this enslavement and the battering of the image of the Black African people?

It was this sort of mind boggling questions raised in the face of this kind of attitude of the Church and her leadership towards the Black African enslavement as well as the various accusations of her involvement and complicity in the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans, that the difficult task of carrying out an academic inquiry into this area of study has been undertaken in this present work. Many echoes had been raised from different quarters and in scattered tones on the so-called part played by the Catholic Church and her leadership during this slave trade. How true are these suppositions and to what length and extent did the Catholic Church participate and aided this slave trade during its long duration? The task of establishing the facts in the issues raised above is the very goal and the sole purpose of embarking upon this study which bears the title “The Popes, Catholic Church and the Transatlantic Enslavement of Black Africans.”

The choice of this topic for this academic study did not come so easily based on the fact that the Catholic Church was not the only Christian Church that participated in this heinous slave trade that selected only the Black man as its victim and object of transactions. Other major denominations of Christianity also actively took part in the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans. This being the case, one might then ask the question: Why then this topic, and why does this academic work focus its searchlight of inquiry only on the role of the Catholic Church and her leadership during this enslavement? As important as this very question might appear, it is significant also to note here that this work does not dispute the fact that other major Christian denominations also actively participated in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. The reason for this choice of topic in this academic study rested on the fact that at the very beginnings of this slave trade in 1444, the Catholic Church through her leadership was the only major role player and a great force to reckon with in determining the course and direction of events in the entire Christian Europe. The Catholic Church of this period in history was not only at the epicentre of religious, moral, academic and social life of the Western Christianity but also the highest Instance in the political barometer of the entire known world under the leadership and unchallenging authority of one man namely, the Supreme Roman Pontiff, “Vicarius Dei” and the visible representative of the Master of the entire Universe in the world of men and

women. This sole position occupied by the visible Head of the Catholic Church in the Name of God and of religion gave the Catholic Church the responsibility of deciding the turn of events in the world of men and women throughout the Western Christendom. It was in this same position of being a supreme Judge over all persons that the popes had control over the Christian kings and princes in whose reins of temporal power the political and social lives of the people of the Western Christendom depended. That means, the leadership of the Catholic Church possessed the moral and political authority even to decide whether the Transatlantic slave trade was to be or not to be. In this sense therefore, to undertake in this academic work a study of the role played by this great and powerful Institution in the enslavement of Black Africans which began with the authority and support of the Supreme Head of this Church is in my humble opinion a gigantic subject of academic research that is worthy of undertaking. That is what this work is all about. It is my conviction that the Transatlantic slave trade is part of the Christian history and that a full scale study of the part played by the Catholic Church and her leadership during this slave trade has been neglected for too long a time and as such should no longer be suppressed or be kept in the dark corners of history. Hence the choice of the topic of this work.

Be that as it may, this present Book does not presume to say all that transpired in the very role played by the Church and her leadership during this enslavement and of course cannot say it all. But it serves as a courageous step taken, and a major contribution made towards encouraging future researchers in embarking upon such quality historical studies that will help to illuminate the dark corner in this part of the history of the enslavement of Black Africans. It also majors very significantly as the first scholarly contribution ever made in this magnitude and style by a Black African Church historian and theologian from the Atlantic Coast of West Africa in the entire debate on the part played by the Catholic Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans.

1.2 Scope and Division of this Work

Numerous historical books have been written on the theme of the Transatlantic slave trade, establishing the account of its history, the part played by the kings and Queens, princes, companies and their shareholders as well as the governments of various European major enslaving nations and other major role players in the execution of the baneful traffic in human beings of Black African extraction. In order to avoid a repetition of what has been done in this area of study, this Book therefore, is not an account of the Transatlantic slave trade as

such. It restricted itself strictly to discuss the role of the Catholic Church especially the papacy in the establishment of this trade beginning with its cradle stage in 1418 when Portugal began to nurse the idea of exploring the West African Atlantic Coasts with the major intention of wresting control of the wealth in the West African trade in gold, silver, ivory and spices from the hands of the Arab Muslim merchants who were controlling the land route to the very source of this West African wealth. It continued with the recognition of this politico-economic ambition of Portugal by the papal Office with the bid to spread the Gospel of Christ to the pagan regions of West Africa and fighting the Saracens in North Africa who were the arch-enemies of the Christian faith. It was in her bid to protect her possessions in the discoveries already made in West Africa that the papacy was brought into the scene of this trade, thereby providing to Portugal the legally recognised rights of monopoly control over this trade and other territorial possessions in West Africa. This support continued until the Portuguese began to forcefully kidnap and capture the innocent pagan natives of West Africa which were brought into Portugal and sold as slaves in 1444, an action that was blessed and praised by the papacy as a heroic step taken towards the salvation of the poor souls of those Black African captives. It was in the light of this, that the papacy even gave her blessings and support in granting to the kings and princes of Portugal and their successors in perpetuity the right to force both the Saracens and the Black African pagan natives into perpetual slavery. This papal decree establishing this right in 1452 and 1454 respectively was defended by the papacy and was never retracted until the Transatlantic slave trade was internationally abolished in 1807. The only condemnation of this slave trade from the side of the papacy came in 1839 after the major European enslaving nations have agreed to abolish slavery in their overseas colonies in the Americas. That means then, this work covers the role of the Church and her leadership from the on-start of the Portuguese ambition to control this wealth in the West African trade in 1418 till the time when the first major condemnation of this slave trade was ever made by the papal Office in 1839.

To enhance an easy reading and a competent handling of the very subject matter of this academic inquiry that involves a good chunk of subjects and covers a large expanse of historical epochs, this Book is divided into seven major sections within which some other subsections or chapters are submerged. Section one which contains five chapters introduces this work and deals on the issue of the idea of slavery in many cultures of the world but paid particular attention to the practice of slavery in Africa. This particular attention given to slavery in Africa here was made so as to know the face of slavery as it was practised in Africa before the external influence of both the Mediterranean and Atlantic slavery came to undermine this form of slavery in Africa. In order

to debunk the claim of some Western authors and historians like George Bancroft, Herbert Klein, Paul Lovejoy et al.,¹⁹ who held the view that slavery in Africa was the foundation of the Transatlantic slave trade, this section sets out to do a comparative study of the history of slavery in other parts of the globe. The result of this study will help us to know that slavery is not something that is synonymous with Africa as it has been widely claimed in the past, but something that has been in practice from time ab initio in all known cultures and human societies. With this done, this section moves on to handle the topic of the Transatlantic slave trade. Even though the story of the Transatlantic slave trade is not the very subject matter which this work sets out to discuss, however, an inclusion of this story was made in two chapters to enable readers to be acquainted with the ugly face of this trade and the mode of its operation as well as the nations and companies that carried out this obnoxious traffic in human beings of Black African origin. The nature, together with the modus operandi of this trade as discussed herein helps one to be at home with the sufferings and treatment that were made the lots of Black Africans during the course of this shameful trade.

Section two of this Book contains six chapters which considered the hot issue of the justification of slavery in general and that of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans in particular viewed within the ambient of the teachings of the Bible and of the Catholic Church from the period of the early Church fathers to the second millennium of the existence of the Church. In this section, much time was spent and much effort was made to handle the topic of the Black African enslavement from the point of view of theological, biblical, mythical and racial justifications for this slave trade so as to establish the reason why the Black man of all peoples and races under our planet Earth was adjudged by both the papacy and the European Christendom to be the only unfortunate victim of the Transatlantic slave trade, whose enslavement was sanctioned by God as a punishment placed upon his race, as a race that descended from the accursed race of Ham.

Section three of this Book which was subdivided into seven chapters treated the very core issue and the very goal of this Book. In order to establish the part played by the Church²⁰ and her leadership during the Transatlantic slave trade, this work went into a historical inquiry into the political and strategical

¹⁹ These authors shifted the blame of the enslavement of Black Africans to Black Africans themselves. For instance, George Bancroft who was one of the leading early American historians maintained that slavery in Africa gave rise to European enslavement of Blacks. For him, “the Portuguese were guilty of mercantile cupidity, but in a certain sense, it was Africa that has corrupted Europe.” Cf. Bancroft, *History of United States*, p. 1ff; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 22.

²⁰ When we talk of the Church in relation with the Transatlantic slave trade, we mean the papacy or the leadership of the Catholic Church in Rome and its involvement in this slave trade.

positioning of the Church's papacy in the international politics of the high and late medieval periods in relation to the issues concerning Black Africa in cooperation with the political and economic intentions of the successive kings and princes of Portugal in West Africa from the period of 1418 to 1839. This was embarked upon with the certainty that the very role of the Catholic Church in the enslavement of Black Africans is to be pinpointed in this papal politics of the late medieval times that crystallized in the numerous, famous and historical apostolic documents of the Church's Magisterium under the control of the renaissance papacy written in support of the political and economic ambitions of the kings of Portugal in West Africa under the pretence of Crusade against the Saracens in Africa. This was embarked upon so as to find out how this papal politics influenced papal decisions in Africa that aided this slave trade immensely and determined the unmistakable silence and laissez-faire attitude of this Holy Office towards the enslaved Black Africans during the course of this trade.

Section four of this Book contains only two chapters and focused attention on the issue of the right of Patronage granted to Prince Henry the Navigator and the Royal Crown in Portugal to organise missionary work and spread the liberating Gospel of Christ in West Africa which ended up in spreading the innocent West Africans as slaves to Europe and to the Americas. It takes care of the missionary activities of the Portuguese missionaries in Africa with particular attention paid to the Kongo mission of the fifteenth, sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries respectively and how the Portuguese missionaries and especially the Jesuits Order enmeshed themselves in the evil of this slave trade not only as slave merchants but also as slave-holders in their various slave plantations established in both Brazil and Maryland and other places in North America. This section also dedicated some space to acknowledge the raised but unheard voices of some missionaries and other members of the Church that raised their voices in protest against the enslavement of Black Africans and the manner in which they were treated by their fellow Western Christians.

Furthermore, Section five of this Book made a summary of this entire academic work and established the position and dividends of this academic inquiry taken to know the role of the Church and her leadership in the long duration of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans.

Over and above all this, due to a growing popularity which this work enjoys among German reading public, who came to learn about it through newspaper publications, international conferences and other academic fora, where this work formed the main subject of discussion, it was deemed necessary to make a Summary of this work in German language so as to provide the German Readership an access to the dividends of this work. And this Summary serves as the sixth Section of this Book.

Finally, the last Section of this work made provisions for the abundance of the papal Bulls and the Royal Letters from the various kings of Portugal in the Appendix to allow access to the original Latin and Portuguese texts of these important documents used in this work that have one thing or the other to do with the Church's role before, as well as during the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans.

1.3 Methodical Approach of this Work

To carry out an academic inquiry of this nature into the difficult task of determining the Church's role in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade involves the use of numerous documents. In effect, a good chunk of papal Bulls written between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries found in the Vatican Secret Archives (Archivio Segreto Vaticano) in their original classical Latin manuscripts full of difficult abbreviations were employed in the course of writing this work. The contents of these papal Bulls threw much light on the position of the papacy regarding the Black African enslavement. And in addition to these papal Bulls, a barrel of Royal Charters found in the National Archives of Portugal in Lisbon (Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo) written in mixed foreign languages of old Spanish and old Portuguese from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries were used in this work to establish the contents of the demands of the kings of Portugal from the papal Office in Rome that warranted the popes to issue their various Bulls in favour of the kings of Portugal that linked the papacy with the obnoxious traffic in human beings of Black African origin. To work with the documents emanating from these most important Offices in the medieval times owing to their difficult languages and style of writing, is not an easy task. It requires much time and inexhaustible patience in identifying the correct words hidden in the abbreviations made in these manuscripts so as to effect correct and corresponding translations into the English language which happens to be the language of this academic work.

To be fair and just to the contents and messages of these papal Bulls and the Royal Letters from the Portuguese Crown, this work applied a historico-critical analytical method in dealing with them. That means, critically analysing the imports of these papal and Royal documents in their very historical contexts. It was with this tool of analytical and critical historic method that these aforesaid documents which served as the primary source and the backbone that provided the superstructures upon which this work was built, were interpreted and applied in this work. Their application in this work, by way of the full citation

of their contents, historical and authoritative imports, marks the originality of this work and distinguishes it from other related works done before now.

Besides using these sources, this work also entertained the services of numerous historical literatures relevant to our subject matter, whose ideas were employed to run commentaries in a critical sense on the matters arising from the discussions raised in the aforesaid primary sources used in this work. The result of this fruitful analytical historical method is the birth of this academic work and holds the key to its being a major historical and significant contribution to the ongoing debates on the part played by the Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. The recurrent and most often unavoidable emotional tone which could be found in this academic work should be disregarded and does not belong to the substance that counts most in this work.

1.4 The Current State of Research in this Area of Study

The study of the role played by the Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade is an important aspect of the Transatlantic slavery that has been neglected for too long in the study of the history of this slave trade. However, despite this negligence in awarding to this part of the Atlantic slavery its historical place of honour in academic studies, it has to be pointed out that this area of study is not a virgin area in the study of the history of the Transatlantic slave trade. That means, something has already been written. But in comparison to the volume of academic works written in the past centuries on the theme of the enslavement of the Indians of West Indies during the Spanish occupation and enslavement of the said Indians, it is regrettable to note that only too little effort had been specifically made by scholars in the area of the study of the role played by the Catholic Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. And based on the quality and position of most of these works on the subject matter under discussion here, 97 percent of them do not reckon as authentic works that aimed at establishing the true position of the role played by the Church in the Black African enslavement and are in this sense very misleading. This truth has been confirmed by the American born theologian and priest Rev. James T. O' Connor in the Foreword he wrote to the work of Joel S. Panzer "The Popes and Slavery" wherein he said: "An accurate history of the papacy's reaction to racial slavery has never been written, and what has been written is in general misleading."²¹ This could be partly as a result of the inaccessibility of the relevant documentary sources

²¹ O' Connor, in: Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. Vii.

necessary for scholars to embark upon a study of this nature and partly as a result of the avoidance of revealing a dark chapter in the history of the life and operations of the Catholic Church.

It was this later reason that made the popes that condemned the enslavement of Indians to raise the impression that their predecessors also condemned the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slavery. This was exactly the position assumed by popes such as Urban VIII in his “*Commissum nobis*” of April 22, 1639,²² Benedict XIV in his “*Immensa Pastorum*” of December 20, 1741²³ and Gregory XVI in his “*In Supremo Apostolatus*” of December 3, 1839.²⁴ All these popes praised their predecessors in their effort to combat and to condemn unjust enslavement of peoples and raised the impression that the Church had always kept a long tradition in defending those held under the bondage of slavery including Black Africans as well as condemned their enslavement. And this became the official position of the Church in the ongoing debate on the part played by the Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans.

It was in the bid to present to the world an image of a Church that has kept a long tradition of condemnation of slavery of peoples wherever it existed in the past that even pope Gregory XIV who condemned the slave trade in 1839 plunged himself headlong into the act of hiding the various Bulls of the renaissance papacy which approved and supported the enslavement of Black Africans in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries respectively.²⁵ Knowing full well that there was no pope in history before him that has ever condemned the enslavement of the pagan natives of the regions of the West African Atlantic Coasts, Gregory XVI still went on to mention as well as to praise the works of his predecessors, none of which in actual fact mentioned the enslaved Black Africans in their various Bulls which they wrote in condemnation of the enslavement of the Indians of the West Indies, whose enslavement ran concurrently with that of the Black Africans.

This same historical inaccuracy was again repeated by pope Leo XIII in his *Catholicae Ecclesiae* of November 20, 1890 through which the pope addressed the Bishops of the whole World on the need to evangelize the Black African Continent as well as to end slavery in Africa. While praising his predecessors, who never participated in the abolition of the slave trade, the pope listed the

²² Pope Urban VIII, The Bull “*Commissum Nobis*” of April 22, 1639, in: *Bullarum Diplomatum Pontificum*, pp. 712-714.

²³ Pope Benedict XIV, The Bull “*Immensa Pastorum*,” in: *Benedict XIV Bullarium*, pp. 99-102.

²⁴ Pope Gregory XVI, The Bull “*In Supremo Apostolatus*”, Document of Archivio Storico di Propagande Fide (APF), Fondo Brevi, Vol. 4, Fls. 317r-320r.

²⁵ See especially here the two Bulls of Nicholas V “*Dum Diversas*” in 1452 and “*Romanus Pontifex*” in 1454 that legalized this enslavement of Black Africans.

names of his predecessors who in his presumption condemned the enslavement of Black Africans and as such presented to the world of the twentieth century the impression that the Catholic Church has kept a long tradition of engaging herself in the fight against slavery wherever it existed including the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans. His position in this presentation reads:

There are incontestable historical documents which attest to this fact, documents which commended to posterity the names of many of Our predecessors. Among them St. Gregory the Great, Hadrian I, Alexander III, Innocent III, Gregory IX, Pius II, Leo X, Paul III, Urban VIII, Benedict XIV, Pius VII, and Gregory XVI stand out. They applied every effort to eliminate the institution of slavery wherever it existed.²⁶

Since the appearance of this official position of the Church on the subject matter of Black African enslavement in this last papal Bull dealing on the issue of slavery and the slave trade, a great debate has arisen among theologians and historians on whether this position is historically tenable or not. This debate has divided both theologians and historians into two camps: one saying that the Church really defended all the enslaved peoples including Black Africans in the past wherever their enslavement existed, and the other camp denying the historical tenability and defensibility of this position. Most historians and authors of the twenty-first century, who have made an academic inquiry into this subject matter belong to the first camp and have given their best to keep this official position of the Catholic Church high on course. Their bid to arrive at this historical inaccuracy led them to come out with the concluding claim that the Church has always defended the enslavement of peoples including that of the Black Africans wherever it existed.

This was exactly the goal set for himself by the American Catholic priest and author Joel Panzer in his Book “The Popes and Slavery” which appeared on the international Book shelves in 1996 as a major work that defended the papal Magisterium against the accusations of complicity and approval of the enslavement of Black Africans in the Transatlantic slavery. In this work, Panzer argued as follows: “In fact, the popes have condemned what is commonly known as slavery from its beginnings in the 15th century. This was accomplished through the moral teaching authority of the pope, known as the Papal Magisterium.”²⁷ The condemnation of these enslavements by the popes was claimed by Panzer to have begun from 1435 and lasted to 1890.²⁸ With the

²⁶ Pope Leo XIII, The Bull “Catholicae Ecclesiae” of November 20, 1890, in: Panzer, The Popes and Slavery, p. 61.

²⁷ Panzer, The Popes and Slavery, pp. 2-3.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 6

help of the numerous papal Bulls written within this lengthy period, Panzer tried to present to the reading public that the Church has kept a long tradition of condemnation of slavery and the slave trade, thereby exonerating the Church and her leadership from the accusations of involvement and complicity in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. And in his bid to do this, he kept in a dark corner of history a barrel of papal Bulls written in support and approval of the enslavement of Black Africans by the papal Magisterium especially during the period of the renaissance papacy.²⁹

Joel Panzer is just a “small fish” in the “big ocean” of Western authors and theologians who have ignored the historical and moral truth involved in the role of the Catholic Church in the Black African enslavement. High ranking Vatican Officials have also kept the same position while discussing the role played by the Church in the enslavement of peoples wherever it existed in history. For instance, the German born Church historian and theologian Josef Metzler who was the Prefect of the Vatican Secret Archives from 1984 to 1995 made a swooping claim in 1992 that: “The popes condemned any kind of slavery with unrelenting harshness.”³⁰ This claim was made in the Preface to the Book “*Caeli Novi Et Terra Nova*” jointly published in 1992 by the Vatican Secret Archives and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana in commemoration of the Sala Sixtina della Biblioteca Vaticana in 1992.

Also toeing in the footstep of this tradition that raises the impression that the Church defended those under enslavement wherever it existed, was the American born scholar Rodney Stark who was a professor of sociology and comparative religion at the University of Washington. In his work “The Truth about Catholic Church and Slavery,” which appeared in 2003, Stark aligned himself with those who denied the basic truth on the part played by the Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans. Just like others before him, Stark employed the Bull of pope Eugene IV in 1435, those of popes Paul III in 1537, Pius II in 1462 and Sixtus IV respectively, to exonerate the Church and her leadership from the culpability of involvement in the enslavement of Black Africans. With the help of these Bulls which were completely silent on the enslavement of the pagan natives of the West Africa during the Transatlantic slavery, Stark concluded that the Catholic Church was not in any

²⁹ All the papal Bulls written by the renaissance popes from 1436 to 1514 which supported the Portuguese economic and political activities in West Africa including the enslavement of Black Africans were completely ignored by Joel Panzer in chapter two, pp. 7-14 of his said work, wherein he considered the first hundred years (1435-1536) of the Catholic teaching in defense of those under enslavement. Ironically, these papal Bulls, whose inclusion in the said Book was ignored by Panzer, were written within the same period of time he was discussing in this chapter of his work. See the inclusion of the ignored Bulls in Appendix A of this Book.

³⁰ Metzler, “Evangelisierung und vatikanisches Archiv”, in: Vazquez, ed. *Caeli Novi et Terra Nova*, p. 26.

way indifferent to slavery or to the slave trade during which the Black Africans were sold and handled like the beasts of the earth. These authors mentioned above and numerous others not mentioned herein, maintained this position as an orthodox position of the Church in reaction to the accusations of involvement and complicity in the evil act involved in the enslavement of Black Africans.

It is exactly against this kind of notion being spread here and there by the above authors that this present work was embarked upon so as to put the historical records straight in the part played by the Catholic Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. Putting the records straight in their historical relevance implies to work with facts embedded with historical records as they make themselves available. That is why this work depended solely on the use of the major papal Bulls written in support of the Portuguese economic and political ventures in the West African Atlantic regions from the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries to show the level of the Church's involvement in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. This study began with the foundational papal Bulls through which the popes began to support the kings of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator in their quest to circumnavigate the West African Atlantic Coasts in order to have a sea route to the trade in African products for their economic advantage. These Bulls were written in form of a Crusade Bull to raise the impression that the Portuguese were embarking upon this venture for the purpose of carrying out missionary activities in the regions of West Africa and beyond. It was in this context that these Bulls were written, granting the kings of Portugal and their successors the right to possess these West African regions and to found Churches in them. The Bulls that are of utmost importance for this discussion here included among others: "Sane Charissimus" of Martin V in 1418, "Dudum Cum" of Eugene IV in 1436, "Etsi Suscepti" of Eugene IV in 1442 and "Illius Qui" of Eugene IV in 1442. All these were written in fulfilment of papal obligation to support the kings of Portugal as papal vassals and sword-bearers in the fight against the Saracens in Africa. And having acquired numerous territories in Africa, the kings of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator once again requested the popes to be granted the right of monopoly over the trade going on in West Africa as well as the right of control over all the regions within their military powers with the intention of excluding other interested European nations from participating in the meritorious trade on West African products such as gold, ivory, silver, pepper etc. This request prompted the writing of the two famous papal Bulls "Dum Diversas" issued in 1452 and "Romanus Pontifex" issued in 1454 by pope Nicholas V to the kings of Portugal and Prince Henry which gave them the overriding authority and power of control

over their acquired territories in Africa as well as the power to dispossess the natives of this region of all their rights to self-dominion, private possessions as well as to force them into perpetual enslavement.³¹ And empowered by this papal authority, the road was made free for the forceful carrying of Black Africans by the Portuguese in ships of different sizes across the Atlantic Ocean into Europe and later to the Spanish New World in the sixteenth century. The attitudes of the popes towards the enslaved Black Africans after the death of pope Nicholas V in 1455 was one of support and approval of this enslavement in the sense that they continued to tighten the nails of enslavement with which Nicholas V nailed the Black Africans into perpetual slavery to serve as slaves in the sugar-cane plantations and gold and silver mines in the Spanish New World. This attitude of the popes towards the enslavement of Black Africans remained unchanged until in 1839, when this enslavement was belatedly condemned as an evil by pope Gregory XVI. And this condemnation never came until the Transatlantic slave trade has been abolished and adjudged as a crime against humanity by all the participating and enslaving European nations in 1833. This is the standpoint of this present work. And with this position, it distances itself from the position of the authors, whose views on the subject matter under discussion herein had been considered above.

In the light of this position, this present work has aligned itself with similar works previously undertaken by a handful of historians and theologians, who presented a dissenting voice to the above “orthodox” stand of the Church in the accusation that she not only supported the horrendous traffic in human beings of Black African origin but also propagated it with the help of her teachings concerning Black Africans. The work of the English born Catholic priest and famous theologian John Francis Maxwell titled “Slavery and the Catholic Church” published in 1975 comes to mind here. This work is a major breakthrough and an indispensable survey made in the ongoing debate on the role of the Catholic Church in the enslavement of Black Africans. Maxwell maintained in this work that the Church accepted and at the same time defended the morality and legitimacy of the institution of slavery until it was finally changed as late as 1965 by the Vatican Council II.³² Maxwell held tenaciously to the view that the position of fighting slavery wherever it existed which the popes have maintained to portray in their various writing is historically untenable. And with a good chunk of documents of the papal Magisterium, he was able to drive his point home by concluding that it is very unfair to historical truth for historians and authors to raise the false impression that the Church had always condemned slavery including the enslavement of

³¹ The contents of these Bulls will be treated in details in section III of this Book. See the Latin texts of these papal documents in Appendix A of this Book.

³² Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, pp. 10 & 17.

Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade.³³ Even though this work did not give the detailed elements contained in the papal documents at its disposal in establishing the Church's support and acceptance of the moral legitimacy of slavery, it however, stated its point straight that the Church involved herself in the enslavement of Black Africans. And with this courageous position, this work has become for many scholars a provocative master-work that has inspired other scholars in their works.

One such scholar was the English born famous historian of the Iberian Maritime history Charles Boxer who in his work "The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion 1440-1770" published in 1978, constantly kept accusing the Church of complicity in the menace of the Portuguese in West Africa during the Transatlantic slavery done under the umbrella of carrying out missionary works in West Africa. Boxer understood the whole logic in the attitude of the Church towards the enslavement of Black Africans as that of being supportive and permissible.³⁴ For him still, those who propagate the view that the Church defended the enslaved Black Africans are not fair to historical reality.³⁵

Some other works written by historians of the Iberian Maritime history also deserve mention here. First among them was the wonderful compendium written by Peter Russell titled "Prince Henry 'the Navigator' A Life" which was published in 2000. This work is very expository of the political alliance which the renaissance papacy made with the kings of Portugal and provided the template for understanding the exact politics pursued by the papacy in West Africa while permitting Prince Henry the Navigator and the kings of Portugal to forcefully drive the Black Africans into perpetual slavery.

Similar works that provided grounded historical key to understanding the papacy's "Political Marriage" with the kings of Portugal which fertilized the ground for the Portuguese easy access to the renaissance papacy in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries and lurked them into supporting the evil of the traffic in human beings of Black African origin during the Transatlantic slavery have also been made by some German historians versed in the Iberian Maritime history. The first in this range of works was undertaken by Carl Erdmann in his work "Das Papstum und Portugal im ersten Jahrhundert der portugiesischen Geschichte," published in 1928.³⁶ This was followed by the

³³ Ibid, pp. 52-56.

³⁴ Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion, 1440-1770*, p. 30.

³⁵ Ibid, pp. 31-32.

³⁶ Erdmann's Book is a monumental historical work that provides clear explanations regarding this political Marriage of Portugal with the papacy and showed how the first king of Portugal made an oath of total allegiance to the popes with the promise of winning more territories in Overseas that would be added to the papal Patrimony. This allegiance made the kings of Portugal feudal lords under the authority and protection of the papal Office in Rome. See, pp. 20-29, 45-55 of this work.

work of Bernhard Josef Wenzel titled “Portugal und der Heilige Stuhl” which was published in 1957.³⁷ The work of Eugen Weber “Die Portugiesische Reichmission im Königreich Kongo” published in 1922 is also very akin to the aforesaid works of German historians of the Iberian Maritime history but focused much attention on the interplay of relationship between the Royal Crown and the Holy Cross, Bible and the sword as well as religion and commerce which were at play in the Portuguese missionary activities in Kongo and other regions of West Africa that culminated in the horrendous traffic in human beings during the Transatlantic slave trade.

Following these earlier works are also some works undertaken in this area of study by a new generation of German scholars. Even though these works did not have this subject matter as their main goal of inquiry, they however, deserve mention here in this work. First among them was the work of Matthias Teipel with the title: “Die Versklavung der Schwarzen: Theologische Grundlagen, Auswirkungen und Ansätze ihrer Überwindung”, which was published in 1999. Teipel argued in this work that even though the theological foundations that justified slavery and the slave trade were not invented by the papacy in the time of the Transatlantic slave trade, the papacy did not at least make a rebuttal of these arguments that made slavery and the slave trade both attractive and defensible during their pontificates.³⁸ In concluding this aspect of his work, Teipel maintained that the papacy's reaction to the enslavement of Black Africans was one of silent approval.³⁹

The work of the historian Michael Hochgeschwender titled: “Wahrheit, Einheit, Ordnung: Die Sklavenfrage und der amerikanische Katholizismus 1835-1870,” which was published in 2006 is another contribution made by a German scholar. In this work, the author did concentrate on the papacy's reaction to the Transatlantic slave trade and used the weight of the traditional justification of the slavery and the slave trade to show the impact which the reception of this tradition made on the American Catholics especially the American Catholic Episcopacy in handling the problem of the Black African enslavement in their various ecclesiastical constituencies. This impact was such that the American Catholics together with their Episcopacy did not see anything wrong in the enslavement of Black Africans whom they held to be inferior human beings whose conditions as slaves on American soil was divinely predetermined. This conviction of the American Catholics made their Episcopacy to interpret the papal Bull of Gregory XVI in 1839 through which

³⁷ This work of Wenzel with the title, “Portugal und der Heilige Stuhl” traced the history of this papacy's political rapport with the Crown in Portugal from 1143 onwards with the oldest and first official Royal Alliance made by the king of Portugal with the papacy. See, pp. 10-23; 32-45.

³⁸ Teipel, *Die Versklavung der Schwarzen*, pp. 38-39.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 41.

the pope condemned the slave trade and the enslavement of Black Africans as a document that was not meant to address the enslavement of Black Africans as practised in the American society. Rather than accepting and honouring this papal denouncement of the enslavement of Black Africans contained in the said Bull, the American Episcopacy maintained that this denouncement was only directed against the Portuguese and the Spanish enslavement of Black Africans in the West Indies.

This line of argument was also taken up by Nicole Priesching in her recently published work titled: “Von Menschenfängern und Menschenfischern,” which appeared on the international Book markets in 2012. This work dealt mainly on the Christian practice of slaveholding and manumission with particular focus on the practice of slaveholding in the Church States in Rome. It threw a very critical searchlight on the level of involvement of the papacy in slavery and the slave trade especially in the corsair wars against the Barbary Muslim states of Tripoli, Algiers and Tiems and those fought against the Turks who were in the habit of capturing Christians and using them as slaves. The papal response to this was the possession of papal Naval Fleets and Galleys which used the services of the Galley-slaves purchased by the popes. These Galley-slaves were used in the Papal States as rowers during the corsair wars with the Turks. Priesching argued in this work that this papal involvement in slaveholding in the Papal States prevented the papal Office from having the moral authority needed to condemn the enslavement of Black Africans.⁴⁰ And in her earlier write-up titled “Die Verurteilung der Sklaverei unter Gregor XVI im Jahr 1839,” which appeared in 2008 in *Saeculum, Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte*, Priesching made in this write-up a wonderful contribution to the ongoing debate on the part played by the Church in the enslavement of peoples in history and maintained that those selling the idea that the Church had a tradition that condemned slavery especially the enslavement of Black Africans are not being fair to historical facts.⁴¹ This position and the various issues raised in the above works by the aforesaid authors helped in no small measures in the writing of this present academic inquiry made into the part that was played by the Catholic Church and her leadership in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade.

⁴⁰ Priesching, *Von Menschenfängern und Menschenfischern*, pp. 173, 174, 178.

⁴¹ Priesching, “Die Verurteilung der Sklaverei unter Gregor XVI. im Jahr 1839”, in: *Saeculum*, 59/1(2008), pp. 151, 152ff.

2. The Origins and Ideas of Slavery

2.1 The Concept and Types of Slavery in Today's Research

The term "Slavery" is one of the many forms of bondage or dependency in the history of humanity which existed in any known human society. Much of all we know today about the origin of the term "slavery" or "slave" comes from its Greek derivation. In the ancient Greek language, there were three popular terms used to describe a slave which were based on the functions he performed in the society. These are: "Oiketes," "Doulos" and "Andrapodon," - words which featured prominently in the fourth and fifth centuries BC. "Oiketes" which has its root in Oikos (family bond) was the commonest term used for a slave in Greek language and culture. It describes the place of a slave in the family where he performs domestic services for his master and his family members.

"Doulos" on the other hand is used to point out the public aspect of the status of a slave in the society. It describes a state of a human being subjected to another person upon whom his life and movement depended. And as such, he is one without honour, who has duties but without any rights due for a human being. Our employment of the term "slave" in the course of the development of this work shall be based on the etymological import contained in this term "doulos."

The last but not the least among the Greek words designated for a slave is "Andrapodon," which means literally "one with the feet of a man" (Menschenfüßler)⁴² in contradistinction to another Greek word "Tetrapodon," which means animals. In comparison with someone who is a noble, "andrapodon" refers to a person whose status is on an equal level with those of animals or in the modern parlance, one who is a Robot, who is at the beck and call of his master, owned and used as a property of his owner.

All these three derivations of the word "slave" revealed to us the various aspects of the fate and functions of a slave both in the family where he lives as well as in the society whose practices and customs condemned him to such conditions of living. They revealed also the main components of slavery which Peter Garnsey and Moses Finley agreeably identified to be three in number. According to Finley, these are: "The status of the slave as a property, his total lack of rights and his loss of family kinship."⁴³ In his own identification of these components of slavery, Peter Garnsey said: "A slave was a property. The slave-

⁴² Bellen, "Vom halben zum ganzen Menschen", in: Fünfzig Jahre Forschungen zur Antiken Sklaverei, p. 14.

⁴³ Finley, Die Sklaverei in der Antike, p. 91. Cf. Weiler, Die Beendigung des Sklavenstatus, p. 22.

owner's rights over his slave (property) were total, covering the person as well as the labour of the slave.⁴⁴ Going a step further in enumerating the components of slavery, Garnsey said: "The slave was kin-less, stripped of his or her old social identity in the process of capture, sale and deracination, and denied the capacity to forge new bonds of kinship through marriage alliance."⁴⁵

Over and above these three main Greek origins of the word "slave," one finds also in the same Greek language another known word "Σκλάβος" (sklabos) which means "Slav," a word which was specifically used for the Slavic people of Eastern Europe, who were used in the Middle Ages as slaves both in Greece, Rome and other parts of Europe that engaged in the practice of slavery. Confirming this, Moses Finley said: "Of course, it was the systematic culling of Slavs as bodies for purchase to be used in forced labour in the European Middle Ages that gave us our word "slave" for a human chattel."⁴⁶ All these derivations of the word slave have given us information about what one expects in the concept of a slave. However, it is important to note that any genuine conception of a slave or his condition of servitude (slavery) must contain the above three given characteristics or properties of slavery.

Conceived therefore from the point of view of "doulos," a slave is a species of property, that is to say, he belongs to someone else other than himself, he lives in a house that is not his own and works in a farm that belongs to another without salary for his labour or owning a part of what he produces. Leonhard Schumacher captured this condition of a total subjugation of one man to another when he defined a slave as: "A person who is directly and completely, that means, unreservedly and permanently subjected under the powers of a master."⁴⁷ And it was in this sense of reducing a person to the level of a property that Varro defined a slave as: "Instrumentum vocale (a speaking instrument)."⁴⁸ That implies, he could be enlisted alongside other material properties of his owner which could be bought or sold as a movable property (*res mobilis*) or as an immovable property according to the practice in operation in the society where he lives. Under this condition, Max Kaser was right when he said of slaves as follows: "They belonged to the business property such as a piece of land and livestock."⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery*, p. 1; Weiler, *Die Beendigung des Sklavenstatus*, p. 23; Herrmann-Otto, *Grundfragen der antiken Sklaverei*, p. 51.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Cf. Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, p. 12.

⁴⁶ Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, P. 25. And according to history, the Slavs of Eastern Europe remained the very source of supply of slaves for Europe and the Near East up to the 11th and 12th centuries. See, Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Schumacher, *Sklaverei in der Antike*, p. 13.

⁴⁸ Varro, *Res Rusticae* 1, 17,1 in: Ebner, ed. *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, p. 406.

⁴⁹ Kaser, *Das römische Privatrecht*, Vol. 2, p. 1.

Considered from the juridical view point, a slave is an object of the law and not its subject (he is like a he-goat or an ox). And as such, he has only duties. This kind of human status implied in the opinion of David Brion Davis “a condition of rightlessness on the part of the slave.”⁵⁰ Legally and most often socially, a slave is forcefully and painfully removed from his lines of natal descent. That is to say, he can neither defend himself in a law court nor raise a charge against his aggressor. He has no kin, and no relative can stand for his rights or even get vengeance on his behalf. Commenting on this fact, Moses Finley affirmed as follows: “Slaves are normally denied a viable family life and tradition, and are thereby deliberately cut off from the rich and complex ways in which the identity of the person is attached through the family to community traditions and empowerments.”⁵¹ In the same line of thought, Keith Bradley affirmed that: “Slaves were kin-less and were permitted no legally sanctioned familial bonds.”⁵² And in his Book, “Slavery and Social Death,” the Jamaican born American historical and cultural sociologist Orlando Patterson describes this condition of perpetual subjectivity of a slave as: “A permanent, violent domination of natively alienated and generally dishonoured persons.”⁵³ In the light of this total alienation, a slave is always an outsider and never an insider in the community in which he finds himself. Put in another way, he is a marginal individual even in his home town, one who is considered socially a dead person within the environment of his enslavement and one who has not the least control over himself, over his reproductive obligations or over his property. Christian Delacampagne is therefore right when he defined slavery as: “A system in which the labor force as such is no longer bought or sold, but the laborer himself is sold and bought. It is a system, in which the manufacturer of goods or commodity becomes a commodity himself and by so being, is banished from the world of the living or shortly put, sentenced to a societal death.”⁵⁴ In the light of this, he is one, who is dis-robbed of his humanness up to a point that he could be said to be a human being only in a symbolical sense.

This category of ancient slavery described above was adopted and received in the modern times by the initiators and propagators of the Transatlantic slavery, where slaves were bought and sold like other goods of transaction and treated as such. A distinctive characteristic of this type of slavery was its racial nature in the sense that it was the only slavery in the history of human slavery that selected a particular race of people as its object of enslavement. And this was

⁵⁰ Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 31. Cf. Lowance, *A House Divided*, p. XXVIII; Tise, *Proslavery*, pp. 103-115.

⁵¹ Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, p. 14.

⁵² Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome*, p. 27.

⁵³ Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p.14.

the fate of the millions of Black Africans, who were forcefully led into this kind of human subjugation for a period of four centuries. Slavery of this nature has been viewed by modern authors as a state of an individual, whose work is unpaid, one, whose movements are under the total control of another, and who is controlled by coercion and the threat of violence including death in an attempt to escape and one who must be returned to the owner or master if he stays away or escapes.

One becomes a slave through various means among which are: by means of war, indebtedness, kidnapping, condemnation by the force of law (example, condemned criminals), family bond (example, children born into slavery by their slave parents) etc.⁵⁵ In the opinion of Homer, who was one of the Greek born poets and philosophers of the Ancient times, slaves were mainly: “Prisoners of war, captured women, household servants, farm laborers, bond slaves and all who are thus characterized such that their masters are in the possession of the right of ownership over them.”⁵⁶

How this idea of keeping fellow humans as slaves and the reduction of their “being” to a level closer to that of animals first entered into the human intellect remains a mystery that is yet to be unravelled. However, a brief journey into the history of slavery in the human society will be of good help to make us understand better, how this “canker worm” called slavery ate deep into the fabrics of any known human society of the world.

2.2 The Idea of Slavery in Human Society

To talk about the institution of slavery in our own time appears as something that is very despicable and one of the sensitive areas where one dares not discuss openly especially among young people and children of today. And by the mention of the word slavery, people’s mind often focuses on Africa as if Africa was the only continent or society, where the practice of slavery ever found its expression in world history. This manner of thought is as a result of many publications by some Western authors, who are bent on raising the impression that the history of Africa is a history of slavery. This is but far from being the truth. The fact remains that until the age of civilisation, the practice of slavery was a “disease” that was found in any known human society of the world.⁵⁷ Moses Finley is therefore correct when he affirmed that: “Slaves have

⁵⁵ Schumacher, *Sklaverei in der Antike*, p. 26.

⁵⁶ Homer, in: *Lexikon der alten Welt*, p. 2812. Cf. Schumacher, *Sklaverei in der Antike*, p. 26.

⁵⁷ *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ed. Safra Jacob, Vol. 27, pp. 289-290. See also, Bernard Lewis, *Race, and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Enquiry*, Oxford 1990, p. 23ff.

been exploited in most societies as far back as any records exist.”⁵⁸ And in his own opinion, Kenneth Zanca maintained that: “Slavery existed in all cultures and developed along different lines in different cultures. It was never a static or uniform system either within one country or among neighbouring countries.”⁵⁹ Corroborating all this, Orlando Patterson affirmed that: “There is nothing notably peculiar about the institution of slavery. It has existed from before the dawn of human history right down to the twentieth century, in the most primitive of human societies and in the most civilised.”⁶⁰ Continuing, Patterson further held the view that: “There is no region on earth that has not at some time harboured the institution of slavery. Probably, there is no group of people whose ancestors were not at one time slaves or slave-holders.”⁶¹

Not too long ago, slavery reigned as a societal institution quite acceptable by most peoples, religions and cultures of the world. But the form and intensity with which this practice was carried out differed from one society and culture to another based on the influence of the religious, cultural and economic life of the societies that practised it. All the world known slave societies such as Russia, Brazil, Greece, Rome, Spain, America, the different societies of the Arabian world and the Middle East, and many countries of Asia and Africa, who participated in this practice of slavery saw it as something natural and therefore saw no reason for which it should not be welcomed as a normal and natural practice in the society. In the views of William Westermann, slavery was seen in all these slave societies as an unavoidable condition. This fact is made clearer when he wrote: “Throughout antiquity, from the Sumerians to the advent of the Colonate in the later Roman Empire, slavery existed as a primary and pervasive institution, accepted both by master and slave as a natural and frequently unavoidable condition.”⁶² Echoing this same fact, Rodney Stark maintained that: “Slavery was once universal in almost every society that could afford to have it. It is older than the Pyramids, no philosopher in Sumer, Babylon or Assyria ever raised his voice in protest or in condemnation of its existence.”⁶³ In the same token, Christian Delacampagne maintained that the practice of slavery in the above mentioned societies was an indispensable condition. Writing on this, he said: “We know that they understood slavery as something good, indispensable - in a word, very natural. It was so natural, so

⁵⁸ Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, p. 77.

⁵⁹ Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, p. XXIX.

⁶⁰ Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p. VII.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Westermann, *The Slave Systems*, p. 57. See also, Boese Wayne, *Study of the Slave Trade and the Sources of Slaves in the Roman Republic*, Washington 1973, p. 1.

⁶³ Rodney, *For the Glory of God*, pp. 291; 293 & 325.

closely connected with the daily life that people did not see any reason to question its existence.”⁶⁴

Based on this fact therefore, it is not an overstatement to assume that the history of slavery is as old as the history of humanity itself. Both the modern historians, anthropologists and archaeologists, who have engaged themselves in one study or the other on the origin of the practice of slavery in the human society are at a difficulty to pinpoint the exact period when and how the idea of slavery first entered into the human society. It is generally accepted among them that the origin of slavery is lost to the human memory. Despite this difficulty of arriving at an exact time when the practice of slavery originated in the human society, the famous French born historian Fustel de Coulanges (1830-1889) made an attempt at its location. In his view: “Slavery was a primordial fact, contemporary with the origin of society, it had its roots in an age of the human species when all inequalities had their *raison d'être*.”⁶⁵ Following this position, some assumptions have been made about the origin of slavery. These tended to believe that the practice of slavery is a product of the idea that it is better to enslave those detained for a crime or as a result of warfare rather than killing them out rightly. But if that is to be accepted, the question that quickly comes to one's mind here is: How then did the practice of slavery also affect those who never committed any crime and were not war captives? How can one explain the enslavement of many innocent men, women and children, who were forcefully reduced to the level of animals in human history? The simple answer to this question is found in the quest for profit, whereby some human beings were considered by the propagators of slavery as commercial goods.

In Summa, all these considerations made above are but indications that slavery is a practice that was found among peoples and cultures of the known human world. That being the case, it is then undeniably true that no one race, cultures or nations of the world could be said to have been entirely free from the practice of slavery or other forms of bondage in its history. Bearing this in mind, let us now consider the practice of slavery in its African context, which many authors have claimed to have opened the door widely for the enslavement of Black Africans by both the Arabic world and the Europeans which altogether spanned for more than 10 centuries.

⁶⁴ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 21.

⁶⁵ Fustel de Coulanges, “The Roman Colonate”, p. 3, in: Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, p. 135.

3. Slavery in West Africa Prior to Arab-Muslim Invasion

3.1 Brief Introduction

The preceding chapter of this section of our work has shown that the practice of slavery is not a prerogative of a particular culture, people or society, but something that existed in all cultures and peoples of the world. This fact goes a long way to nullify the opinion of some Western authors and historians like Walter Rodney who claimed that: “The indigenous slavery in Africa is said to have facilitated the rise and progress of the Transatlantic slave trade.”⁶⁶ Does that then mean that Black Africans are the architects of the fate which befell them at the dawn of the Transatlantic slave trade? Be that as it may, no one can deny the fact that slavery existed in the West African society as it did exist in others. In other words, West Africans like other peoples of the world also did enslave people from their own folk. But the question that one should ask here is: What kind of slavery actually existed among Black Africans in the West African society? As Christian Delacampagne rightly pointed out, the term slavery “can comprise of different practices in accordance with place or time.”⁶⁷ By reason of this fact therefore, it is pertinent to establish in this chapter of our work the kind of face which slavery in West Africa wore before the introduction of the Transatlantic slavery into the West African societies in the first half of the fifteenth century by the Portuguese.

3.2 Blacks Enslaving Blacks

As earlier stated, it is a historical factum that Black Africans did enslave people of their own race in the history of their existence as a people. But what existed in West Africa prior to the external influence coming from the Arabic world and Europe could be better understood in the context of the Greek description of “Oiketēs” (family bond) which describes the duties of a slave in the family and locates the place of a slave also in the family. Among Black Africans, the proper place of a slave was in the family where he lived and discharged his domestic duties without much discrimination from the other members of the family. Coming to this awareness, Walter Rodney confirmed the kind of slavery which existed in Africa when he rightly pointed out that: “Sometimes what obtained in Africa was a quasi-feudal exploitation of labour by a ruling elite, who received the greater proportion of the harvest. More often than not, the

⁶⁶ Rodney, *African Slavery*, p. 431.

⁶⁷ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 13.

domestic slaves were members of their masters' household."⁶⁸ And being members of the household of their masters, Rodney further argued that they were not taken to be right-less individuals, but rather as persons with some basic human rights. Expressing this view, Rodney said as follows: "They could not be sold except for serious offences. They had their own plots of land and rights to a proportion of the fruits of their labour."⁶⁹ Continuing, Rodney affirmed that: "Slaves in Africa could marry and their children had rights of inheritance, and if born of one free parent often acquired a new status. Such individuals could rise to positions of great trust, including that of a chief."⁷⁰

The origin of this practice of slavery in the West African society is something that is lost to human memory. That is to say that the practice of slavery among Black Africans began from time ab initio. A proof of this fact can be found in the numerous words which could be translated to connote the word "slave" in many West African languages. For instance, among the Igbo speaking part of Eastern Nigeria which harbours one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa, the word slavery means "Ohu" which reflects a state of a restricted life condition, a life of dependence on another, a form of subjugation. And one who finds himself in this state of living is called in the same Igbo language "Nwa-ohu" which means, someone labouring under the burden of slavery, one who is not in full control of his life, who depends on another for his existence.

However, recent archaeological and ethnological studies carried out in Africa in the 1990s have been able to discover the reasons for which this form of life ever existed in the West African societies. One such reason is the fact that West African social environment allows for social stratifications just as it existed in the ancient Greco-Roman world. This fact accounts for the existence of an environment that is replete with many kings, chiefs and traditional title holders. Historical records had shown that wherever such environment existed, the tendency for the spread of social inequality and differentiation along lineage groupings is always very high. The resultant effect of such social differentiation is the inclination to see other people outside of the "reigning" groups or family descent as inferior human beings, who are just left with only one option - that of reduction to servitude. This factor really accounts for the good number of West Africans who became traditionally slaves of their fellow Africans especially the chiefs and the African title holders. In his wealth of archaeological experience, Bassey Andah corroborated this point when he said: "The presence of social inequality within the African societies presupposes the

⁶⁸ Rodney, *African Slavery*, p. 432.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

existence of a class of people who were deprived of their rights and place in perpetual servitude.”⁷¹

Another reason for the existence of the practice of slavery among Black Africans has been identified to be the fact that slavery is just one of the features that accompanied the rise and development of kingdoms and empires in all the known cultures and peoples of the world. In her history, West African society is well known for the existence of such empires, Caliphates and kingdoms. Kingdoms and empires such as Ashanti Dynasty, Kanem-Bornu, Benin, Oyo, Mali, Songhay, Egba kingdom, Nri kingdom, Yoruba, Sokoto Caliphate and many others of their kind come to mind here. Historical records have shown that wherever these empires existed, there is always the tendency to compete with one another negatively as well as to subjugate one another to one’s own advantage. And one of the ever known methods of achieving this in the history of mankind has remained the waging of wars with one another. This was done either for reasons of territorial expansion or for an utter show of greatness and supremacy in their regions as well as the natural instinct to dominate others. The result has always been that many ordinary citizens were captured and made slaves of the empire that has defeated theirs during war. Alluding to the historicity of this fact, Bassey Andah affirmed that: “Through the annals of history, all the ancient empires and kingdoms had captive population to serve in various capacities in their palaces, cities, towns and rural areas as they saw fit. The Syrian, Babylonian, Egyptian power states, Ethiopia, Nubia and later on the Greek and Roman Empires.”⁷²

Furthermore, the West African society is also one that is based on kinship and dependence. To talk of a family in an African context does not just mean a house where a man, his wife and one or two children live. The West African society just like other regions of Africa, practices an extended family system which goes beyond a family constitution of two or more family members. In its African context, the family connotes any group from the smallest nuclear family to several thousand persons tracing descent from a common ancestor through many generations.⁷³ Based on this patrilineal system of the West African society, it is not out of place for members of a whole community or town to identify and address themselves as brothers and sisters with whom they could not even intermarry. This is so because, every member of this community could trace back his identity and family-root to the same ancestral family-root. Helmut Bley confirmed this fact when he wrote: “The socially fundamental unity of all societies was the extended family-bond, the lineage. Their members

⁷¹ Andah, “The Enslavement of Africans and Africa”, p. 4.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

trace their fatherly descent back to the common forefather, the original founder of their lineage.”⁷⁴ Each member of the family receives his or her own social identity and sense of belonging from this lineage. His family or community becomes his own social environment where he lives, moves and has his being. He freely expresses himself here and takes part in family decision making. That is why in the West African society, an individual is not and can never be greater than the community in which he lives. In this kind of ethnologically structured society, an individual is wholly dependent. Both his meaning as a person and the role he is to play in this set-up had to come from the family or community itself. Outside of his community, an individual has no meaning. The result of this dependency on kinship was the emergence of some forms of suppression and submission which can bring about subjugation of an individual or a group of individuals. In their studies on the ethnology of African societies, Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff were able to establish that:

Slavery in the context of traditional society, where the extended family or kinship group is the decisive instance of role allocation and as such the fundamental organizing principle of social relations is seen as an institution existing alongside others, which in the perspective of those affected are distinguished by the restriction of all their rights in favor of those of the family-head. Slavery is thus in line with other relationships of dependency such as client relationships and debt slavery, but also the relationship of the father to his sons and daughters.⁷⁵

However, one could lose the rights to one’s family-tie through some heinous and abominable acts such as murder, theft, suicide, adultery and sorcery, all of which were punishable with enslavement or banishment. Confirming this, Olaudah Equiano, who was a slave boy of Igbo origin forcefully kidnapped and taken into the Transatlantic slavery wrote in his Autobiography as follows: “Adultery, however, was sometimes punished with slavery or death, a punishment which I believe is inflicted on it throughout most of the nations of Africa. So sacred among them is the honour of the marriage bed...”⁷⁶ In most cases, those convicted of these crimes were at best considered to be put to death for the fear that their continued existence in the community could spell doom for the entire community by arousing the anger of the ancestors, who, though are dead, were still believed to be alive, keeping their watchful eyes over the families they left behind. The decision to punish a defaulter with the yoke of slavery was as a result of their belief in the sanctity of life. It was very

⁷⁴ Bley, *Sklaverei in Afrika*, p. 21. This citation reads in German thus: “Die soziale Grundeinheit aller Gesellschaften war der erweiterte Familienverband, die Lineage. Ihre Mitglieder führten sich in väterlicher Abstammung auf einen gemeinsamen Vorfahren, den Lineagegründer zurück.”

⁷⁵ Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, in: Bley, *Sklaverei in Afrika*, p. 10.

⁷⁶ Edwards, *Equiano’s Travels*, p. 2.

abhorrent to the Igbo society to shed the blood of any of her members. Owing to the fact that there were no prisons in the pristine African societies, where those considered as society-risks to the community could be kept under imprisonment, the alternative was to turn them into slaves. One who finds himself in such a condition was considered socially dead in the sense that he has disrobed himself of all the rights he has in the family. And this was the most painful aspect of the fate of those Black Africans, who suffered enslavement in the Arabic world as well as in the Caribbean. The fact that they were severed from their family lineage was like a sword that kept on piercing their souls throughout their life time. Slavery was therefore, a dangerous weapon of destruction of the social identity which was highly held in esteem by every African man and woman.

Over and above all these reasons, the domestic need in the West African society contributed much to the practice of keeping slaves. As we already mentioned, the proper place of the slaves in West Africa was in the family where he is assimilated as a member of the household. Prestige among the West African men was not judged from the point of view of how much money one has in the bank but rather it was seen from the point of view of the number of wives, children, slaves, sons and daughters- in-law he could boast of. Writing on this issue, G. S. Webster confirmed that: "A large number of wives is usually a demonstration of wealth and prestige."⁷⁷ That was the reason why most, if not every African man had prior to the coming of Christianity more than one wife under his roof, a point also which justified the practice of polygamy as an accepted cultural way of life. It was not just for sexual gratification that the practice of polygamy was put in place in the entire African society but rather, it was a means of raising children who later constituted the prestige of the African man as well as formed part of his labour force. This was confirmed by G. S. Webster when he said: "A chief regards his wealth in terms of the number of his followers rather than the number of his cattle and possessions, and a man counts his assets in terms of the number of sons-in-law whose services he commands."⁷⁸ Armed with his labour force (himself, wives, children, slaves, sons- in-law and daughters-in-law) the head of the family happily engaged himself in agricultural production of the basic food items which he used for the sustenance of himself and the members of his large family. Much emphasis was placed on farming in many West African societies in order to produce enough food to take care of the teeming African population. Among the Igbo speaking part of West African society, greatness among men was adjudged according to the number of tubers of yam which the head of the family could raise during

⁷⁷ Webster, *Labour Control and Emergent Stratification*, p. 72.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

the harvesting period. Access to land, labour and capital as means of production was easy to come-by. Any of the men who was able to raise an agreed number of yam-tubers within the shortest possible time, was rewarded with a cultural title of “Ezeji” (the king of yam) together with all his sons who were part of his working force and they were respected as great men among the men in their region. This brought about a spirit of healthy competition in farming among the people of this area. Everyone, both free-born and slave was engaged in the farming exercise to help support as well as promote his own head of the family to reach the desired greatness which brought honour not only to the head of the family and his sons but also respect to his wives, daughters and slaves as well. Simeon Barry lent his voice to this point when he rightly said: “In many African societies, children customarily worked for their parents, bridegrooms for their prospective in-laws, juniors for their elders, clients for their patrons, subjects for their chiefs, religious disciples for their spiritual leaders and so forth.”⁷⁹ In this spirit of competition in farming, everyone was active and no one was left out.

However, this emphasis on farming, whose goal was to produce enough food for the West African large families in particular as well as for the teaming African population at large, did employ the services of slaves for its realisation. But it has to be pointed out here that the work on the farms in the African set up was not a prerogative of any class of people, for instance, for slaves alone. Rather, it was a collective responsibility of both the head of the family and the members of his household. There was no particular area of the farm that was marked out for slaves to work alone. All worked hand in hand to achieve this onerous purpose. At times, it was even difficult to know who is a slave in the family and who is a free born because, there was no discrimination of that kind in the families of the African society. Attesting to this, Helmut Bley wrote: “Many of these slaves lived and worked just like their masters, such that it was impossible for both the Europeans and the Africans to differentiate them from their owners.”⁸⁰ Bley is not a lone voice in confirming this truth. Toeing his path, an early American Negro explorer of Southern Nigeria, Martin Delany held the view that it makes no meaning to attribute the term slavery to the traditional family set up among the people of Southern Nigeria which was made up of both slaves and free born. According to Delany: “The system is a patriarchal one, there being no actual difference socially between the slave and the children of the person with whom they live. Such persons intermarry and frequently become the heads of state...”⁸¹

⁷⁹ Barry, *Social Institutions and Access to Resources in Africa*, p. 68.

⁸⁰ Bley, *Sklaverei in Afrika*, p. 8.

⁸¹ Delany, in: Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 38.

What all these authors confirmed herein is that all the marked differences associated with slaves in the Atlantic slavery such as keeping them in chains, brand-marking them with the initials of their masters and loss of their real names as witnessed during the Transatlantic slavery were lacking in the practice of slavery among Black Africans. From all these factors that led to the existence of traditional slavery in African society, one can say that the practice of slavery in the African society was therefore essentially social in origin, domestic in character and economically marginal in all the societies in Africa where it found expression. A consideration of who the slaves are, and their manner of treatment in an African context will help us a great deal in understanding the true manner of the practice of slavery in Africa prior to the time of the external menace of the West African society from both the Arabic and the European slave raiders.

3.3 Who were Slaves among Black Africans?

Slaves in the Black African society like as it was in other slave societies of the world were either born or made by men. Most often than not, a greater percentage of the Black African slaves was man-made. But in both cases, their state as slaves was like a wound that heals with the passage of time. That is to say, no one in the Black African society was born and (or) made to remain a slave perpetually. One is a slave today and might become a leader of an African community tomorrow. Validating this truth, Davidson recorded as follows: "An Ashanti slave in nine cases out of ten possibly became an adopted member of the family, and in time, his descendants so merged and intermarried with the owner's kinsmen that only a few would know their origin... Captives, that is to say, became vassals, vassals became free men and free men became chiefs."⁸²

Slavery in Black Africa was mainly a product of warfare. Black Africans like every other people of the world have a lot of experiences of war in their history. They were indeed warlike in nature and the African society just like the Greco-Roman world extolled men of valour in war. War was even seen among them as a final means of resolving conflicts, boundary or territorial disputes among ethnic societies when all other efforts made at a peaceful resolution of conflicts failed. The warring societies of course did suffer much loss in the areas of men and women as well as in their land and properties. Those captured on both sides were made slaves. At times when the whole ethnic group fell into the hands of her enemies, she stood the risk of being made slaves of her enemy. By so doing, many men and women were forced into slavery as prisoners of

⁸² Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 38.

war for some number of years before they could be set free again. War captives therefore, ranked first in the class of those made slaves in Africa.

Another class of slaves among Black Africans were criminals who were convicted of crimes according to the norms and customs prevalent in the African society. They were mainly armed robbers, murderers, kidnappers of children and women for ritual purposes, adulterers and sorcerers. Their enslavement was always seen as a just punishment they had to bear for their crimes. These group of slaves were considered very dangerous and were seen as a serious treath to security and peace in the Black African society. Prior to the time of the Arab Muslim enslavement of Black Africans, that is, from the seventh to the tenth century, these criminals were at best condemned and put to death due to the fact that there were no such places as prisons or rehabilitation homes where they could be kept in custody. They were the set of men and women who were legitimately sold to the Arab Muslims and European slavers during the Mediterranean slave trade by their African collaborators. This was confirmed by Equiano Olaudah when he said: "Sometimes indeed, we sold slaves to them, but they were only prisoners of war or such among us, who, as had been convicted of kidnapping, or adultery and some other crimes which we esteemed heinous."⁸³ According to the norms and customs in place in the Black African society, such men and women were no longer considered worthy to live side by side with others in the society. As a result of the nature of the crimes they committed, they did no longer win the mercy and sympathy of anyone, even those of their family members who felt very disappointed with them. There is a saying among the Igbo speaking region of West Africa which goes a long way to support the punishment with enslavement handed unto criminals in Igbo land. This maxim states as follows: "Ala echekwala onye aru," that means, the mother earth should not harbour criminals or those guilty of abominable offenses. This concept was based on their belief that the mother earth is sacred and as such those who defiled this sacredness should be kept out of the society or at best be put to death so as to maintain order and security in their society. Confirming this, Françoise Latour recorded as follows: "It was normal to sell one's own kind if they were prisoners of war, or were under sentence for adultery, felonies or magical reasons. It was also a more refined way of getting rid of hot-heads and undesirables than by putting them to death."⁸⁴ This method of punishment with slavery for abominable crimes was kept alive until the Arab slave traders penetrated into the regions of sub-Saharan Africa in the later part of the eight century. From this period onward, those guilty of abominable crimes in the

⁸³ Edwards, Equiano's Travels, p. 6.

⁸⁴ Da Veiga Pinto, "Portuguese Participation in the Slave Trade," pp. 120-121.

West African region of the Sahara were sold as slaves to the Arab merchants where they were left to their own fate.⁸⁵

Another group of slaves in the Black African society were men and women who became slaves as a result of their inability to repay their debts. They were called debt-slaves. They loaned themselves as slaves to their creditors and worked for them till they were able to do enough compensation commensurate to the debt they owed before they were set free again. There were also many families who gave up their wards into servitude as a result of economic hardship. The most affected in this practice were mainly families with many children who could no longer find enough means of supporting their families. In order to escape from the merciless hands of starvation and untimely death of both the parents and their children, some children and their mothers were let out to be taken as slaves (indentured servants and maids) to the families where they could find succour for themselves and their wretched families. Many of such children remained in their status as slaves until they could save money to buy their freedom once more, or by good behaviour. There are no historical records as to know the number of people who were victims of the enslavement in Africa before the advent of the Arabic and European slave raids on the African shores. However, their manner of treatment and the place they occupied in the African society are found on the pages of some historical books. Let us briefly consider the place of the slaves in the African milieu and the treatment which they received from the hands of their masters.

3.4 Treatment of Slaves among Black Africans

The practice of having slaves in a traditional African family set up for domestic usage was not a capital based slavery and this practice as well had not the character of “slave for life.” By reason of the fact that these slaves were Black Africans and owned by their fellow Black Africans coupled with the fact that one who is a slave today can be the chief of a region in African society tomorrow, the question of their being treated with some respect as humans therefore leaves no room for doubts. As already indicated above, slaves in the Black African society were considered members of the household. They did not suffer the kind of discrimination like the slaves in other slave societies like Rome and Greece which had an overriding population of slaves who were not of Greek and Roman origin. This was a basic factor that militated against ill-treatment of slaves in a Black African context. There was a total lack of color difference and every member of the society could easily interact with one another. Writing on this, Bassey Andah affirmed: “Perhaps an important factor

⁸⁵ Ibid.

militating against societal rigidity against slaves in the Black African society was the absence of a visible color barrier.⁸⁶ That being the case, slaves in the Black African society were integrated into the families of their owners. They were regarded as humans with rights and accepted members of the society who could sit together with their owners and converse with them, eat and celebrate feasts with them. Confirming this truth, Equiano Olaudah, a slave boy from the Igbo speaking part of West Africa, who himself experienced the treatment of slaves in Africa as well as in the West Indies compared his experiences of the two worlds and narrated as follows:

But how different was their condition from that of the slaves in the West Indies! With us they (slaves in Africa) do no more work than other members of the community, even their master, their food, clothing and lodging were nearly the same as theirs, and there was scarcely any other difference between them than a superior degree of importance which the head of the family possesses in our state, and that authority which as such, he exercises over every part of his household. Some of these slaves have even slaves under them as their own property and for their own use.⁸⁷

This level of assimilation into the society enjoyed by the slaves in the African society before the advent of the Arab and European slave raiders is something very peculiar. Going a step further in elucidating the level of assimilation of slaves into the families of their owners in the African context, Equiano Olaudah recalled what applied in his days (1745-1789) as a slave boy in the house of a wealthy West African woman who bought and kept him as her slave when he was only 11 years old and treated him almost like her own child. Narrating the story of his life, he recalled:

...the next day, I was washed and perfumed, and when meal time came, I was led into the presence of my mistress and ate and drank before her and her son. This filled me with astonishment, and I could scarcely help expressing my surprise that the young gentleman should suffer me, who was bound, to eat with him who was free, and not only so, but that he would not at any time either eat or drink till I had taken first, because I was the eldest, which was agreeable to our custom. Indeed everything here, all their treatment of me made me forget that I was a slave.⁸⁸

Slaves among West Africans were never seen as commodities to be bought or sold in the sense that the goal of the practice of slavery in the African context was not to establish a slave economy as it was the case in a capital-based slavery, where slaves were paraded like commodities for sale and handled like

⁸⁶ Andah, "The Enslavement of Africans and Africa", p. 5.

⁸⁷ Edwards, Equiano's Travels, p. 9.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 19.

properties. Echoing this point, Helmut Bley affirmed that: “Most of these slaves were not meant for sales. Also in the strictest sense of the word, there is no right of ownership over them. In other societies on the contrary, free people could even be sold, but slaves however, could not be sold.”⁸⁹ They were not forbidden to marry, build houses or raise families of their own. In terms of property and other civil rights, they earned money and acquired properties of their own. Laying credence to this point, Basil Davidson affirmed that: “A slave might marry, own property, himself own a slave, swear an oath, be a competent witness and ultimately become heir to his master.”⁹⁰ Their owners also allotted them some portions of land where they could do some farm-works to raise money so as to sustain their own families.⁹¹ This fact was also echoed by Basil Davidson who compared the status of slaves in West Africa with those of serfs in Europe. According to him: “His status often was comparable to that of the bulk of men and women in Western Europe throughout the medieval times.”⁹² Continuing in his comparison, Davidson affirmed that: “The “slave” peoples of the hierarchical or “centralizing” states, whether near the Coast or Inland across the Sudanese Grasslands, were in truth serfs and ‘clients,’ often with valued individual rights. Their status was altogether different from the human Cattle of the slave ships and the American plantations.”⁹³

However, it has to be pointed out here that there were also some societies in Africa that were unfortunately rigid in their treatment of war captives and even kept their neighbouring city which they defeated at war under enslavement for a long period of time. Some of these societies kept their captives rigidly in their place and did not allow them much freedom as slaves in many societies of West Africa were given. Be that as it may, their status as slaves was not a visible one as such in the sense that they were allowed to intermarry with the men and women of those societies that kept them as slaves. And by so doing, their servitude came to an end. Lending credence to this view, Bassey Andah affirmed that: “The important thing to note is that in most of Africa south of the Sahara, prior to the onset of the onslaught of the Arab and European Transatlantic slave trade, the slave status was not a visible one. If anything in most societies slaves were quickly absorbed and one major institution used was marriage.”⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Bley, *Sklaverei in Afrika*, p. 8.

⁹⁰ Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 38.

⁹¹ Ann O’ Hear, *Agriculture in Illorin during the Pre-Colonial Rule*, in: *West African Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 28, 1998, p. 126.

⁹² Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 37.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Andah, “The Enslavement of Africans and Africa,” p. 5.

Furthermore, despite the favourable treatment most of the African slaves received from the hands of their masters, there were those of them who lost their lives just for the fact that they were slaves in order to meet up with some inhuman religious and traditional practices of burying some slave-owners alongside with some of their slaves, a practice which was prevalent almost in all the African societies prior to the advent of Christianity. So the demand for victims to be killed at funerals of kings, prominent men and women, as well as for some religious rites and political ceremonies was always met by slaves. Such ritual practices were prevalent in Egypt especially during the time of the Pharaohs as well as in many other West African societies. And this ritual practice with slaves formed the other side of the status of slaves in the African society and the treatment which they received from their masters. Such was the face of the traditional practice of slavery in the Black African society. It was not the type that was witnessed around the second half of the seventh century when the campaign for the Islamic expansion brought in Arab Muslims and their traders into the shores of West Africa. It was through their disguised motives and exploits that the trade on human beings was made a lucrative business for the first time in the West African society and led her to put on the veil of being a reservoir for the supply of slave labour for the rest of the world as witnessed during the Transatlantic slave trade in the early beginnings of the fifteenth century.

3.5 Arab-Muslims Enslaving Black Africans

There is no event in the history of West Africa until in the seventh century that negatively changed her life and the relatively peaceful environment she has enjoyed all through the ages than the Arab-Islamic expansion and her consequent enslavement of Black Africans. This encounter which initially pretended to be a normal trade relation between Black Africans and Arabian merchants later turned out to be a politically motivated religious cum territorial Islamic expansion and exploitation of the West African society. And it was this encounter that exposed for the first time Black Africans as slaves on the Mediterranean scene. Enslavement of Black Africans at this level began as early as the seventh century AD and continued to take its harsh toll on them for a long time until in the fifteenth century when the ravages and the mess in which Africa was left thereafter was brought to its final conclusion by the Transatlantic slavery. This length of time was according to many historians like Christian Delacampagne the golden age for the spread of Islam in both the African society and in some parts of Europe.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 118.

The Mediterranean slave trade was a trade that linked Africa with the Persian Gulf, Europe and the Indian Ocean. As a lucrative trade, it concentrated mainly on the North African ports of Massa, Saleh, Tangier, Honein, Algiers, Bone and Tunis. According to the historian G. R. Crone, the European participants of this trade “were the Normans of Sicily who had been amongst the first in the field, but later the Pisans, Genoese, Marseillais, and Venetians.”⁹⁶ Even though some slaves of European extraction were involved in this trade, it was however to a larger extent a trade on Black African slaves and gold. This fact of involvement of slaves of non-African origin such as the Tatars, Mongols from farther East and Russians as well as Ukrainians from the Northern hemisphere made this trade a non-racial slave trade. This truth has been confirmed by Philip Curtin when he said: “The Mediterranean slave trade made no distinction in terms of race, colour or religion.”⁹⁷

The Arab Muslim-world was at the helm of affairs in the planning, organisation and enterprise of the Mediterranean slavery and its principal actors were the Muslim merchants, whose main objective was to spread Islam in Africa. Jews, some European slave merchants, Berbers and of course some Black African kings and their collaborators also did play a vital role in the enhancement and progress of this trade. The Jews for instance played the role of the middlemen between the Christians from Europe and the Maghreb Muslims of North Africa. This fact was confirmed by G. R. Crone when he wrote: “While Christians remained at the coast, the Jews who were their middlemen did the trade in the interiors. The Jews had long played an important part in the commercial life of North Africa and from their “Mellahs” on the coast had spread into the oases of the Sahara and thence into the Sudan.”⁹⁸

At the back of the mind of the Arab-Muslim merchants who came into Africa in the late seventh century for trade transactions was the spread of Islam. They saw Islam as an instrument of organising the African society according to their own mind-set and interest. Little wonder then did they see slavery as an unquestionable part of human organisation. According to Ibn-Khaldun (1332-1406), who was the greatest historiographer and historian of the Arab world: “It was through slavery that some of the strongest Muslims such as Turks learned the glory and blessings, and were exposed to divine providence.”⁹⁹ This accounted for the many holy wars (Jihad) carried out against the Northern African nations of Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Mauritania, Tunisia and Sudan between the eight and the tenth centuries, which forcefully made them to succumb to the Islamic influence and power and turned them into Islamic

⁹⁶ Crone, ed. *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents*, p. XII.

⁹⁷ Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, p. 10.

⁹⁸ Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents*, p. XII.

⁹⁹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 37.

societies. Those who refused this Islamic expansion were turned into slaves. Slavery therefore, was seen as a lawful means of conversion of non-Muslims into the Islamic religion.

In the Arabic world, slavery has been in practice since the early times. The practice of enslavement was seen as something normal and lawful even before the coming of Islam in this region. The slave trade in this region has also a long history. The Arabians were in the habit of buying and selling men and women of their own folk and the neighbouring societies around them. Being trained in the art of understanding the changes in the moon and the sun, they were able to know when to sail to the eastern coast of Africa in order to hold Africans captive and sell them to their European counterparts and to the region of the Indian Ocean. And when Islam came, they did not find any verse of the Koran and the teaching of the prophet Mohammed which out-rightly condemned their participation in the slave trade. According to the historian Murray Gordon: "There is no part of the Islamic world that called the practice of slavery into question."¹⁰⁰ The truth contained in this statement is predicated on the fact that even the Koran permitted the practice of enslavement. Thus in this holy Book, the prophet wrote: "We have made lawful to you the wives to whom you have granted dowries and the slave girls whom God has given you as booty" (Koran, 33:50). This verse of the Koran did not only allow the practice of slavery but also permitted the taking of women during wars as booty or spoils of war as a God-given right to the Muslims.

Again, the earliest sets of laws in ancient Mesopotamia popularly known as the laws of king Hamurabi (1780-1750 BC) supported as well as encouraged the practice of slavery. This set of Laws was given by the king of Babylon in 1750 BC and formed part of the Mohammedan's and Roman-Syrian laws.¹⁰¹ This code of laws of king Hamurabi made clear provisions on the institution of slavery. It recommended acquisition of slaves through purchase abroad, captives in war and conversion of freemen degraded for debt or crime into slaves. A section of these rules also prescribed death as a penalty for "anyone who helped a slave to escape as well as for anyone who sheltered a fugitive."¹⁰²

Despite this prohibition on manumission of slaves in the Hamurabic code of laws, one still finds a portion of the Koran where it recommends manumission for slaves as an act of piety. For example, chapter twenty-four of the Koran recommends liberation of slaves as follows: "As for those of your slaves which wish to buy their liberty, free them if you find in them any promise and bestow on them a part of the riches which Allah has given you" (Cf. Koran, 24:32). It

¹⁰⁰ Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, p. 44.

¹⁰¹ [www.historicaldocuments.com/Hammurabic Code. Html](http://www.historicaldocuments.com/Hammurabic%20Code.html), visited on April 7, 2012.

¹⁰² Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 25.

was the message contained in this verse that motivated the third Caliph Ibn Othman (577-656) of Saudi Arabia to buy over two thousand slaves with the sole intention of granting them manumission afterwards. The Islamic law also prescribed that free Muslims should not be turned into slaves. Only infidels should be made slaves as a way of compelling them to embrace the Islamic faith. This was the fate of many African Christian societies of North Africa who refused to embrace Islam as their own religion. And in this sense, religion was made a weapon of enslavement against those Black Africans who did not belong to the Islamic religion.

With this kind of justification of slavery in the Muslim world, the stage was now set for the restructuring of the African life and society in a manner that will suit the Muslim concept of slavery and governance of their new territories. Muslim merchants did not have any remorse of conscience in executing their assault on the African society. Having succeeded in bringing the Northern African states under their power and control, they made their way into the Eastern and Western parts of Africa in search of Black slaves to be sold into the Mediterranean regions and to Europe as well as to expand their territorial stronghold in Africa. And with the help of the Northern African states, it did not take the Arab-Muslims much to invade and subject the large kingdoms of Mali (Timbuktu), Angola and Songhai under their exploitative control. Even the powerful Christian kingdom of Ethiopia in the East, which had no single Muslim before the holy war was waged against it in 1520 succumbed to the Islamic power. Those turned into captives were sold as slaves into the regions across the Red sea as well as many Christians who resisted these Muslim incursions.¹⁰³

In their bid to make a maximum profit from this trade, the Arab-Muslims ensured that they had a strict monopoly and control of the Black African society and markets so that their European merchants will not intrude into West Africa to have a direct trade link with their Black African counterparts. To achieve this motive, they established six trade routes for a free flow export of captured Black Africans as slaves to Arabia, the Red sea and the Indian Ocean regions. Paul Lovejoy explains these routes as follows:

the first went north from ancient Ghana to Morocco, a second stretched north from Timbuktu (Mali) to Tuwat (Algeria), a third passed from the Niger valley and the Hausa towns through the Massif to Ghat and Ghadames, a fourth travelled north from Lake Chad to Murzuk in Libya, a fifth reached north from Dafur in the eastern Sudan to the Nile valley at Assiout and a sixth passed north from the confluence of the Blue and the white Nile to Egypt.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Cf. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 25.

With these trade routes on ground, the next step taken was to create some African middlemen to control the caravan routes across the Sahara desert. The group of men who won the favours of the Arab-Muslim merchants were mainly from the Berbers (Libyans) called the “Tuaregs” who were dwellers in the regions closer to the desert. They mounted control posts on the various caravan routes across the desert and collected tolls from the owners of the caravan carrying the Black African slaves into Arabia and the regions of the Mediterranean coast. In order to fulfil their obligation in capturing slaves for the Muslim merchants, they were in the habit of mounting incessant slave raids on the settled communities of West Africa south of the Sahara, thereby kidnapping men and women from Songhai, Mali, Bornu and Guinea whom they sold to the Arab Muslim world. According to Paul Lovejoy, the reason for these attacks was that these regions “were more exposed to raids from desert nomads (Tuaregs), whose use of camels gave them the advantage of strategic surprise.”¹⁰⁵

In the tenth century, the Arab Muslims established a slave commerce between the Christian merchants of Europe represented by the Normans and the Muslims of the Mediterranean coast. But these merchants from Europe were not allowed to establish direct business links with the Black Africans living in the hinterland regions. However, their needs were supplied by the Arab middlemen positioned at the various Arab slave ports such as the ones in Cadiz, Timbuktu and Sijilmasa (southern Morocco) who had direct contact with the West African products such as slaves, gold, ivory, ebony, dyed goat skins and Malaguetta peppers. And in return for these West African products, the European merchants brought with them products such as glass beads, weapons, cutlasses and woollen goods.¹⁰⁶

The nature of this trade is revealed in the kind of slaves demanded for its propagation and maintenance. They were mainly women, children, some men and Eunuchs. But women and Eunuchs were always on higher demand than the men, and their prices were also higher than those of the men. Confirming this, Paul Lovejoy said: “Muslims too wanted women, not men as is evident in the higher prices for women in the Muslim trade.”¹⁰⁷ The male children were trained for military as well as domestic services. Young girls were also given some domestic training but the prettiest among them were placed in Muslim-Harems as concubines where they were used for sexual activities. Some of the slave girls worked in Muslim Courts as cooks both in the cities of Cordoba and in Baghdad. The adult males and the rest of the women among them were

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 29.

¹⁰⁶ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁷ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, p. 20.

given menial as well as laborious duties. The Eunuchs were also highly rated in the Muslim world. They were used as administrators in the government as well as overseers of the Muslim Harems.

In general, slaves played an important role in the Islamic world. They were not often used for productive services but rather mainly for domestic services. They were also engaged in textile production, mats, basket-weaving and other lucrative craft works. Even when some of them were put in production services, they were mainly placed to work in salt-mines of Arabia, Persia and northern Saharan areas. Sometimes they employed Black African male slaves in agricultural production as well as in gold mining located in Sudan, Ethiopia and the Zambezi valley. Writing about the role of the slaves in the Islamic world, Christian Delacampagne affirmed that: "Although the slaves played an important role, this was not central to the production process. If slaves sometimes worked in the fields and in the mines, they were still working mostly at home"¹⁰⁸

Sources of supply of these slaves for the various duties they discharged were mainly through warfare (Jihad), convicted criminals, kidnapping of women and children, seizures by *razzias* and probably by reason of unpaid debt. Self-slavery due to lack of fund to maintain oneself and family as well as religion and Birth were a common practice that formed part of the slave supply during this slavery.¹⁰⁹ Most often than not, a greater majority of the slaves were captured through slave raids organized by the African chiefs who are nominal Muslims. Such African chiefs were in the habit of giving orders to raid non-Muslim neighbouring communities with the goal of capturing non-Muslim captives to pay for the "Goods which they had selected from the North African caravans."¹¹⁰ The demand for these slaves in the Mediterranean world was steady and was ever met with quick response by the Arab Muslims. A special demand was placed on the Black African slaves, whose services were greatly needed in the sugar and agricultural plantations established in Portugal, Spain and Italy for economic generation. That was why a good number of Black Africans sold into slavery by the North African Moors were seen in the Mediterranean coast of Spain in 1250 AD. They came mainly from the Atlantic Coast of Guinea, Benin, Ethiopia and Mali. The Muslim merchants had great interest in Black Africans and would always want to have them in a larger number as slaves for their household. The Black African male slaves were considered a good asset for military conquests and protection in the Arabic world. This flair for the Black African slaves captured the views of the historian

¹⁰⁸ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 120.

¹⁰⁹ Savage, ed. *Slavery Abolition*, *A Journal of Comparative Studies*, Vol. 13, (April 1992), p. 7.

¹¹⁰ Rex Sean O' Fahey, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in Darfur", in: *Journal of African History*, 14(1973), pp. 29-45.

and author Thomas Hugh when he affirmed: “The enthusiasm for Black slaves was to be sure nothing like a private interest of the Muslims, they were also popular as slaves in Java and India in the Middle Ages, even the Chinese seem to have liked East African slaves.”¹¹¹

In order to respect the Islamic rule that Muslims should not be enslaved and at the same time to meet up with this demand for Black African slaves, the Arab Muslims organised some political strategy in the governance of many African societies under their control. They made sure that most African leaders were only those with Islamic aristocratic ancestry. Political appointments were restricted only to those who were Muslims and those who could identify themselves on ethnic grounds. That was why officials and merchants in all the northern and eastern African societies who took active part in the organisation and propagation of the trade in Africa were from the Muslim extractions. Their only option was to regard all the West African societies who resisted the Islamic expansion and rule as enemies of Islam and made them targets for slave raids and conquests.¹¹² As a result of this pressure, some West African societies such as Mali, Ghana, Bornu, Kano, Sennar, Songhai and Adal succumbed to the Islamic influence in the thirteenth century and were forced to participate in the slave trade. They embraced the Islamic concept and legalisation of slavery and dropped the traditional concept of slavery prevalent in the West African society before the advent of Islam.¹¹³ This newly embraced concept of slavery as well as its acceptance as a legalised trading activity became a fire brand for a speedy spread of the slave trade among the societies in West Africa. Incessant and endless wars, slave raids and kidnapping of non-Muslims carried out in these West African societies became the order of the day. Lovejoy lent credence to this, when he said: “This legalism is instructive of the process by which slavery spread in the Savannah regions of Africa. For those who accepted a Muslim interpretation, enslavement was a legitimate activity, war was a normal relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims who did not accept their subjugation.”¹¹⁴

This led to the creation of a society that was replete with slaves. For instance, just a slave-raid conducted by the Muslims from Bornu against Kanem in the northern part of Lake Chad in the later part of the thirteenth century “netted a thousand females and two thousand male slaves who were divided among the soldiers.”¹¹⁵ Also the Moroccan conquest of the Songhai Empire in 1591 left this part of West Africa in ruins and thousands of men and women were

¹¹¹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 43.

¹¹² Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, p. 17.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 30.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 32.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 31.

forcefully taken away as slaves. As a result of their huge number in Mali and Songhai Empires, it was estimated that the exchange rate for these slaves was 15 slaves for a single Arab horse. Attesting to this fact, Thomas Hugh recorded that: "Slaves were usually exchanged for horses: fifteen or twenty slaves for a single Arab horse. The low cost was because the Songhai had an almost limitless stock of captives: they had only to raid their weaker neighbours to the south in order to obtain all that they needed."¹¹⁶

These Black African captives were either carried off by boats across the Red sea and the Indian Ocean or were formed into caravans and marched to the Arab world across the dangerous routes of the Sahara desert. Before leaving the shores of Africa, the slaves were often assembled in the East African slave markets in Zanzibar where the Arab merchants and slave traders exchanged them with boats, sugar, salt, kauri, horses and other works of art. A good number of the Black slaves were sent to work in the sugar plantations belonging to the Arabians which were located both in North Africa, Spain and Sicily while some others were supplied either to the palaces of the Islamic Caliphs and in their harems, or they were sold to the European slave dealers, who in the fourteenth century were in a dire need of Black African slaves to work in their various areas of production especially in sugar plantations. Testifying to this, Thomas Hugh confirmed that some of these slaves "were put to work on the sugar estates founded farther south in Portugal, often by Genoese investors."¹¹⁷

On the areas of treatment of these slaves, one can generally say that the slaves in the Muslim world received better treatment than their counterparts in the Christian Europe. This fact could be justified on the grounds that the practice of slavery in the Muslim world was not racial in character. That is to say, it was not like the Transatlantic slavery that targeted only the Black Africans for enslavement. Another reason for the better treatment of slaves in the Muslim world is to be found in the teachings of Islam. According to Islamic teachings, masters were forbidden to treat their slaves like animals. This teaching was based on the words of the Koran which read: "O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes that you may recognise one another. The best among you in the sight of God is the most religious" (Cf. Koran 49:13). In the light of the teaching contained in this verse, both the slaves and free men were considered equal before God. And this being the case, the masters were not given the power of life and death over their slaves. They did not play economic roles of great importance like those of

¹¹⁶ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, pp. 46-47. Other sources held the view that about 10 to 15 Black slaves were exchanged for one Arabic horse. Cf. Crone, ed. *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents*, p. 17.

¹¹⁷ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 47.

them in the Western Christian societies did. They were assimilated in the families of their Muslim owners, where according to the Islamic slave-law, their masters were bound by the law to instruct their slaves on Islamic way of life. The law forbids also the practice of separating slave children from their mothers until they have reached the age of seven. Good behaviour was highly encouraged and demanded of the slaves which in return merited them emancipation and better treatment. Some of the slaves prospered in the Muslim courts and later rose to positions of honour. For instance, a slave called Badr later became the governor of Cordoba. Echoing this fact, Philip Curtin affirmed: "In the Ottoman's Empire, much slaves rose to powers and even became Sultans and governors of states."¹¹⁸ A good number of them served in the military especially in Egypt where a greater percentage of the soldiers called the Mamelukes was made up of slaves, some of whom king Al Hakam II (915-976) also employed as his personal bodyguards in the tenth century. The eunuchs among them occupied places of honour in the palaces of kings and homes of Muslim leaders. It was reported that in the tenth century, about eleven thousands of such slaves were found in the Caliphate of Baghdad either as soldiers, officials of the palace or as teachers, thereby performing duties which were denied their counterparts in the Christian societies of Europe.

It is difficult to have an accurate number of Black African slaves involved in the Mediterranean slavery for want of historical records. However, it is estimated that about 7 million Black Africans were taken off the East and West African Coasts to Arabia, the Red sea, Indian Ocean and Europe from the seventh to the fifteenth century AD. According to one source: "The East Africa accounted for a traffic in the order of 1000 slaves per year in the period from 800 AD to 1600 AD, the Red sea ports probably handled something like 2000 slaves per year in the same period, while the six main routes across the Sahara averaged from 3000 to 8000 per year."¹¹⁹

Be that as it may, the Mediterranean slave trade left untold consequences on Black Africans and in the African society and life. There were much loss of human lives caused by the incessant slave raids and warfare, fields and farms were destroyed thereby leading to famine and abject poverty for the survivors in the raided communities. As a result of this, many of their survivors, mainly old men and women and little children were faced with crippling hunger and starvation. Separation of families was a common phenomenon, most of the men were executed as a result of the high demand for their wives and children during this slave trade. The great demand for Eunuchs and the high prices placed over them caused many boys who were still in their prime stages of life

¹¹⁸ Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, p. 41.

¹¹⁹ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, p. 25.

to be castrated for the rest of their life, a situation that led to their untimely deaths due to the unsuccessful operations carried out on them by unqualified personnel. Confirming this, Paul Lovejoy rightly said: “Still other captives, the prime boys faced castration because the price for the eunuchs was always very high, and no wonder the price was high, since death from unsuccessful operations could be as large as nine boys out of ten.”¹²⁰ Also Louis Frank provided records of the number of young Black male slaves turned into Eunuchs during this slavery in the Muslim world. According to him: “Between 100 and 200 men were turned into Eunuchs annually at Abu-Tig, a small town in Upper Egypt.”¹²¹

On the contrary, this slavery did enrich many African kings and Empires especially those of Mali and Songhai Empires in the fourteenth century who connived with the Arab merchants in the supply of slaves and continued to live in luxury and in highly decorated palaces at the cost of their fellow Black Africans who were perpetually condemned to blind fate for the rest of their lives. Black African society was not only reshaped by the Mediterranean slave trade led by the Arab-Muslim merchants but also became deformed and exasperated by it and was forced to embrace a character that was foreign to her by nature. She could hardly recover from the dangerous tolls which this slavery brought to bear upon her sons and daughters than the Western European nations of Portugal, Spain, Holland, Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark and France began to dig a bottomless grave for her through their dangerous package wrapped in an unforgettable racial paper of the Transatlantic slavery. How this racial slave trade came into being and its *modus operandi* will form the subject matter of the next chapter of this section of our work.

4. Transatlantic Enslavement of Black Africans

4.1 Brief Introduction

The discovery of America by Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) in 1492 went down into the annals of historical records as one of the greatest events of the fifteenth century and also one of the unforgettable historical events that changed the face of the earth in the history of humanity. It was a discovery that not only overhauled the lives of those living in the Caribbean islands of South America but also that of those living in Europe and African continents. To

¹²⁰ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, p. 35.

¹²¹ Louis Frank, *Collection d' Opuscules de Médecine Pratique avec un Mémoire sur le Commerce des Nègres au Kaire*, Paris 1812, p. 202.

both the Caribbean islands of South America and Africa, it was an unforgettable historical event that decimated their continents and impoverished their people. But for Europe, it was an event that removed her from the economic hardship, political and social pressures of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which forced her to look for a solution outside of her continent and brought her onto the road to economic boom, industrial revolution and to the lasting glory of a developed continent.

It was a discovery that opened up a world trade, the so-called “Transatlantic slave trade” which linked Europe with America and Africa. The Transatlantic slave trade was a trade planned, directed and carried out according to the whims and caprices of some European nations. The reigning kings, princes and parliaments of many European major nation states actively participated in the organisation and propagation of this slave trade. This slave trade presented to Europe the long awaited opportunity to exercise her extraordinary supremacy over the rest of the world which she enjoyed since the medieval times. Africa and the Caribbean continents which featured in this slave trade played a dormant and subjugated role in the development of this trade. The speedy growth and spread of this slave trade made it to attract within a short period of time all the major European nations of Portugal, Spain, France, Holland, England, Sweden, and Denmark on the Atlantic Waters and let out in them the “sleeping lion” which led them to outmanoeuvre one another in an unhealthy economic competition.

To understand it better, we shall consider in this chapter the factors that necessitated the establishment and promotion of this slave trade. This will help us to know better, the reason why all the above mentioned European nations participated in it and their choice of the Black African race as the only race selected as a victim of this trade. It will also offer us an opportunity to know why they tried by all means to outsmart each other in their bid to control the markets established for this trade. These are some of the points that will be treated in this chapter.

4.2 How it all began

The thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries will always remain fresh in the minds of historians as a period of great need for survival in Europe. It was a period of many internal wars for territorial expansion such as the French-English war popularly known as “Hundred Years’ War” which began in 1337 and lasted up to the mid fifteenth century. The great Christian Crusades for the propagation, preservation and defence of the Christian faith carried out by Christians of Europe against each other as well as the ones carried out against

the militant Islamic religion and its control over the Holy Land and other places that formerly belonged to Christendom also took place within this period. Natural catastrophes of epic proportions and epidemics which destroyed thousands of lives and properties in Europe count as unforgettable moments that characterized this period. The so called “Black death” (1347-1350) quickly comes to mind here. This plague was a devastating pandemic that struck Europe for the first time in 1347. But before it ended, it has caused the entire Europe a great loss in its population. And in the opinion of the historian John Clarke, Europe “had lost one third of its population through famine and plagues in this century.”¹²² And as such, European nations of Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Sweden, Italy etc were under serious demographic pressures caused as a result of this epidemic, coupled with unending wars with one another, malnutrition, poverty, hunger, famine, flood, high death rate, growing inflation and other economic problems which brought about series of social and political upheavals in their societies. Portugal for instance, was hard-hit by this epidemic such that in the views of John Ure, its population between 1348-1349 was reduced “to well under one million people, who were thinly spread throughout the countryside rather than concentrated in cities or towns.”¹²³ Commenting on the situation of things in Europe in this epoch, Marc Venard wrote without equivocations that: “In this epoch, epidemics of catastrophic proportions, especially the plague had spread under a too numerous and poorly nourished population, who were struck with famine and wars.”¹²⁴

Given the pressures imposed as a result of all this, there was then the need to look for help elsewhere outside Europe so as to search for human and material resources that will enable them to sustain their nations. West Africa, the Far East and Asia offered a trading outlet. But the problem of the opposing Arab Muslim powers coupled with the activities of the Crusades prevented them from making a maximum utilization of travels over the land that would bring them to the “promised” land. There was therefore the need to make a voyage through seafaring to the source of the West African and Indian wealth. Through this means, a new trade route from West Africa to India was discovered and this brought about a moment of temporary respite for the nations in distress. In his article titled “Das Europa der Renaissance (The renaissance Europe)” Marc Venard is of the view that the affected European nations survived these economic and social pressures that characterised the thirteenth and fourteenth century Europe by means of: “securing a hegemony over their surroundings, but also whereby they sometimes imported food from

¹²² Clarke, Christopher Columbus and African Holocaust, p. 24.

¹²³ Ure, Prince Henry the Navigator, p. 16.

¹²⁴ Venard, ed. *Geschichte des Christentums*, Bd. 7, p. 500.

afar. So they determined the flow of the trade from more or less great distance, which has attained in this period a new booming stage.”¹²⁵

Items most dear to Europe to overcome her socio-economic pressures included land for farming, labour force, food crops and industrial resources. The journeys made to the land of Crusades (Near East) especially the first Crusades of the eleventh century brought them into contact with many food crops and other precious items such as gold, silver, copper, ivory and raw sugar materials some of which were brought home. Herbert Klein was therefore right when he said that: “It was the First Crusade at the end of the eleventh century that gave the Christians of Europe a chance to become sugar producers in their own right.”¹²⁶ Emulating the Arabians, who as late as the eighth century AD had cultivated sugar plantations in Sicily and Spain, European Crusaders used the Crusades of thirteenth century to cultivate sugar plantations in Syria and Palestine with the help of slave labour.¹²⁷ But owing to the Arab Muslim resistance, they were driven back and could not reap the fruits and gains accumulating from these plantations. They looked then for places in the West where sugar plantations could be cultivated. In this regard, Cyprus, Sicily, Spain, Southern Italy and Portugal with their favourable climatic conditions offered hopes of reaching the Promised Land. However, these places hadn’t enough acres of land needed for the cultivation of the sugar plantation as much as was required. As a result of this, there was indeed a great need to discover new lands outside of Europe, where they could plant the much valued sugar and other agricultural crops. This discovery was mainly undertaken by the European nations of Portugal and Spain. It was at this time that the Spanish Canary islands and the Portuguese Cape-Verde and Azores islands were discovered. And this was why in the views of Christian Delacampagne: “At the start of the fifteenth century the cultivation of sugar-cane plantation was introduced in the Portuguese islands of Madeira and Azores.”¹²⁸

Now that these areas have been discovered and cultivated, much labour force was needed for the day to day work on the plantations. And the problem of how to reduce costs in labour so as to make a maximum profit from these plantations became a major concern. Added to this reduction in the cost of production is the fact that these Islands were sparsely populated and could not provide the needed labour force. As a result of this, there was then the need to look for a cheap labour force elsewhere outside Europe which one could easily exploit so as to arrive at a maximal profit. It was at this juncture that the decision was made to employ the services of slaves in these farms. In the views

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 5.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 134; Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 6.

of Delacampagne, slaves of different origins who were bought from the Mediterranean regions in the first two decades of the fifteenth century were for the first time employed to work on these sugar plantations.¹²⁹ The use of slaves especially of African origin already in Spain and Portugal in the 1420s was not enough for the much works on the plantations in Europe. Portugal and Spain had long established trade contacts with the Arab Muslim merchants since the early Middle Ages, who at this period were still in control of the trade on gold and slaves in Africa. But this time around, Portugal and Spain did not want to hang onto the Arab merchants for the supply of these West African labour force and other material products so as to have them as much as they could. In order to achieve this, the Portuguese, who were well advanced in seafaring for years, discovered a new route of reaching to the very source of the African products located at the West Atlantic Coast of Africa through the sea voyage. This was done in order to avoid clashes of interests with the Arab Muslims, who were in full control of the land routes to these products across the Sahara. To achieve this, seafaring equipments were developed by the Portuguese for voyages and expeditions in Africa. And with the help of this, they were highly motivated to explore the interiors of the Coasts of Africa in search of West African slaves and gold.

Another serious factor that led to the establishment of the Transatlantic slave trade was the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Columbus was greatly encouraged and supported by the Spanish Crown precisely, king Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to make a voyage to Asia so as to open up a new trade link with the people of this region. It was believed at this time that gold, silver and other income generating products existed in a great quantity in this region. But he ended up landing to the West Indies, where he found these items also in a great mass. On his return, he made a very promising report of his voyage and discovery to the Royal Crown in Spain. Impressed by this promising report, the king of Spain was much encouraged to send a crew of Conquistadors who accompanied Columbus in his second journey to the West Indies in 1493. With the help of their military experience and superiority, they were able to overcome the resistance posed by the natives of the island called La Española - the present day Haiti and Dominican Republic, subdued them as well as seized their land and property. The outcome of this invasion was to establish Spanish colonies in the subdued areas and the subsequent reduction of the Indians to the status of a slave.

In order to exercise full control of authority and supremacy over their discovered islands in the Americas as well as to avoid any rivalry in the gains and profits that might flow from their investments in these colonies, the king of

¹²⁹ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 135; Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 5.

Spain under the cover of missionary expansion of the Church in the new colonies, sought for and secured the permission and authority of pope Alexander VI over the entire regions of the present day South and North America. The permission and authority granted to the Spanish king to exercise full control and ownership of this part of the world was contained in the papal Bull “Inter Cetera” of pope Alexander VI in 1493. According to Bruno Schlegelberger, the Spanish king got from the popes a total of five Bulls whose contents included among other things: “The transfer of the right of ownership over the newly discovered islands and mainlands to the Crown of Castile, citing the mission intent of the two monarchs in those regions and the prohibition of other Christian rulers from sending expeditions to the islands and mainlands discovered by Columbus.”¹³⁰

The authority of these Bulls of the pope gave the Conquistadors the opportunity to exploit the natives to do the works on their cultivated sugar and cotton plantations as well as to break the hard rocks in order to reach at the gold and silver mines. But as the natives of Española were not used to doing this kind of hard jobs coupled with the outbreak of “white” epidemics that killed them in their thousands, there arose the need to hold slaves to work in their place. And the lot fell on Black Africans at the suggestion of bishop Bartolomé de Las Casas, who in his bid to liberate the suffering Indians from enslavement suggested that Black Africans should be used to replace the dying Indian population in the slave works at the plantations and on the gold and silver mines. Following this suggestion, king Ferdinand of Spain in 1510 gave permission to import Black African slaves directly from the West African Atlantic coasts to the Americas. By so doing, the ball was rolled into motion for the smooth take-off of the Transatlantic slave trade.

4.3 Early History of Transatlantic Slave Trade

The history of the Transatlantic slave trade will be incomplete without the mention of a powerful figure and serious originator and promoter of this trade in the person of the Royal Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal (1394-1460). Prince Henry was the Portuguese initiator and motivator of European discovery of the West African Atlantic. It was even generally agreed among historians of the Transatlantic slave trade that the whole enterprise of

¹³⁰ Schlegelberger, *Ihre Armut macht uns reich*, p. 11. It reads thus in German: “Die Übertragung der neu entdeckten Inseln und Festländer an die Krone von Kastilien unter Berufung auf die Missionsabsicht der beiden Monarchen in jenen Regionen und das Verbot an andere christliche Herrscher, Expeditionen zu den von Kolumbus aufgefundenen Inseln und Festländern zu entsenden.”

exploration into the Coasts of Africa was under the control and leadership of this Prince Henry. He was an important pioneer in the history of the Atlantic slave trade and might be said to be “a representative European of his day.”¹³¹

Prince Henry was born in Oporto on March 4, 1394 as the third son of Queen Phillippa of Lancaster (*1360, reigned 1387-1415) and king John I (*1358, reigned 1385-1433) of Portugal. He was the duke of Viseu, Grandmaster of the military Order of Christ and Governor of the Algarves. As a young Prince, he was trained along with his two elder brothers Duarte and Pedro in the art of princely life by the knights of Aviz. He was greatly influenced by the spirituality of his mother Phillippa, whose aim was to see her sons to live reputedly and pious Christian life and to attain greater heights in life.

By reason of the tradition practised in the Royal palaces, his father king John I of Portugal wanted to settle his young princes with Estates so that they would be able to be on their own and face the responsibility of maintaining their own Estates and households. This led him in 1411 to assign to his first three Royal sons - Duarte, Pedro and Henry different territorial Estates and properties under his control inspite of the limited resources within his reach as a result of the huge expenses he incurred during the war of independence with Castile. Prince Duarte was given a household of his own at the age of 17 years, Pedro with 16 years. And Prince Henry at the age of 14 years received his own Royal Estates located on the hilly regions of North-Central Portugal called “Comarca da Beira” with its centre city located at Viseu as well as another Estate located at the South-Eastern part of Serra da Estrella called Convilham. With the meagre resources available to maintain these Estates, the Royal princes were challenged to look for economic help elsewhere to maintain the huge cost of running such Royal Estates. It was as a result of this that the entire Royal House of Portugal was committed to the task of improving their impoverished kingdoms through conquests for territorial and economic expansions of the kingdom of Portugal. This need and ambition led to the conquest and occupation of the Moorish city of Ceuta in 1415.¹³² And Prince Henry the Navigator was part of the Portuguese army Commander in the fight against the Moors in this Moroccan ancient city of Ceuta leading to its fall and capture in 1415.

¹³¹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 52.

¹³² According to David B. Abernethy, “Ceuta is a North African port and trading center located directly across the strait of the narrow promontory on which the town was built.” See, David Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, 2000, p. 1. The capture of this city of Ceuta had the significant effect of stimulating Portuguese efforts at exploration, trade and conquest along Africa's Atlantic Coasts. It was a northern terminus of trade routes bringing gold, ivory and slaves across the Sahara.

The administration of this ancient Moroccan city of Ceuta was left in the hands of Prince Henry the Navigator, who monitored the administration of the land with the help of an army Commander and Governor of this city appointed by his father king John I of Portugal. When the time came to be knighted as a reward for his bravery, Prince Henry was knighted by his father along with his two elder brothers and was given the title of the duke and lord of Viseu and Convilham. He chose as his Motto “*Talant de bien fiere*” (a hunger to perform worthy deeds). This marked the beginnings of the rise of the young Prince Henry the Navigator into power and fame locally and internationally.

After this battle, Prince Henry settled at the Portuguese city of Sagres in the neighbourhood of Lagos and Cape St. Vincent from where he cast his mind on the Atlantic Waters and worked out his strategy on how best to reach to the wealth of East India via the Atlantic sea route of West Africa with the intention of attaining economic glory by having control over the Indian and West African Trade. To arrive at this goal, he set out for himself five main aims in pursuit of his dream. These aims were outlined by the palace chronicler attached to the Portuguese Crown Gomes Eannes de Azurara (1410-1474)¹³³ in his famous work “*The Chronicles of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea.*” In this epic work, Azurara confirmed that his master Prince Henry carried out his discovery and conquest of West Africa for the following reasons: (a) To discover the Land that lay beyond the Isles of Canary and that Cape called Bojador, by reason of the fact that: “Up to his time, neither by writing nor by memory of man, was known with any certainty the nature of the land beyond that Cape.”¹³⁴ (b) To know if there were Christians in that land or havens where it is possible to sail without danger so as to engage in a trade with the people living there. (c) To ascertain the military powers of the Moors in the regions of North Africa so as to know the extent of their power. (d) To know if he could find a Christian king in that land, with whom alliance could be formed in the fight against the arch-enemy of the Christian Church: “For he sought to know if there were in those parts any Christian princes, in whom the charity and the love of Christ

¹³³ Gomes Eannes de Azurara was the chronicler attached to the palace of king Alfonso V of Portugal as well as the Royal Keeper of the National Archives of Portugal. He was the second Royal Portuguese chronicler who succeeded Fernão Lopéz (1380-1460) who was the first Royal Archivist attached to the king's palace in 1449. According to Peter Russell, “Azurara was no mere Palace Clerk but a person of consequence at Court, a protégé of Princes who were very much aware that it lay in the hands of chroniclers such as he to determine if and how posterity would remember them.” See, Russell, Prince Henry “*The Navigator,*” *A Life*, p. 5. Gomes Azurara was also a knight of the Military Order of Christ which financed the Voyages and military expeditions of Prince Henry the Navigator in West Africa. With the help of Prince Henry, Azurara was promoted to the rank of a Commander in this famous Order.

¹³⁴ Azurara, *Chronicles of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, p. 27.

was so ingrained that they would aid him against those enemies of the faith.”¹³⁵ (e) To spread the Catholic faith: “For it was his great desire to make increase in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and to bring to Him all the souls that should be saved.”¹³⁶

Gomes Azurara just presented herein the intention of his master Prince Henry the Navigator in a gentle manner so as to cover him up from being portrayed as a greedy Prince, whose main objective was to discover lands for the political expansion of his kingdom as well as to raise the poor economic powers of his Estates in particular and that of the Portuguese kingdom in general. Diogo Gomes, one of the Portuguese seamen and captains in the service of Prince Henry the Navigator, unlike Azurara, was honest enough to confirm in 1483 that his master Prince Henry was in a dire financial difficulty and as such, his embarking on the work of discovery of Guinea was to help meet up with his financial needs in administering his Royal Estates. This fact is made clearer when he wrote: “When the Prince began his explorations in West Africa, he wished to make contact with the lands from which West African gold reached the North in order to trade with them and to sustain the nobles of his household.”¹³⁷

However, the generally accepted truth among historians of Iberian maritime history remains that the main goals of Prince Henry were two in number namely: to use military conquests to expand Portugal politically and to have a monopoly control of the West African wealth flowing from the trade on gold, ivory and silver. It was these two major motives that propelled him into full swing action to discover a sea route to the source of this West African wealth, having known that the land route to the source of this wealth was unavoidably under the strong and unbreakable control of the Saracens, whom he described as the arch-enemies of the Christian faith. Attesting to this truth, the historian C. R. Crone upheld that:

At various times during the fifteenth century, the directors of Portuguese policy toyed with the idea of territorial expansion in Northern Africa, with the object of securing the trans-Saharan traffic for themselves, an alternative method and one promising more

¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 28. During the fifteenth century Europe, there was an awakening interest to know more about the mysterious Christian Priest-king, the so called “Prester John.” This Priest-king was believed among Europeans of this century to be the “Negus of Abyssinia (king of Ethiopia).” Initially, he was believed to be a ruler of the East Indies. This belief led to the idea of reaching him through the West African Atlantic Coasts so as to gain his support as a Christian king in the fight against the arch-enemies of the Christian Religion - the Saracens. For further details on this legendary Christian king, see, Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents*. p. Xixff; Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, p. 5ff.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 29.

¹³⁷ Azurara, in: Russell, *Spain, Portugal and the African Atlantic*, pp. 21-22.

success, was to attempt to establish contact with the sources of this wealth by sea, and so divert trade by land routes and the Moorish Middlemen.¹³⁸

This historical fact was also earlier documented by the historian Jéronimo Münzer in his work "Itinérario" which contains the reports of the Portuguese voyages to the West African Guinea from the periods of 1460-1495. In this work, Münzer attested to this fact when he recorded that Prince Henry: "Knowing that the king of Tunis, that is of Carthage, obtained much gold each year, he sent spies to Tunis, and having ascertained that this king despatched merchants to Southern Ethiopia who exchanged their goods for slaves and gold, determined to do by sea what the king of Tunis had done for many years by land."¹³⁹ In his own view, the historian Françoise Latour da Veiga Pinto maintained that the earlier Portuguese navigators' attempts to round the Atlantic coast of West Africa were prompted mainly by two economic motives. These motives are: "To discover the source of production of the Sudanese gold, which had so far reached Europe via North Africa, and to find the sea route to India and her silk and spice markets."¹⁴⁰ This fact was also attested to by the famous British historian Raymond Beazley when he affirmed that: "In any case, the riches of West Africa and the East India were the plain and primary reason of the explorations."¹⁴¹ Continuing, he narrated how important the Indian trade was for many European nations that were privileged to participate in it. According to him: "This Indian trade was the Prize of the world, and for the sake of this, Rome had destroyed Palmyra, and attacked Arabia and held Egypt, and struggled for the mastery of the Tigris. For the same thing, half of the wars of the Levant had been waged, and by this the Italian Republics, Venice, Genoa and Pisa had grown to greatness."¹⁴² He further maintained that it was for the glorious fame of this trade among the Europeans and its capability of making Portugal a great nation that Prince Henry was hell-bent to embark on the mission of rounding Cape Bojador despite many dangerous and mysterious legends that were involved in circumnavigating it. According to him: "In spite of the terrible stories of the

¹³⁸ Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents*, pp. XVII-XVIII.

¹³⁹ Basilio de Vasconcellos, ed. *Itinérario do Dr. Jéronimo Münzer*, Coimbra 83 (1932), p. 141. See also, Crone, *Voyages of Cadamosto and other Documents*, p. XVIII.

¹⁴⁰ Da Veiga Pinto, "Portugese Participation in the Slave Trade," p. 119. Cf. Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, p. 5. The Prince was aware that reaching the very source of the West African gold and exercising control over its source would yield to him more economic gains than those of controlling Ceuta. Hence his quest for discovery and conquest of West Africa.

¹⁴¹ Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 141. The historian E. W. Bovill also maintained the same view when he said: "The discovery of the Gold of Guinea was the primary object of Prince Henry the Navigator and his team of Conquistadors." See, Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, p. 114.

¹⁴² Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, pp. 141-142.

Arabs, Henry was able in the first years of the fifteenth century to find men, who would try to forlorn hope of a direct sea-route from Europe to the Indies.”¹⁴³

Other motives given above by Azurara for this conquest and discovery of West Africa such as the Crusade against Islam and the conversion of the pagans of West Africa into the Christian religion were secondary and only provided the moral support for the conquest-thirsty maritime Portuguese Prince and his team of Conquistadors for the military invasion of West Africa. And to enable him justify his intentions, he turned to the popes for support of his discovery and the extension of the Christian faith to the lands he was about to discover in the course of his conquest and explorations. And it was for this purpose that he sought and secured the permission of pope Eugene IV in 1443, who granted him the authority and the right of ownership over all the lands and places discovered along the West Atlantic Coast of Africa since the capture and fall of the North African city of Ceuta in 1415.¹⁴⁴ According to the historian John Ure, with the papal Bull of 1443: “Pope Eugene IV granted Prince Henry's requests. The pope was probably glad enough to hear of the prospects of new conquests for Christianity at a time when the Eastern fringes of Christendom were under such pressure from the Ottoman Turks.”¹⁴⁵ Continuing, John Ure affirmed that pope Eugene IV additionally granted Prince Henry: “Indulgences for the Church of Santa Maria da Africa which the latter had founded in Ceuta in 1418. Thus no doubts consciously consolidating the Church's hold on that city at a moment when its surrender might still come under contemplation.”¹⁴⁶ All the rights and privileges granted to Prince Henry the Navigator and the Royal Crown in Portugal by pope Eugene IV were confirmed by his predecessors especially pope Nicholas V in 1452 and 1454 respectively.¹⁴⁷ This shows the relevance of the papal Bull of 1443 as a foundational papal Bull in the history of the establishment of the Atlantic slave trade. It sets in motion all the powers both temporal and spiritual which the Crown of Portugal enjoyed in its history in West Africa. These powers were consolidated by pope Nicholas V (1447-1455) who in his two Bulls “Dum Diversas” of 1452 and “Romanus

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 140.

¹⁴⁴ The various documents containing the Royal Requests made by Prince Henry and the Crown of Portugal and the Papal Bulls granting those requests will be given full academic attention in Section III of this work.

¹⁴⁵ Ure, Prince Henry The Navigator, p. 116.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ All the contents of the above aforesaid papal documents with regard to the various grants made to Prince Henry the Navigator and to the Royal Crown in Portugal will be treated and elaborately cited in section III of this work.

Pontifex”¹⁴⁸ of January 8, 1454 granted to Prince Henry among other things: the right to conquer as well as to reduce to the status of slaves the native Africans living South of Cape Bojador.

Empowered by the authority of these papal Bulls as well as the Bulls of other popes issued before it, Prince Henry the Navigator gathered together geographers, astronomers and all those, who were experienced in the art of seafaring and explorations to embark on this mission.¹⁴⁹ They met for the first time in Algarve in 1421, where they outlined their plans on how best to carry out their voyage on the West African coast of Guinea. In their deliberations and wider consultations, it was discovered that the very source of the African gold - Rio de Oro (the gold river) was precisely unknown, but it was believed that it came from the region that lay beyond the Sahara which could easily be reached by sea routes without even going through the traditional Saharan routes, which was at this time operated and controlled by the Arab Muslim merchants. From 1418 onwards, Prince Henry the Navigator began sending his Caravels and captains into the Atlantic to round up the Cape which had baffled all his Caravels due to its powerful and dangerous currents. This fact was echoed by the historian G. R. Crone when he said: “It is not surprising that the fifteenth century witnessed many determined efforts by sea and land routes to discover whence the gold came.”¹⁵⁰ This Cape popularly known as “Bojador” meaning “the Paunch or bulging Cape” was about 180 miles removed from Cape Nan. It was regarded by mariners as a dangerous zone and a point of no return for all mariners (“Ne Plus Ultra” of wise seamen). According to the historian Raymond Beazley: “In rounding Bojador, there were not only the real threats and terrors of the Atlantic, but also the legends of the tropics to frighten back the boldest.”¹⁵¹ This Cape was at this period shrouded with a lot of mysteries. For instance, it was believed that:

Beyond it, white sailors were supposed to turn back, and a Green sea of Darkness was believed to open up. One might expect to meet sea-monsters and rocks which could turn into serpents. The sun would send down sheets of liquid flames, the mist would be impenetrable, and the currents and reefs un-navigable.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Hernaez, *Coleccion de Bulas*, pp. 824-828. Full details of the roles of these papal Bulls in the enslavement of Black Africans will be carried out in Section III of this work.

¹⁴⁹ For more information on the gathering and recruitment of maritime experts and ship-builders by Prince Henry the Navigator for the exploration and discovery along the West African Atlantic Coasts, see, Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, p. 5ff.

¹⁵⁰ Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents*, p. XIII.

¹⁵¹ Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 170.

¹⁵² Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 50. Cf. Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 53.

Legends such as turning into a Blackman of any white Christian sailors, who neared Cape Bojador made their rounds among the Western Christian explorers and mariners. This was seen as a punishment, which a victim will carry as a mark of God's vengeance upon him throughout his life time for attempting to do so. Even the Arab geographers helped to worsen the threats and difficulty surrounding this Cape. This is seen in the names of dangerous animals they associated with Cape Bojador. For instance, they used terminologies such as sea-monsters, serpent-rocks and water-unicorns to refer to Cape Bojador. They had even “drawn the horrible giant hand of Satan raised above the waves to seize the first of his human prey that would venture into his den. If God made the firm earth, the Devil made the unknown and treacherous ocean.”¹⁵³

Furthermore, it was also believed by the Arab Muslim geographers that the part of West and South Africa lying beyond the Cape where the main source of the African gold and silver lay, was a place where no man can live. According to this very legend: “The sun poured out in this region sheets of liquid flames upon the ground and kept the sea and the rivers boiling day and night with a fiery heat. So any sailors would of course be boiled alive as soon as they got near to the Torrid Zone.”¹⁵⁴ It was this kind of belief and difficulty that kept the Cape un-rounded and unnavigable after many decades of unsuccessful attempts made by the men of Prince Henry the Navigator up till 1433 from reaching Cape Bojador and beyond it in search of the riches of West Africa and East India.

The incentives given to Prince Henry the Navigator by his elder brother and now the new king Edward of Portugal in 1433 spurred him on to continue with the difficult task of rounding up the said Cape. These incentives given to the Prince included among other things: the grant of the right and privilege to govern the Portuguese West Atlantic islands of Madeira, Porto Santo and Ilhas Desertas on September 26, 1433, and the appointment of Prince Henry the Navigator as the Governor and administrator of the prestigious military Order of Christ. Armed with these incentives, Prince Henry became more determined to embark upon his mission to circumnavigate Cape Bojador so as to reach down to the very source of the West African wealth. He sent another crew of navigators to this Cape of no return in 1434 led by Gil Eannes which was able to de-mystify the beliefs and legends surrounding this “sea of Gold.” Eannes and his men did not only successfully explore this River but also discovered that the so-called “Green sea of darkness” was on this very day “as easy to sail-in as the waters at home in Portugal and the land very rich and pleasant.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Beazley, Prince Henry the Navigator, p. 171.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 172.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 173.

The historian E. W. Bovill described this great feat in the history of maritime seafaring as: “A turning point in the history of geographical discovery. Gil Eannes had proved for all time the absurdity of the superstitious terror with which mariners regarded the unknown.”¹⁵⁶

In 1441 another Portuguese explorer Antão Goncalves was sent by Prince Henry with the order to continue the exploration into the West African coasts. He went further down to the northern part of Mauritania where his men were able to capture 12 Black Africans and collected a small quantity of gold-dust which they brought back home by sea and presented to Prince Henry as an evidence of what laid in stock for him in future.¹⁵⁷ From this period onwards, the trade on West African slaves and gold was given a new boost: that of being transacted easily via sea voyages. This art of capturing innocent men and women and turning them into slaves was repeated again by Antão Goncalves and Nuno Tristão two years later, when they went on board again in 1443. According to John Ure, “Tristão had the usual order to go further than his predecessors and to endeavour to bring back some natives of the country for interrogation by Prince Henry.”¹⁵⁸ This time around, they captured 29 Black Africans whom they brought to “the slave Prince” Henry, “without even feeling any need to negotiate their purchase, instead they regretted that their boat was so small that they were not able to take such a cargo as they desired.”¹⁵⁹ This kind of slave raiding and stealing of innocent Black Africans continued from time to time such that most often, a whole village invaded by these Portuguese was turned into confusion and disarray. In his “Chronicles of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea,” Azurara described how Prince Henry's captains laid ambush from one village to another in Arguin and Senegambia just for the purpose of capturing innocent and unarmed Black African natives which they would present to the Prince as slaves so as to please him. According to Azurara:

Our men looked towards the settlement and saw that the Moors, with their women and children were already coming out of their dwellings, because they had caught sight of their enemies. But they, shouting out, 'St James', 'St. George', 'Portugal', at once attacked

¹⁵⁶ Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, P. 114. Cf. Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Davidson, *The Black Mother*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁸ Ure, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 113.

¹⁵⁹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 55; Davidson, *The Black Mother*, p. 55. He described on this page how Antão Goncalves and Tristão fought with the natives, put them into confusion and took them captive. Quoting the chronicler attached to the palace of the king of Portugal, he recorded how these two Portuguese captains attacked the natives in the following words: “They came to where the natives lay scattered in two encampments. And when our men had come nigh to them, they attacked the natives very lustily, shouting at the tops of their voices “Portugal” and “Santiago,” the fright of which so abashed the enemy that it threw them all into disorder.”

them, killing and taking all they could... On hearing this, the natives are shocked and in fears, get scattered. Then you see mothers forsaking their children, and husbands their wives, each striving to escape as best he could. Some drowned themselves in the waters, others thought to escape by hiding under huts, others stowed their children among the sea-weed, where our men found them afterwards, hoping they would thus escape their notice.¹⁶⁰

In 1443 Prince Henry the Navigator was given in the Royal Charter of 1443 the right of monopoly control over the entire trade in West African Atlantic and he exercised this role from his residence in Sagres in the Algarve until his death in 1460. He appointed the chief Treasurer of his Villa as the Official in-charge of fitting out his ships for the Guinea trade. This “Official was also responsible for receiving the ships on return to Portugal loaded with Moors, gold, silver etc.”¹⁶¹ In accordance with this Royal Charter of 1443, all other ships going to West African Atlantic must obtain authorization directly from Prince Henry. According to the historian M. Saunders: “This authorization usually had to be bought from the Royal or princely monopolists, who in addition levied special duties and imposts on all goods brought back from Africa.”¹⁶²

In 1444, the company “Lancarote de Freitas was founded in the Portuguese haven called Lagos. It was precisely founded to carry on Portuguese enterprise in West Africa. It obtained license for its operations in the Atlantic trade directly from the Royal Prince Henry the Navigator. Shareholders of this company were the members of the military Order of Christ¹⁶³ which financed

¹⁶⁰ Azurara, Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea, pp. 65-66.

¹⁶¹ BN Lxa, Fundo Geral, Caixa 235, No. 87, Jan. 1458. Cf. Monumenta Henricina (MH), XIII, 126-127. The ships belonging to the Crown of Portugal for the Guinean trade were fitted out by the Royal Officials incharge of the Casa de Ceuta. Cf. ANTT- Chancellaria do Dom Afonso V. Liv. 1, Fl. 82, March 2, 1456; (M.H), XIII, 126-127.

¹⁶² Saunders, A Social History of Black Slaves, p. 7.

¹⁶³ There were four great military Orders in the history of the Church in Portugal in the Middle Ages. These are: The military Order of St. John, the military Order of Santiago, the military Order of Aviz and lastly the military Order of Christ. The “Military Order of Christ” was a knightly Association founded in Portugal to carry out Crusades against the militant Islamic religion in both Portugal and Spain. This Order of Christ was in the words of John Ure: “A Portuguese derivative of the Knights Templar to whom had fallen the task in the preceding two centuries of keeping open the routes to the Holy Land and in effect, of forming the storm troops of Christendom.” See: Ure, Prince Henry The Navigator, p. 33. The father of Prince Henry the Navigator, king John I, was the first Grandmaster of this Order. This post was later transferred to Prince Henry the Navigator who held this post for a long period of time. And with the help of the heavy financial power at the disposal of this Order, Prince Henry was able to carry out his military expeditions and explorations in Africa. And in order to compensate this Order of Christ for its huge expenses incurred in the financing of the Crusades and expeditions in West Africa, Prince Henry the Navigator decreed that a “standard levy on the value of all Goods and slaves imported from Guinea or from the Atlantic Islands should be payable to the Order's treasury.” See, Russell, Prince Henry “The Navigator,” p. 77. The referred payment herein is the payment of “Vintena Tax” to the Order of Christ which the Prince approved for this Order on December

the previous expeditions made by Prince Henry the Navigator. The first ship sent by this company on the Atlantic Coasts of Africa carried among other things 235 Black Africans captured and forcefully taken into Portugal as slaves.¹⁶⁴ It landed on the Lagos island of Portugal on the 6th day of August 1444. With this huge success, Basil Davidson is of the opinion that: “The overseas slave trade may really be said to have begun.”¹⁶⁵ On arrival at the Lagos port in Portugal, these innocent men and women taken captive by this expedition were so confused that words could not describe their state of appearance and what went on in their minds on that fateful day, when they were disembarked on this Portuguese island. However, Azurara who witnessed the whole scenario attempted to describe their state of utter confusion when he wrote:

For some kept their heads low, and their faces bathed in tears, looking one upon another. Others stood groaning very dolorously, looking up to the heights of heaven, fixing their eyes upon it, crying out loudly, as if asking help from the Father of nature, others struck their faces with the palms of their hands, throwing themselves at full length upon the ground, while others made lamentations in the manner of a dirge, after the custom of their country.¹⁶⁶

In the face of this state of total confusion and bewilderment of these Black Africans, the Royal Prince Henry and the Grandmaster of the knightly Order of Christ remained merciless and unmoved by their misery. He rather rejoiced for the gains and financial enrichment which stood before him in the images of these innocent Africans forcefully turned into slaves by his men. His heartless

28, 1458. In this approval, the Prince said among other things: “That the said Order should receive One Twentieth of all merchandise from Guinea, slaves, gold and all other articles, the rest of the profit to fall to the Prince's successor in this kingdom of Seas.” Cf. Beazley, *Prince Henry The Navigator*, p. 304.

¹⁶⁴ This expedition was carried out by Lancarote and Gil Eannes who sailed beyond Cape Bojador in 1434. Their launch of attacks on the natives of this island was so massive that they were able to net the above given number of natives taken into captive in one expedition. The English historian Basil Davidson gave a detailed account of this raid when he observed: “Lancarote and Eannes looked for still more captives. Fifteen Portuguese were ordered to march along the land, and look if they could see any Moors, or find any trace of them. The ships stood off from the flat Coastline while boats were launched to row along the shore within sight of the marching men. And on their way they saw the Moors flying as fast as they could, for they had already caught sight of the Portuguese, and at once all our men leaped on shore and began to run after them. But as yet they could not overtake the Moor men, but only the women and little children, not able to run so fast, of whom they caught seventeen or eighteen. The whole expedition reached Lagos in southern Portugal with two hundred and thirty-five captives.” Cf. Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 56; Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 57; Da Veiga Pinto, *Portuguese Participation in the Slave Trade*, p. 119.

¹⁶⁶ Azurara, *Chronicles of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, p. 114ff.

expression during this ugly event made his courtier Azurara to ask himself: "If the Prince was not moved and pierced with the piteous feeling to see that company. Instead, he watched impassive from his horse and himself received forty-six of those slaves as present, the "Royal fifth." He gave thanks that he was saving so many new souls for God."¹⁶⁷ These Black African captives were sold as slaves by Prince Henry and his merchants and distributed to both Spain and Italy. Some of them were also used for household slavery in Portugal and in the production services in the Portuguese overseas Atlantic colonies in Madeira, Santo Porto and Ilhas Desertas, where they met the need for the slave labour on the sugar-cane and other agricultural plantations established by the Portuguese planters on these islands. The growth of the economy accruing from the sugar production warranted the planters to cultivate more sugar-cane plantations in Portuguese colonies in Madeira and the Azores. This need gave rise to the importation of many slaves from West Africa into these Atlantic islands.

The Portuguese led by Dinis Dias carried on their expedition further down to the Senegalese coast in 1444. On reaching this coast, they found the area something of their long expected promised land, with cultivated fields and nice tropical savannah. They explored deeper into the interiors of Senegal and landed in the island of Gorée - the present day Dakar, which later on became an important Portuguese slave trading centre during the Transatlantic slave trade. When Dias and his men attempted to catch the natives of this island as slaves by their usual method of razzias, the inhabitants of Goreé island put up a strong resistance against them. Wooden boats and canoes powered by paddles were constructed by the inhabitants of Goreé to ward off the incursions of the Portuguese. It was during one of their encounters that Prince Henry's chieftain Antão Goncalves, who began this razzia and the discovery of the West Atlantic Coast of Guinea lost his life. Many of the Portuguese were seized and killed, including Nuno Tristão in 1448. When the Portuguese could no longer contend with such a resistance, they learnt to behave themselves by negotiating with some Moorish Africans to buy slaves from them.

These Muslims were the Tuaregs known for their method of catching slaves by raids. It was these Muslims, who served as Middlemen for the Arab Muslim slave merchants during the Mediterranean slave trade. With their help, Portugal began to organise slave trading in Africa. To serve this purpose well, a trading centre was located on the island of Arguin in 1448. It was on this island that the Portuguese constructed a castle and a trading post in 1461 which according to

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 115.

the historian Thomas Hugh “was the most important European gateway into the Western Sahara.”¹⁶⁸

In order to avoid the loss of his most valued explorers, Prince Henry the Navigator decided to make a treaty with the local chiefs of Senegal in 1448. His team of negotiators was led by Diogo Gomes, who came to Goreé with three caravans loaded with gift items. These served as gifts to pacify the native Africans of this Island and to assure them that they have not come to harass them as it was the case before, but rather to do a bilateral trade business with them. Some African chiefs were also offered to make a visit to Portugal by way of consolidating trade relations with them. With this treaty of 1448, the Portuguese were allowed to settle in Senegal. And from their settlement, they were able to reach down to Gambia in the same year.

Prince Henry the Navigator sent the last expedition into West Africa before his death to explore the island of Sierra Leone. But he died in 1460 before he could hear of the promising discovery made in this place. After his death, the onus of continuing the administration of the Portuguese large enterprise and colonies in Africa fell into the hands of his nephew and his adoptive son Infante Fernando. Unfortunately, the young Fernando had no interest to continue this enterprise. His brother king Alfonso V (*1432, reigned 1438-1481) of Portugal showed also no interest in this regard. However, king Alfonso V assigned this duty to a popular entrepreneur of Lisbon called Fernão Gomes in 1469, who was mandated to be making annual returns to the amount of 200,000 reis to the Royal Crown in Portugal and the mandate to discover yearly new territories in Africa for the king of Portugal.¹⁶⁹ His captains sailed to the southern part of Sierra Leone and arrived in Liberia, Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast of Ghana between 1460 and 1462. Later they sailed further down west of Ghana and landed to the famous “slave coast” of Dahomey – the present day Republic of Benin and then to the Bight of Benin and Biafra in the southern part of Nigeria.

In 1470, the island of São Tomé was discovered. This island later became a very important centre of trade and slave depot for the Portuguese, from which millions of Black Africans were shipped to the Portuguese Brazilian colony and into the Spanish colonies in the New World. And in 1471 the island of Fernando Po located at the present day Equatorial Guinea was founded. It was named after the man who discovered it Fernão do Po. In the 1480s, Portugal furthered its discovery ambitions during the reign of king John II. He encouraged his trusted navigator and explorer Diogo Cão (1452-1486) to

¹⁶⁸ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 59.

¹⁶⁹ ANTT- Chancellaria do Dom Afonso V, Liv. 15, Fl. 47, April 12, 1455. Cf. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 8.

explore further down to the southernmost part of the West African Atlantic Coast. With the navigating experience of Diogo Cão, he was able to sail down to the Congo Rivers and discovered in 1483 the kingdoms of Kongo and Angola, and thereby opened for the Portuguese the gates of the Central Africa which later became a rich source of slave supply to the Portuguese Brazilian colony and to the Spanish colonies in the New World. Also the majority of the slaves from the Kongo and Angola were used by the Portuguese to populate the sparsely populated islands of São Tome and Príncipe as they did also in the West Atlantic islands of Madeira, Azores and the Cape Verde islands in the 1450s. These slaves sent to São Tome were used to cultivate the Portuguese sugar-cane and other agricultural plantations, whose products were brought home and sold throughout Europe.

The huge profit accruing from the Portuguese sugar and other agricultural productions in São Tome as well as the riches of the African trade under the monopoly of Portugal became the envy of other European nations. That is why, the early stage of this trade witnessed the participation of merchants from both Spain and England, who were at this period doing secret business in Africa. Many licenses to trade on the Coast of Guinea were also given to the captains from Spain in the 1470s, who carried a good number of slaves from the coast of Guinea into Seville and Valencia. In 1481, English merchants showed interest in the trade on African products such as gold, ivory and pepper but Portugal refused to give licenses to them. That notwithstanding, the English captains and other sea Pirates from Holland continued to trade secretly and illegally in Africa. In order to hold onto their monopoly of trade in Africa, the new king of Portugal king João II commissioned Diogo de Azambuja (1432-1518)¹⁷⁰ and his team of engineers and architects to construct the famous Portuguese fortress in Elmina - Ghana in 1481. This was the first meaningful European Castle in tropical West Africa. Its purpose was to protect Portuguese interests in West Africa against foreign interlopers from both Spain, England, Holland and other European nations that might in future join the trade on the

¹⁷⁰ Diogo de Azambuja was a loyal and trusted Knight attached to the Court of both kings John II and Manuel of Portugal. He was a man very experienced in the art of war and was the Captain Mayor of the ships sent to build the Portuguese Castle at Elmina (Ghana) in 1481. He and his team of engineers left Portugal in December of 1481 and arrived in Ghana in 1482. Within 20 days of intensified works, the Castle was erected and was given the name O Castello de Sam Jorge in honour of St. George the Patron Saint of Portugal. In this Castle, the first holy Mass was celebrated in West Africa. Writing on this, the famous Portuguese historian João de Barros said: "There, God is praised today not only by our men who visit that town, but also by those Ethiopians who having been baptized, are included among the faithful. In this Church in memory of the labours of the Infante Don Henrique, the author of this discovery, a Mass is said every day for his soul by a chaplain appointed for that purpose." Cf. João de Barros, *The Asia of João de Barros*, in: Crone, *Voyages of Cadamosto and other Documents*, p. 123. Cf. Davidson, *The African Past*, p. 185ff.

African slaves and gold. It provided also the store rooms for slaves before their transportation into Europe and to the Spanish Americas as well as provided security to the Portuguese ships and Naval Fleets.

With this fortress on ground, Portugal strongly safeguarded its hold on the control of the African trade on both gold, silver, ivory, pepper and slaves by issuing a set of laws in 1482 to control the flow of African products into other European markets. Parts of these laws stated that all ships carrying African goods and slaves must first and foremost land into Portugal before they disembark to other places such as Seville, Spain, Valencia etc. All ships sailing down to Africa must also register in Lisbon. These rules were put in place in order to ensure that: licences to trade in Africa were issued from Lisbon that slaves reached the approved markets meant for them and that duty was paid for any trade transactions with Africans by interlopers. This set of rules continued to safeguard Portuguese enterprise in Africa mid-way when the Transatlantic slave trade came into full swing after the discovery of the Spanish New World by Christopher Columbus.

4.4 Choice of Black Africans as Slaves of this Trade

It was the famous historian of the West Indies history Eric Williams who rightly remarked that: “The voyages of Prince Henry the Navigator complemented those of Columbus, West African History became the complement of West Indian.”¹⁷¹ The truth contained in this statement is a proof of the fact that the Portuguese quest for exploration and discovery of the West African Atlantic Coast with the intention of reaching to the very source of its wealth - gold and ivory and those of the East Indian trade ended up in the opening of the sea route to both West Africa and East India. It was this same quest to have access to the riches of East Indian trade that prompted the commissioning of Christopher Columbus by king Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to embark on a voyage to the India of the East in the name of their Crowns in 1493. Unfortunately, this Columbian voyage did not lead him to the expected riches of East India but ended up in landing him to the islands of the West Indies, where he also found gold and silver in quantum and the land easy for cultivation. This voyage opened up for the Europeans a new continent outside Africa for conquest and colonisation. The quarrel that ensued between the two leading maritime European Iberian nations of Spain and Portugal over the ownership of the new continent discovered by Columbus led to the division of the discovered lands into two by pope Alexander VI (*1431,

¹⁷¹ Williams, “Economics, not Racism as the Root of Slavery”, in: Northrup, ed. *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 5.

pontificate 1492-1503) in 1493. This quarrel was finally laid to rest by the Treaty of Tordesillas on June 7, 1494 which lawfully granted Brazil to Portugal as her only portion in the New World but allotted the rest of the discoveries made by Columbus to the Spanish king and Queen. Portugal took possession of her new colony of Brazil after its discovery by the famous Portuguese navigator and explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral (1467-1526) on April 22, 1500.

Portugal, with her long colonial experience in the West Atlantic islands of Madeira, Azores, São Tome and the Cape Verde islands began to develop Brazil in the 1530s. The initial search for gold, silver and other natural mineral resources in the interiors of the Brazilian society did not come their way and as such, agricultural plantations were cultivated. Agricultural goods such as tobacco, cotton, Brazilian woods from which timbers and red dye were extracted, were the early Brazilian products of the Portuguese colonists which were sold in Europe. Later in the 1540s, sugar-cane plantations in the regions of Bahia and Pernambuco were cultivated. The indigenous natives were first employed to cultivate, harvest and process the sugar-cane at the milling industries established by the Portuguese, but upon discovering that Black African slaves are far better than the native Brazilians in the art of sugar-cane production, Black Africans were imported to Brazil to undertake the works of sugar production in Brazil, whose products became a hot cake throughout Europe. In the views of Hilary McD. Beckles and Verena A. Shepherd, about 100,000 Black African slaves were employed to cultivate the Portuguese Brazilian sugar plantations.¹⁷² Most of these slaves were kidnapped from the interiors of Angola and Congo and were shipped to Brazil from the Portuguese slave depot located at São Tome. The Brazilian sugar quality continued to be the leading sugar in the European markets up to the seventeenth century. Corroborating this fact, Hilary Beckles and Verena Shepherd recorded as follows: "By 1600, Brazil was the largest producer of sugar-cane in the world with effective dominance of the European market."¹⁷³

However, the growing of sugar-cane in the Spanish West Indies curtailed this pre-eminence of the Brazilian sugar as soon as the Caribbean sugar industries began to flood the markets in Europe with their products, thereby leading to the dwindling demand in the production of the Brazilian sugar.

Initially, the production of the Caribbean sugar was carried out by the native Indians and some white indentured servants. But with the increase on the demand of sugar in Europe and America, a clarion call was made by the Spanish and other European settlers and plantation owners for the importation of Black Africans for the cultivation and production of the Caribbean

¹⁷² Beckles & Shepherd, eds. *Trading Souls*, p. 24.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

plantation sugar. The emphasis placed on sugar at this time was so high that it occupied a prominent position among the goods needed throughout Europe and America. And it became in the words of the famous Scottish born moral philosopher and political economist Adam Smith (1723-1790) “the most profitable of any other cultivation that is known either in Europe or America.”¹⁷⁴

At this juncture however, one is wont to ask this pertinent question: How did Black Africans come into the scene of the discoveries made outside of their Black Continent in the New World, which did not concern them at all? What could have informed the choice of the Black Africans to replace the native Brazilians and Indians of the West Indies as made by the Portuguese as well as the Spanish Caribbean colonists in the cultivation of agricultural plantations and sugar production in their various colonies in the New World? On the superficial level, many have attempted to answer this question without first and foremost pausing to think deeply on the main reason behind this decision. And on the long run, they ended up with hasty and frivolous answers, which purported to mean that Black Africans were chosen because, they knew the art of farming and were used to hard work and suffering.¹⁷⁵ Following this opinion, a German called Sömmering in one of his reports on the “Guinea Coast” claimed that Black Africans were chosen as slaves of the Caribbean sugar and other agricultural plantations because, they are less-sensible to pains and more adapted to be slaves of other peoples than other races of men in the world. This view was made when he wrote as follows: “The people there are more insensible than others towards pain and natural evils, as well as towards injurious and unjust treatment. In short, there are none so well adapted to be the slaves of others, and who therefore, have been armed with so much passive obedience.”¹⁷⁶ And very akin to this opinion was the view recorded by the historian Peter Russell when he observed that: “As domestic servants, Blacks in those early days were seen in Europe as exotic household luxuries for the rich.”¹⁷⁷ Continuing, Russell recorded that more significantly: “Blacks were generally believed to make better slaves because, they were said to be more capable of sustaining hard physical labour than Whites.”¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, the case of the blackness of the skin color of the Black Africans was made an issue in their choice as slaves of the Transatlantic slave trade. Echoing this fact, Russell reported as follows: “From the slave owner's point of view, Black slaves

¹⁷⁴ Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, p. 389.

¹⁷⁵ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 153.

¹⁷⁶ Sömmering, in: Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 14.

¹⁷⁷ Russell, *Prince Henry “the Navigator,” A Life*, p. 253.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

had another advantage. Their color made them conspicuous in a predominantly white society.”¹⁷⁹

All the utterances above that bothered on the Blackman's insensitivity to the feelings of pains and sufferings and their likes are but personal opinions of these individuals and could not be accepted by any genuine scholar worth the name as the reason for the choice of Black Africans as slaves for the work on the plantations in the New World. Every human being knows that no one is at home with sufferings, pains and loss of freedom as the above opinions erroneously claimed. Insights in both sociology and psychology reveal that there is a limit to the level of endurance of sufferings and pains for every human being - Black or White alike. And this theory was justified with the fact that even the Black man is afraid of pains and sufferings and is not at home with subjection and enslavement. This was proved by the various successful and failed attempts made by many Black African slaves, who preferred to jump into the Atlantic Ocean during the Middle Passage so as to end their lives rather than to live in a state of subjection as slaves of others for the rest of their lives. Again, the life span of the Black African slaves at the plantations in the New World was averagely put at seven years. The fact of their dying in great numbers like the Indians on arrival to the New World speaks volumes against the opinion that the Black African race was better equipped by nature to suffer hardships more than any other race. On this ground therefore, the main reason for the choice of Black Africans as the most suitable for the slave works on the plantations in the New World is to be sought elsewhere other than in the above personal opinions of the aforesaid authors. The historian Philip Curtin lent credence to this view when he wrote:

But rumours based on the Portuguese experience in Brazil had already carried the word that Africans could work in the tropics, whereas Europeans could not. That belief was mistaken, but it was to have a long life and is barely dead today. It drew part of its strength from the correct observation that though newly arrived Europeans and Africans both died in greater numbers than old residents did, the European death rate was much higher than the African. The apparent difference was race.¹⁸⁰

The genuine reasons that appeal to human reason for the choice of Black Africans as victims of the Transatlantic slavery as one can see from the suggestions made by Peter Russell and Philip Curtin above therefore point to the fact of their race and their skin color. They were chosen as slaves by reason of their skin color and this points to the racial character of this Transatlantic slave trade.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of Plantation Complex*, p. 80.

Over and above all these, the pressure which the demand on sugar exerted on the plantations owners and colonialists cannot be overemphasized. It was as a result of the huge profit and the high demand for both Brazilian and Caribbean sugar products in both Europe and America that opened up the flood-gate of enslavement of the Black Africans in the New World, who were forcefully brought into plantation slavery for the purpose of cultivating the sugar-cane plantations whose harsh and hard labouring conditions went beyond the limit of human endurance for both the native Indian population and those of the white indentured servants forced to work on these plantations before the arrival of Black Africans. Even the Black African slaves brought to work in place of the dying Indians in the New World were not spared from dying in their hundreds as a result of the harsh pressures involved in the cultivation, harvesting and the processing of sugar-cane at the milling factories in the Caribbean and Brazilian plantation slavery. In a study conducted in Jamaica, where the English colonists and settlers cultivated their sugar plantations, it was attested that: "Wherever slaves were not engaged in the production of sugar, their chances of survival were greater."¹⁸¹ In the light of this fact, the renowned historian of the West Indies history Eric Williams argued that it was the introduction of the sugar-cane based economy in the Caribbean islands with its servile nature and demanding labour that caused the Indian and the white labour population to reduce drastically as both were not used to the harsh conditions of working on the sugar-cane plantations. And as a result of this, the demand for their replacement with Negro labour became very expedient. According to him: "It was sugar plantation with its servile base, which retarded the white immigration in the 19th century Cuba as it had banned it in the 17th century Barbados and 18th century Saint Dominique. No sugar, no Negroes."¹⁸² Continuing, he maintained that: "Sugar meant labour, and the Negro slavery was the solution of the Caribbean labour problem."¹⁸³ For him still, the Black Africans were not introduced into the plantation slavery in the Caribbean colonies as a result of the blackness of their bodies but as a result of the cheapness of their labour. Thus according to him: "The reason for the replacement of white and Indian labour with the Negro labour was economic, not racial. It had to do not with the color of the labour, but with the cheapness of the labour."¹⁸⁴ Going a step further, Williams argued that the case of racial arguments against the Black Africans based on their physical traits brought up

¹⁸¹ Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, p. 59. Cf. Rawley, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade*, p. 15; Curtin Philip, "Epidemiology and the Slave Trade," in: *Political Science Quarterly (PSQ)*, LXXXIII (1968), pp. 215-216.

¹⁸² Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 27.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 29.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 19.

by the pro-slavery proponents in the justification of the enslavement of Blacks in the New World was not the primary reason for their importation and enslavement on the plantations in the New World. Such racial propaganda was only employed to justify a simple economic policy of using the Negro cheap labour to arrive at a maximum economic profit. Thus, in an unmistakable terms, Williams argued that: "The features of the Black man, his hair, color and dentifrice, his "subhuman" characteristics so widely pleaded, were only the later rationalisations to justify a simple economic fact: that the colonies needed labour and resorted to Negro labour because, it was cheapest and best."¹⁸⁵

This view was corroborated by the Governor of the English West Indies colony, who, after many years of experience in the British Barbados plantations colony once testified in an economic parlance that: "Three Blacks could do more work at cheaper cost than one white servant."¹⁸⁶ In other words, the choice of Black Africans was not only made as a result of the dying Indian population but also was the result of a purely economic calculations of the white colonial planters, who saw in the Negro enslavement a cheap labour that could be multiplied every now and again with the cheapest possible economic means. Added to the above was the religion of the Black African slaves. This fact is another serious consideration made in the choice of slaves to be sent to work on the Caribbean gold and sugar based plantation economy. For the chronicler of the Portuguese Crown Gomes Azurara, the preference made in the choice of Black Africans as slaves for the plantation slavery rested on the fact that they were pagans and as such: "They were much easier to convert than either orthodox Christians from the East or Africans from the Islamicized lands north of the River Senegal."¹⁸⁷ It was based on this condition that the Catholic king Ferdinand of Spain gave permission on January 22, 1510 to send 250 Black African slaves to the Spanish colonies in the New World.¹⁸⁸ According to him: "They had to be the best and strongest available."¹⁸⁹ This event legally but unfortunately opened up the gate for the baneful passage of Black Africans into the Spanish New World.

After the death of king Ferdinand of Spain in 1516, the administration of the Spanish American colonies fell into the hands of king Charles V (1500-1558) the Holy Roman Emperor in 1518. It was during his reign that the request made by Bartholomew de Las Casas (1461-1555) and the Spanish Governors in

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 20.

¹⁸⁶ Governor of Barbados, in: Emerson Smith Abbot, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776*, North Carolina 1947, pp. 3-4. Cf. Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 132; Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 19.

¹⁸⁷ Azurara, in: Russell, Prince Henry "the Navigator," *A Life*, p. 253.

¹⁸⁸ Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 30.

¹⁸⁹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 92.

the Caribbean islands to grant license for a direct importation of West African slaves into the Americas saw the full light of the day. In one of the letters addressed to the king in 1518, whose tone necessitated the grant of this license, the issue of the whereabouts of the Black African slaves and their religion was also emphasized. In the emphasis made therein, fray Manzanedo pleaded as follows: "All the citizens of Hispaniola demand your Majesty to give them license to be able to import Blacks, because the Indians are insufficient to sustain them in the land. They (Blacks) had to come from the best territory in Africa."¹⁹⁰ This demand was finally granted by Emperor Charles V on August 18, 1518. The license contained among other things, the importation of four thousand Black Africans directly from the Guinea Coast into the New World for a period of four years. This number of slaves was permitted to be sent to the islands of Española, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Jamaica. And with this grant now made, the poor and innocent Black Africans became officially victims of the Transatlantic slave trade. So began their being carried like material goods and distributed in the whole regions of the discovered New World like animals by the European and American colonists and slave merchants for the period of four centuries.

4.5 Spanish and Portuguese Crowns and Atlantic Enslavement of Black Africans

The role of the two Iberian maritime super powers in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade consisted in the organisation of this trade and the founding of colonies in the New World, which were leased out to authorized white settlers and planters, who in turn were paying stipulated annual taxes to their various Royal governments. The division of the New World made by pope Alexander VI in 1493, which allotted Brazil and the whole of Africa as well as East India to Portugal and the rest of the Americas to the kings of Spain and their successors in perpetuity put a barricade in the movement and participation of both Royal Crowns in the organisation of the Transatlantic slave trade. In respect of the papal obligation contained in the papal Bull of 1493, which bound them to respect the territorial rights of one another, both kings found themselves in a tight corner to carry out the organisation of the Transatlantic slave trade in the sense that the importation of the slaves which was a "conditio sine qua non" for the development and propagation of the Spanish West Indies could not be effected without express permission from the king of Portugal. In the like manner, the Portuguese king, in whose areas of papal right of Patronage covered the whole of West Africa

¹⁹⁰ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, pp. 97-98.

and the very homes of the most preferred Black African slaves needed for the development of the Spanish West Indies, could not export these slaves into the Spanish West Indies under the papal right of Patronage of the king of Spain without first and foremost obtaining permission from the king of Spain. To break this territorial imbroglio, the king of Spain in order to meet up with the pressures from the demand and supply of slaves by his West Indies colonialists, introduced the system of issuing *asientos* to his Spanish loyalist and trusted merchants. These in turn, sold these *asientos* to the Portuguese merchants in possession of the license to trade on the Portuguese Atlantic Waters of West Africa. This was the case of the *asiento* granted by the king of Spain Emperor Charles V in 1518 for the importation of 4,000 Black Africans as slaves into the West Indies, who gave the right to execute this function to his Flemish friend and Governor of Bressa Lorenzo de Gorrevod, who then sold this license to the Genoese in Seville.¹⁹¹ The beneficiaries of this license were according to Lawrence A. Clayton: “The brothers Centurione, Melchor, Gaspar, Martin, Esteban and Luis, and their associates in banking and slave trading, Nicolas Grimaldi and Augustin Vivaldi who bought it at the price of 25,000 ducats.”¹⁹² This license was kept under their monopoly control for a total period of eight years and they earned from it more than 300,000 ducats being profits accruing from the sales of this license and the Black African slaves.¹⁹³ They later sold this contract to the Portuguese captains Leonardo Catano and Pedro Benito (1492-1575).

However, the long delay to grant the Spanish Crown license to legally enter into the West African Coasts for trade on African products and slaves did hold sway in 1580, when the two leading Iberian maritime kingdoms of Portugal and Spain emerged into one government under the rule of the Spanish monarchy led by king Philip II (*1527, reigned 1554-1598) of Spain. This loss of Portuguese independence was brought about by the crisis of succession to the Portuguese throne caused by the untimely death of the young king Sebastian I (*1554, reigned 1557-1578) of Portugal in 1578, who died without leaving behind an heir to the Portuguese throne. It was at this time that Portugal lost her right of monopoly control in the West African trade to Spain for a total period of 60 years until in 1640, when she regained her independence from Spain once more. Within these long period of Spanish rule over the Portuguese (1580-1640), the Spanish Crown controlled not only the slave trade but also the trade on other West African products such as gold, ivory, salt and pepper. The Royal Crown in Spain did all it could to keep at bay all her rival nations

¹⁹¹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 98.

¹⁹² Clayton, *Bartolomé de Las Casas*, p. 136.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

especially the French, Dutch and English merchants from exercising an overwhelming influence on the Atlantic Coasts of Africa. This control was done by means of awarding officially, *Asiento de Negros*¹⁹⁴ only to trusted and capable Spanish merchants to be carrying Black Africans as slaves directly from West Africa into the Spanish American colonies. The first *Asiento de Negros* at the time of Portuguese loss of independence was won by Spaniard Pedro Gomez Reynel in 1585. In this trading contract, Reynel was granted the permission to send 4,250 Black slaves to the New World. In order to meet up with the timely execution of his contract, he contracted merchants from Seville and Lisbon who bought licenses from him. A total of 500 slaves was agreed to be sent annually to the Hispanola (Santo Domingo or Haiti) and Cuba. These merchants were allowed to sell those slaves in the Americas themselves and by so doing they were able to take them to the Americas interiors, where they were sold to the highest bidder among the Spanish colonial planters.

By reason of the high demand on Black African slaves in the Spanish Americas to provide labour for the cultivation of sugar-cane at the plantations, the Spanish Crown continued to issue *asiento* to the trusted merchants. For instance, in 1592 Pedro Gomez Reynel was granted another *asiento* by the Royal Crown in Spain. This time around, he received a huge mandate to supply 38,250 Black African slaves into the West Indies.¹⁹⁵ For the supply of this huge number of Black African slaves, Reynel had to pay to the Spanish Crown a total of 900,000 ducats. The terms of his contract was stipulated at nine years at the rate of 4,250 slaves per year. And of this number of slaves, it was stipulated that: “At least 3,500 a year must be landed alive.”¹⁹⁶ In order to administer his *asiento* capably, Reynel sold licenses to some Portuguese and Spanish slave contractors for the supply of a given number of West African slaves to the West Indies. The sudden death of Reynel in 1600 could not allow him to finish this huge contract and as a result of this, the administration of this *asiento* fell

¹⁹⁴ *Asiento de Negros* as it was called in Spanish, was an official trading monopoly contract granted by the king of Spain to individuals, companies or nations to supply some Spanish American colonies with Black African slaves. It was introduced by the king of Spain to ensure that the slave trade was put in the hands of capable and trusted individuals loyal to the Crown so as to prevent friends and Officials of alien kings from entering into the Spanish colonies in America for any meaningful trade transactions. In this trading contract, a stipulated number of slaves for supply was outlined, duration of contracts was specified, and amount to be paid to the Spanish Crown was stated as well as the number of slaves to be brought into the colonies annually. The Contractor of *Asiento* called (*Asentista*) was allowed to supply ship-building materials for the transportation of his human Cargoes to the Americas as well as to buy certain goods for sales in Europe produced by the plantation slaves in the Americas. This *Asiento* was governed by a commission called “*Junta de Negros*” whose members were appointed by the king of Spain. It has its headquarters in the *Casa de la Contratación* in Seville. For more Information on this *Asiento* and its governance, see, José, “The Slave Trade in the Caribbean,” p. 88ff.

¹⁹⁵ Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 66.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

into the hands of a Portuguese Captain-General of Angola João Rodrigues Continho, who was representing Portugal in West Africa.

With this license given to both Spanish and Portuguese merchants, the road was now set for a perpetual condemnation and destruction of West Africa through war and slave raids planned and organised by these nations in the entire West African continent. This license given to Portuguese and Spanish slave merchants brought about madness and rush in the manner of transacting business in West Africa. The whole emphasis formerly placed on the West African gold and other products such as silver, pepper, ivory, copper etc., was now shifted to the Black Africans themselves, who at this period were turned into “mobile gold with hands and feet.” This was done to satisfy the insurmountable rise in the demand for Black African slaves by the colonial planters in the Spanish colonies in the Americas. To meet up with this demand in the first half of the sixteenth century, Portugal, which was directly involved in the slave raiding of villages intensified her raids in both Angolan and the Congolese coastal areas. They got settled in Luanda - the capital of Angola where about 300 of them were living in 1590. Other methods of making slaves employed by the Portuguese included war and payment of tributes with a stipulated number of slaves by the African monarchs. Most often, the Portuguese carried out wars against some African monarchs, who refused to dance to the tune of their demands for slaves. They made sure that the monarch in question was dethroned and forced to be paying annual tribute with slaves. A clear example of this Portuguese secret policy was the case of the monarch of Ndogo people in the present day Angola in the seventeenth century. The Portuguese Governor in Luanda Luis Mendes de Vasconcelors did not only crush the resistance from Ndogo people but also deposed their monarch and forced him to be paying tributes to the Portuguese Crown with 100 slaves annually.¹⁹⁷ The main centres of Portuguese slave trading activities in West Africa were Arguin where they built their first trade fortress in 1448, Elmina on the Gold Coast of Ghana in 1482, São Tome in 1493 and Luanda in 1575. It was from these centres of Portuguese settlement in West Africa that all the Black African slaves were carried to their colony in Brazil and to the Spanish colonies.

The Spanish merchants representing the king of Spain in the trade in West Africa did not depend solely on Portuguese slave raiders for their own supply of the Black African slaves to their American colonies. They also established trading links with some West African chiefs and middlemen, who exchanged some disposable persons, criminals and other offenders in minor crimes with the Spanish perishable goods such as tobacco, gin, beads, iron pots for cooking,

¹⁹⁷ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 168.

horses, guns and gun powders etc. They were also active in the slave raiding of villages and insinuating wars amongst the West African communities through their supply of weapons. Through these means, they were able to generate many slaves, which they carried to Seville and to their colonies in the New World.¹⁹⁸

The huge and quick profit emanating from the slave trade and the sugar production increased the economic powers of both Portugal and Spain and this became the angling point of attraction for the other leading European nations of France, Holland, Great Britain, Sweden and Denmark. Their common and major problem to benefit from the riches of the Transatlantic slave trade was how to break the Spanish and Portuguese monopoly control of this trade on West African products and slaves. How these major European nations fared in their participation in the Transatlantic slave trade is the subject matter of the next chapter of this work.

5. The Dutch, French and the British in the Atlantic Slave Trade

5.1 Brief Introduction

The monopoly control, which the Portuguese enjoyed in the trade in West African slaves and on other products and that of the Spanish Crown on the trade in the Caribbean colonies during the Transatlantic slave trade was the envy of other major leading nations of Europe and their respective governments. And their major hindrance was how to make a meaningful appearance on the playground of this trade - the Atlantic Waters of West Africa, which in the light of the papal Bulls written between 1452 and 1516 made the West African Atlantic and all within and around it an exclusive rights of the king of Portugal and their successors in perpetuity.¹⁹⁹ This papal “hammer” that nailed the entire African Waters and surroundings to the kings of Portugal and thereby outlawed other nations and kingdoms from attempting to approach Africa for whatever reason, was indeed a hard nut to crack for all the European nations and governments that showed early and renewed interests in the participation on the Trade in Africa and in the East India. And they all saw this as a cog in the economic wheel of progress of their various nations and governments. Hence the need to remove this cog in their wheel of

¹⁹⁸ Beckles & Shepherd, *Trading Souls*, p. 9.

¹⁹⁹ The contents of the said papal Bulls and the various enactments made therein will be made known when we shall be discussing the theme of the papal involvement in the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans in section III of this dissertation.

progress became a matter of utmost importance. It was for this reason that piracy as a means to fight against Portuguese dominance over this trade was introduced. Historians of Transatlantic slavery both past and present agree that both the Dutch, the French and the British merchants as well as their national governments were guilty of this act of piracy on the West African Atlantic Waters belonging to the Crown in Portugal as well as the Atlantic Waters of the Spanish West Indian colonies. A one on one brief consideration of their various roles in the enslavement of Black Africans during this slave trade will help a great deal to see how they fared in the evil of this traffic in their fellow human beings.

5.2 The Dutch and the Atlantic Slave Trade

Among the European mercantile and seafaring nations that showed early and irresistible interest in the West African trade under the control of the Portuguese was Holland. She joined this business in 1592, when one of her explorers and merchants Bernard Ericks from Medemblik began the trade link with Black Africans of the Guinean and the Gold Coasts. His first attempt to break the Portuguese monopoly in West Africa in 1592 landed him into prison in São Tome, where the Portuguese kept him in custody until 1594. However, he managed to escape Portuguese hands of justice and returned home in the same year. This early mishap did not keep him at bay from his ambition to open up a trade link for his home government with the West Africans. In 1595, he made another voyage to the Gold Coast (Ghana) and was able to establish trading agency for the supply of West African products such as gold, silver, ivory and spices, which he successfully carried back home and sold to the markets in Europe. With this success, he opened up the road for other Dutch merchants in the trade on West African products.

Like other European merchants before them, the Dutch merchants pretended initially to focus their attention only on the aforesaid West African products. But when these goods began to decline in their prices in the early part of the seventeenth century, they turned to the lucrative and easy-money-yielding trade on Black African slaves. Having no legal permit to engage in this trade, these individual merchants, armed with military outfits provided by their home government, resorted to coastal attacks on the Portuguese and Spanish ships carrying Black Africans bound for shipment to the Portuguese Brazilian colonies as well as the Spanish West Indian colonies. The slaves and other goods captured from these Iberian ships were sold to the Portuguese sugar plantation owners in both Bahia and Pernambuco regions, whose demand for slaves were not met by the indigenous Portuguese slave traders. The same

applied to the sugar-cane planters in the Spanish West Indies. With this contact established, they began to make inroads in the business of supplying Black African slaves to the Spanish New World as well as to the Portuguese Brazilian colonies.²⁰⁰

In order to be successful in the trade with West Africans, the Dutch merchants began to outwit the Portuguese by presenting to the local African chiefs and middlemen with articles with better quality at cheaper rates than those of the Portuguese and incited the natives of these regions to revolt against the Portuguese trading with them. According to Bethwell Allan Ogot, these Dutch articles brought in exchange for West African slaves, malaguetta pepper, gold, ivory and silver included among others: iron, brass, copper, tin ware, cheap textiles of different sorts, spirits, firearms, beads, necklaces etc.²⁰¹ This tactic worked out perfectly well for the Dutchmen and bore fruits in Ghana when the natives of Fetu region of the Gold Coast drove away the Portuguese living among them and replaced them with the Dutchmen. According to a Dutch historian Johan Karel Jakob de Jonge (1828-1880), with this success, the Dutch emulating the Portuguese built their first trade fortress on the Gold Coast of West Africa at Mowree in 1611 which they gave the name “Fort Nassau.”²⁰² Six years later (in 1617) under the military command of Prince Maurice of Nassau, the Dutch army defeated the Portuguese stronghold within the Senegalese Rivers and established good relationship with the local chiefs of Gorée island, who permitted them to construct two small trade fortresses in this region.²⁰³ With these fortresses on ground, the Dutch merchants replaced the Portuguese and won the monopoly control of the African trade in the entire regions of Senegambia in West Africa. And that being the case, they were able to make their first successful shipment of the Black African slaves to the West Indies precisely, to the British Virginia in 1619.

In 1621, the “Dutch West Indian Company” was founded for the purpose of organizing and exercising monopoly control over the Dutch trade in Africa as well as to curtail the Portuguese monopoly in West Africa.²⁰⁴ It was a national investment venture funded and militarily supported by the Dutch home government. There were also private financiers and members of this company. Even though this company did not win any *asiento* from the Spanish Crown to be supplying slaves from Africa to either of the Portuguese or Spanish colonies, however, its members such as Amsterdam trading House of Bathazar and

²⁰⁰ Beckles & Shepherd, eds. *Trading Souls*, p. 25.

²⁰¹ Ogot, *General History of Africa*, p. 12.

²⁰² De Jonge, *De Oorsprong van Nederlands*, p. 16. Cf. Ogot, *General History of Africa*, p. 12; Zook, *The Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 1.

²⁰³ Zook, *The Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 1.

²⁰⁴ Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 76.

Joseph Coymans & Sons and many others were able to lend credits and loans to Spanish and Portuguese merchants who won *asientos* from their home government and supplied them with the agreed number of slaves needed either in the Portuguese Brazilian colonies or in the Spanish West Indies. This tactics of being used as financiers and contractors of the winners of *asiento* really paid off positively for the Dutch company and its financiers in the sense that they were steadily involved in business transactions along the West African Coasts as well as the West Indian Coasts.

In the early years of the foundation of the Dutch West Indian Company, the company obtained her slaves mostly by sea piracy and waging wars against the captains of other ships belonging to Spain and Portugal. They were in the habit of appropriating the slaves belonging to the captains of the ships whom they defeated during their sea raids. According to Thomas Hugh, it was estimated that: "An average of 1,500 slaves per year in the 1630s were captured at sea from Portuguese ships."²⁰⁵ And in the views of the historian Herbert Klein: "About 2,336 slaves were captured through piracy from the Iberian ships in 1623."²⁰⁶ But as the years passed by, the company continued to gain much ground in Africa through a well-improved relationship with the natives, chiefs and middlemen of their various trading locations in Africa.

Between 1624 and 1650, the Dutch West Indian Company registered a landmark achievement in both the trade on African goods and in slaves, as well as in the plantation based economy in Brazil and the Caribbean colonies. For instance, it was within this point in time that the Dutchmen, supported strongly by their home military strength, was able to defeat the Portuguese in Brazil and took over their money yielding sugar-cane plantations and milling industries in both Bahia (in 1624) and Pernambuco (in 1629). According to the historian Françoise Latour da Veiga Pinto, within the above given period of the history of Dutch dominance over the Transatlantic slave trade: "The entire north-eastern Brazil including Recife, Pernambuco and Maranhão fell into the hands of the Dutch, while Bahia was twice compelled to surrender."²⁰⁷ Back home in West Africa, they defeated the Portuguese in both Guinean and Gold Coasts and took over from them their major strongholds, trade fortress in Elmina and other major establishments in the regions of Guinean and Gold Coasts in

²⁰⁵ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 171.

²⁰⁶ Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 76.

²⁰⁷ Da Veiga Pinto, "Portuguese Participation in the Slave Trade," p. 128. Cf. Beckles & Shepherd, *Trading Souls*, p. 26. All these Portuguese possessions in Brazil were returned back to them by the Dutch government on August 6, 1661 in a Treaty made between Portugal and Holland. This was done as a compensation for the huge losses which the Portuguese suffered from the hands of the Dutchmen in West Africa. For detailed information on this compensation, see: Jean Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique: Du Droit des Gens*, VI, Part 2, Amsterdam 1726, p. 367ff; Zook, *The Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 28ff.

1637.²⁰⁸ The Portuguese guards stationed at their trading centre at Elmina were unprepared for this assault and as the result of this, this famous Portuguese fortress fell into the hands of the Dutch Naval force. This was for Portugal a great loss and an end to her many years of domination of the West African Coasts and the monopoly control of the trade in Black African slaves and other products. Confirming this loss and what it meant for the Portuguese, Thomas Hugh wrote:

This was the end of an era, for the Portuguese had been there for 160 years. So the daily masses for the soul of Prince Henry the Navigator ended, the Portuguese Church was converted into a warehouse, the rules for the payment and conduct of Governors and officers drawn up in 1529 were abandoned,...Salaries to the local Africans were thenceforth paid in florins, not Reals, and a lay preacher replaced the Royal Chaplain.²⁰⁹

Other Portuguese strongholds in Africa especially around the Coast of Guinea, São Tome, Benguela and their largest settlement in Africa located in Luanda were also attacked and seized from them by the Dutchmen between 1640 and 1642.²¹⁰ It was indeed a defeat that took away all the gains belonging to the Portuguese and a victory that brought about a great fortune to the Dutch and their West Indian Company in this century. And from this period onwards, the Dutch Company became very powerful and dominant in the Transatlantic slave trade carrying about 6,500 slaves annually to the Americas.²¹¹

Propelled by this great feat so far made in the African trade, the Dutchmen felt more determined to break the Spanish controlled West Indies so as to procure their own colonies in the Spanish New World, where they could also establish plantation slave-based economy and furnish them with slaves from the West African Guinean Coasts. This ambition of establishing their own colonies in the West Indies was realized with the founding of various settlements at different points in time. Thus between 1616 and 1640, the following settlements were founded: Guyana in 1616, Sint Maarten in 1618, Tobago in 1628, Curaçao in 1634, Sint Eustatius in 1636, Aruba in 1637, Saba in 1640 and a host of other settlements in the Spanish Americas.²¹² Later in 1667, they took over the British colony Suriname founded by the British in 1650 after defeating the British

²⁰⁸ Beckles and Shepherd, eds. *Trading Souls*, p. 26; De Jonge, *De Oorsprong van Nederlands*, p. 18; Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 2.

²⁰⁹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 171.

²¹⁰ Da Veiga Pinto, "Portuguese Participation in the Slave Trade," p. 128. Cf. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 76.

²¹¹ Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 76.

²¹² For the names of the various Dutch settlements in the West Indies and their various dates of settlement, see: *Dutch Colonisation of Americas*, in: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch>, visited on July 31, 2013.

colonial army in the second Anglo-Dutch war on July 31, 1667. In these settlements, Dutch colonists established sugar-cane plantations as well as other agricultural plantations such as tobacco and cotton-wool. Slaves captured in the Guinean and Gold Coasts areas were despatched to these colonies, where they supplied the slave labour needed to cultivate these plantations. The Dutch colony of Curaçao was used as the entrepôt of Black African slaves for the Dutch West Indies.²¹³ And from this colony, the Dutch slave merchants distributed their slaves to their colonial planters in the Dutch West Indies. It is accepted among historians of Atlantic slavery that in 1675, about 3,000 Black slaves were landing on this Dutch slave-port annually and that ten years thereafter, precisely in 1685, this number rose to 20,000 slaves being supplied yearly directly from the West African Guinean and Gold Coasts regions.²¹⁴

The profits made in this trade brought the Dutch nation into great heights in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. And Holland continued to enjoy her trade monopoly in Africa and in the Americas until the French and Great Britain came into the business in Africa and overran the Dutch monopoly later in the century. Attesting to this Dutch domination of the trade in Black African slaves and other products in the first part of the seventeenth century, Christian Delacampagne wrote: "In the 1640s, the supremacy of Holland over the Atlantic waters and Amsterdam reached the heights of its powers. In both Africa and America, the Dutch had evidently ousted and replaced the Portuguese."²¹⁵

However, a popular parlance holds that no condition is permanent. And that being always the case, the Dutch West Indian Company began to wane in its domination of the Transatlantic slave trade partly, as a result of the wars of Spanish succession (1701-1714) which led the French and British troops to attack the Dutch colonies in the West Indies. And on the other hand, by reason of the fact that Portugal had regained her independence from the Spanish rule in 1640 and began to recover some of her lost colonies and centres of trade in West Africa in 1647 from the Dutchmen. Also the Dutch West Indian Company suffered liquidations and could no longer face the competition coming from the rival merchants of both France and Great Britain.

²¹³ Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 72.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 166. This citation reads in German as follows: "In den 40er Jahren des 17. Jahrhunderts hatte Holland die Vorherrschaft auf den Meeren und Amsterdam stand auf dem Höhepunkt seiner Macht. In Afrika wie in Amerika hatten die Holländer offensichtlich die Portugiesen abgelöst."

5.3 The French and the Atlantic Slave Trade

The decline of the Portuguese monopoly in the Atlantic slave trade in West Africa caused by the Dutchmen, made the way free for other European competing nations to enter into full business transactions in the slave trade as well as in other African products of trading. The French merchants and their home government benefited from this feat of the Dutchmen in the trade in West Africa and on the Atlantic Coasts of the Spanish West Indies. The ambition and intention of the Frenchmen to enter into the Atlantic trade was captured by Franoise Latour da Veiga Pinto when he rightly affirmed that: “The wars which Spain and Portugal faced with the powers of Northern Europe had three main objects as far as Portugal was concerned: to supplant her in her trade with the Orient, to take over the sugar plantations of Brazil, and to take over the sources of African labour.”²¹⁶ All the quests of the French government for a place in the Transatlantic trade along the West African Guinean and Gold Coasts were geared towards removing Portugal from her place of pre-eminence in this trade in Africa. The French, just like the Dutch and other European nationals joined the trade in Africa as individual merchants. This view was corroborated by Bethwell Ogot when he said: “Initially, only individual French traders such as the well-known Jean Ango of Dieppe or individual trading companies were active.”²¹⁷ Jean Ango Dieppe (1480-1551) was therefore the initiator of French participation in the Transatlantic slave trade. Ango was a French ship-owner and merchant, who took over the import and export business of his father. With his vast experience in the art of seafaring, he was able to sail through the Atlantic Waters of West Africa towards the end of the sixteenth century in search of the African gold, silver, pepper and ivory and by so doing, he became the first Frenchman that ventured to participate in the trade in Africa and in the spice trade of the East India under the direct monopoly control of the Portuguese.²¹⁸ Using coastal piracy as a method of breaking the Portuguese dominance of this trade, Ango in cooperation with other French sea pirates and merchants launched series of attacks at the Portuguese and Spanish ships and plundering their goods which he brought home and later sold to Brazil. In 1525, in collaboration with the king of Portugal, the king of Congo captured a French ship with its crew which was menacing in his region and centre of Portuguese trade in Congo and handed it over to king John III of Portugal.²¹⁹ Jean Ango and his French

²¹⁶ Da Veiga Pinto, “Portuguese Participation in the Slave Trade,” p. 127.

²¹⁷ Ogot, *General History of Africa*, p. 10.

²¹⁸ For information on Jean Ango Dieppe, see, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean>, visited on July 31, 2013.

²¹⁹ Brasio, (M.M.A), Vol. 1, p. 138.

merchants were angered by this incident and in reaction to this incident, and with the support of king Francis I of France (*1494, reigned 1515-1547), Ango threatened to block the Portuguese from reaching to their port in Lisbon unless his ship was released to him. The Portuguese complied and got the ship and its crew released. However, this incidence did not prevent the French merchants from carrying out attacks against the ships belonging to Portugal and appropriating part of their goods from West Africa. In 1530 the French merchants received Royal and military support from king Francis I of France to attack and plunder Portuguese and Spanish ships sailing along the West African Atlantic waters.²²⁰ With this Royal support, Ango continued to supply French merchants with militarily armed ships to carry out incessant raids on the Portuguese and Spanish ships appropriating their slaves and other goods from the areas of the Congo River and sold them to the New World. It was estimated that between 1535 and 1547, the French Fleets captured and plundered over 60 ships belonging to Spain.²²¹

The French attacks on the Portuguese aimed at breaking their monopoly on the African trade did not stop on the high sea level but went beyond it, stretching to the Portuguese stronghold in the West African mainland. The French military incursions were felt much in the regions of Cape Verde Island, Senegal and Gambia where in the views of Bethwell Ogot: “They often looted Portuguese ships returning with a cargo of African gold and other goods acquired from the trade in the spices of East India.”²²² And toward the tail end of the sixteenth century, French expansion in West Africa was firmly established in Senegambia especially in the Portuguese centres of trade such as Gorée, Portudal, Joal, Rufisque etc.²²³ The other Portuguese strongholds in West Africa such as the Gold Coast, Guinea and São Tome were not free from the French military attacks and quests for expansion in West Africa. France employed the method of incessant conquest throughout her period of operations in West Africa to weaken the Portuguese stronghold in São Tome and their famous fortress in Elmina. But these attacks were not only bluffed off by the Portuguese guards quartered at these important Portuguese trading posts, but were also successfully repelled, such that the French Fleets remained unsuccessful in these areas.²²⁴

However, having seen that military conquests alone could not help them to oust the Portuguese from the Gold Coast regions, the Frenchmen resorted to the tactics of presenting themselves as better traders with good and quality

²²⁰ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 153.

²²¹ Jean de Ango, in: <http://bbprivateer.ca>, visited on August 1, 2013.

²²² Ogot, *General History of Africa*, p. 10.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 154.

materials for exchange with the African products. With this economic manoeuvre, they succeeded in winning the hearts of the native traders and local chiefs of the Gold Coast, as well as those of the regions of the Bights of Benin and Biafra. These exploits of the Frenchmen had the effect of leading the natives to refuse to trade their gold, pepper and other West African products with the Portuguese merchants in 1556 such that Portuguese merchants could no longer exchange their products with the African goods.²²⁵ The French goods brought to the natives of these regions in exchange for West African gold, malaguetta pepper, ivory and silver, included among other things: cheaper and more textile materials, spirits, iron ware and weapons.²²⁶ In the second half of the sixteenth century, the French did overcome as well as replace the Portuguese merchants in both Sierra Leone, Senegal and Gambia and was frequently sending hundreds of ships into these areas. In the views of Thomas Hugh: “Between 1534 and 1565, nearly two hundred ships from those pretty Norman ports set sail for Sierra Leone.”²²⁷

In 1664, the French government founded the famous French East Indian Company (*Compagnie des Indes Orientales*) with the sole purpose of controlling and defending the French monopoly and possessions in the West Indies against the competitions and incursions of both the British and Dutch East Indian Companies in the West Indies. This company was responsible for carrying Black African slaves into the French West Indies colonies in both Martinique and Saint Domingo.²²⁸ In 1672, it was granted by king Louis XIV (*1638, reigned 1643-1715) of France the right of monopoly over all the French territorial possessions and trade in the West Indies. In this Royal grant, the company was permitted to cash into its coffers the sum of ten French Livres per slave delivered alive to the French West Indies.²²⁹ With this incentive, it moved into full operations and was making enough profits that enabled the French government to found another company called “*Compagnie du Sénégal*” with the sole objective of controlling and defending French monopoly in the African trade in both the regions of Senegal, Gambia and Sierra Leone. In 1679, this French company in West Africa had within its control a total of 21 French ships in operations, carrying West African products and slaves to the French West Indian colonies.²³⁰ And with these French structural arsenals on ground in both Africa and in the West Indies, France joined the Dutch and the Iberian nations of Portugal and Spain in the horrendous and tragic traffic in

²²⁵ Ogot, *General History of Africa*, p. 10.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* Cf. Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 153.

²²⁷ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 154.

²²⁸ Beckles & Shepherd, *Trading Souls*, p. 26.

²²⁹ Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 78.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

human beings of Black African origin, carrying and handling them like animals on their sugar and other agricultural plantations and in the search of gold and silver in the mines in the West Indies. However, the French, quite unlike the Dutch did not exercise supreme control over the Transatlantic trade and world markets established for it throughout its operation due to the presence and overriding influence of the Great Britain in this trade.

5.4 The British and the Atlantic Slave Trade

Great Britain also played a vital role in the development of the Transatlantic slave trade and did exercise much influence over this trade. She is “great” indeed in every aspect of her undertakings and even great in the “evil deeds and guilt of this baneful traffic in human beings.” The eighteenth century British politician and a member of the House of Commons William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) was therefore right when he remarked in 1792 that: “No nation in Europe has plunged so deeply into this guilt of the slave trade as Great Britain.”²³¹ Britain became interested in the trade on the Atlantic Coast of Africa through one of her adventurers called William Hawkins (1495-1555) from the British town of Devonshire. Hawkins was the father of the famous English pirate John Hawkins and the first British navigator that sailed down to the Gold Coasts of Ghana and to Benin in 1536.²³² At this time the English interest as it were, was not on the West African slaves but rather in gold, silver and pepper. It was only in 1562 that her interest in the West African slaves became almost irresistible. This interest in the slave trade was initiated and nurtured by one of her captains John Hawkins (1532-1595), who was well known for his great art in sea piracy. The activities of Britain in West Africa was given approval by Queen Elizabeth I (*1533, reigned 1558-1603) of England. John Hawkins and his men employed the method of conquest and seizure of boats carrying slaves for the Portuguese merchants to make their role in this transaction very extraordinary. In 1562, Hawkins received 3 ships from the merchants in London bearing the following names: the Salomon, the Swallow and the Jonas.²³³ With these ships, he set out in October 1562 with a crew of 100 men and landed in the West African Coast of Guinea, “where he stayed sometime and got into his possession, partly by the sword and partly by other means to the number of three hundred Negroes.”²³⁴

²³¹ Cf. Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 235.

²³² Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 3.

²³³ Davidson, *The Black Mother*, p. 67.

²³⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, p. 262; Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 4; Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 156.

In 1567, John Hawkins set off again to the West African Coast of Guinea and returned safely home carrying a huge number of Black Africans captured by means of piratical invasions. In the views of a renowned English geographer and writer Richard Hakluyt (1552-1616), the human cargoes captured and taken home by John Hawkins by the expedition of 1567 numbered about 450 slaves, which he sold to the Spanish colony in the West Indies.²³⁵ Despite numerous protests made by Portugal against this illegal interference in the trade on the West African Atlantic Coasts, which was under her papal right of Patronage, the Queen of England and her English merchants in a total defiance of this papal authority in the hands of the Portuguese, continued to have their way unperturbed in this business so as to win for their nation a place in the Transatlantic slave trade. The Queen herself sent a Royal ship of 700 tons called “Jesus of Lübeck” in 1564 whose crew was led by John Hawkins. She did not only permit the use of the Royal vessels for this slave raid expedition but also supported it financially with the sum of 500 British pounds.²³⁶ This expedition sent by the Queen sailed down to the Coast of Guinea and while returning, carried about 400 slaves from West Africa mostly snatched from the Portuguese slave ships by act of piracy, which were sent for sales in the West Indies particularly in the Spanish islands of Venezuela, Curaçao, Santa Marta etc.²³⁷ And in the views of William R. Scott, the Queen was given the sum of 1000 British Pounds as a reward for her investment in this very slave voyage.²³⁸ Portugal continued to protest these attacks on her ships as well as an undue infringement on her possessions and locations in West Africa. However, when these protests could not yield anything, Portugal, which has now grown militarily weak as a result of many wars, was coerced to issue licence for a trade in Africa to the British Crown in 1572.²³⁹

With this licence now secured, the decision was quickly taken by the Queen and some heavy weight English commercial class to organise her trade in Africa well. This time around, the means of piratical conquests was dropped and the method of trade by peaceful means was introduced. On May 3, 1558 the Queen granted a Royal Charter to a group of merchants of Exeter and London to organise as well as to exercise the right of monopoly control over the English

²³⁵ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, p. 64ff; Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 4. While returning from the voyage he made to the West Indies during which he sold his 450 Black Africans as slaves, John Hawkins ran out of luck and was captured by the Spaniards who got his ships seized, killed most of his crew members while he managed to escape with only one vessel. See details of this incidence in: Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, pp. 64-74.

²³⁶ Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 3; Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, pp. 258-261.

²³⁷ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, pp. 156 & 157; Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 3.

²³⁸ Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English*, Vol. II, p. 6; Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 3.

²³⁹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 160.

trade in the regions of Senegambia for the period of 10 years. They began by introducing English goods into West African markets in exchange for the West African products such as gold, ivory, silver and pepper.²⁴⁰ However, the trading in the Guinean and the Gold Coasts areas was left open for every English merchant. The English trading in West Africa remained in this form and level until 1618 when the entire territory of Great Britain in Senegambia and Sierra Leone was brought under a monopoly control of 30 English commercial and royal class, who formed a joint stock trading company called "Guinea Company." Members of this company included among others, Sir William St. John, who was believed to have built the first English trade fortress on the Gold Coast in West Africa in 1630.²⁴¹ It was from this centre that the Guinea Company controlled the trade on gold and the Black African slaves, which they supplied to the British new colonies in the New World. Its main areas of slave supply in the English colonies in the New World included: Jamaica, Virginia, Barbados and Massachusetts, where the demand for the African slaves became almost insatiable. This company of English traders was not all that successful in its operations in this trade. Throughout its period of business transactions, it continued to experience lots of losses as a result of the incursions of private interlopers, who were operating in their areas of trade monopoly without paying any duties. It later gave way to the formation of the Company of Royal Adventurers to Africa, whose members received from king Charles II (*1630, reigned 1660-1685) of England on December 18, 1660 the Royal right to exercise monopoly control over the British African trade and her possessions in West Africa.

This Company of Royal Adventurers, specifically founded for the trade in Africa was supported by all the men and women of note in England including the king, his friends the duke of Buckingham, Lord Craven, duke of York, the Queen's mother, John Locke and a host of other notable shareholders.²⁴² The members of this company tasked themselves with the duty of financing an expedition geared towards finding the very source of the West African gold mine, which they believed was located along the areas of the Gambian Rivers. According to Samuel Peppy, each member of this Company of Adventurers agreed to make an initial monetary contribution of 250 British Pounds.²⁴³ And to ensure that its business in West Africa was properly organized and controlled, a committee of six men was formed to oversee its operations in West Africa. This committee was headed by the Earl of Pembroke Lord

²⁴⁰ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, pp. 443ff.

²⁴¹ Scott, *Constitution and Finance of English*, p. 11.

²⁴² José, "The Slave Trade in the Caribbean," p. 91; Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 198; Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 118.

²⁴³ Peppy, *The Diary of Samuel Peppy*, Vol. 1, p. 253. Cf. Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 198.

Craven.²⁴⁴ The terms and provisions made in the Royal Charter that established this company, specified its main objective and areas of monopoly control in the British territory in West Africa. For instance, it was agreed that two-thirds of the gold to be found in this goldmine will belong to the king while the members of the company will retain the rest. The main objective was to locate the gold mines in Gambia, to encourage discoverers for the search for more gold mines in the region and to trade on the African products such as ivory, gold, redwoods, hides and spices. Participation in the trade in human traffic was not given a place in the provisions made by this Royal Charter of December 18, 1660.²⁴⁵ Even though the search for the gold mines, which was assumed to be in Gambia topped the objectives for the expeditions undertaken by this company in West Africa, it however, turned out to be that it was embarking on a fruitless search for gold mines which never existed in the supposed regions of River Gambia. Also the Company experienced lots of mishaps both on the Atlantic waters of West Africa and in the harsh weather conditions which was choking the lives of its crew members.

In a bid to restructure itself as well as to recover from its financial weakness, the Company of Royal Adventurers obtained a new Royal Charter from king Charles II on January 10, 1663, which made a better provisions than those contained in the former Charter of 1660. This time around, the name of the company was slightly remodelled to be known as “The Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa.” Its area of operation was now extended to begin from the whole territory of Cape Blanco to the entire South-western part of Africa stretching up to the Cape of the Good Hope. After observing that it could make a quick profit from the slave trade, the company made sure that a provision was made in this new Royal trade Charter permitting it to engage itself in the trade on human beings as well as on other African products. In a provision made for this participation in the slave traffic, the company was permitted to trade in: “The whole, entire and only trade for the buying and selling, bartering and exchanging of, for or with any Negroes, slaves, goods, wares, and merchandise whatsoever to be vented or found at or within any of the cities on that West Coast.”²⁴⁶ And to avoid the menaces of English privateers and interlopers which contributed to the down fall of the former undertakings of this company, a provision was made forbidding such interlopers from engagement in the slave trade and on other African products and thereby given the said company and its members an absolute right of

²⁴⁴ Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, p. 9. The list of names of other members of this Committee is made available on this page.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 10.

²⁴⁶ Carr, “Select Charters of Trading Companies,” pp. 172-177. Cf. Zook, *Company of Royal Adventurers*, pp. 12-13.

monopoly over the British participation in the trade in Africa. In the provision made for this prohibition, the Charter threatened among other things that: "Anyone caught illegally taking part in this trade, must forfeit his ship and properties."²⁴⁷ With the help of these new provisions, it plunged itself headlong into the traffic in human beings. Using the method of military conquests against the Dutchmen, who had already established themselves firmly in this trade, this company began to expand the British interests in controlling the trade going on in West Africa. It acquired territories in Senegambia, Sierra Leone and in the Gold Coast areas which were under the control of the Dutch government. The slaves, which were acquired from these territories were transported with the English ships to the British colonies in the Caribbean islands of Bermuda, Jamaica, Barbados, and in the North American colonies, where they planted their tobacco and sugar plantations. Between 1663 and 1664, it had already acquired 40 ships in the service of its transactions and made an investment in goods to the tune of 160,000 British Pounds."²⁴⁸

Most of these slave ships were built and fitted in Liverpool and in London. The English author Frank Graham gives us an inkling into the types of goods carried by the British ships and how the English slave merchants operated their Triangular slave trade transactions. According to him, the ships were: "built and fitted to carry slaves; the cargoes consisted of Manchester and Yorkshire woollen goods, hatchets, cutlasses, knives, gunpowder and trinkets, pistols, muskets etc. from Birmingham and Sheffield. These they battered for slaves - men, women and children on the West Coast of Africa."²⁴⁹

Continuing, he noted: "They then carried their cargoes of slaves to the West Indies, who were sold for spices, sugar and rum, and the later commodities were sold in Liverpool. Thus making three profits to the merchants in one voyage."²⁵⁰ In the years that followed, the Company of Royal Adventurers made great progress and huge profits in this trade, financing the discovery as well as military acquisition of new colonies for the British settlers in the West Indies, development of the new settlements in these colonies, cultivation of sugar and tobacco plantations and furnishing them with slaves carried directly from West Africa to the British West Indian colonies. These huge investments coupled with the long period of wars fought over monopoly control of this trade in Africa with the Dutchmen during the Anglo-Dutch wars of 1665-1667 went a long way to exhaust the financial strength of this company such that its influence and success in this trade began to wane. And in the face of this difficulty, the company could no longer pay its debts and as a result of the fact

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Colonial Office Files, 1:17, Fl. 255.

²⁴⁹ Graham, Liverpool and Slavery, pp. 16-17.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 17.

that no further funding was coming its way either from the king of England or from its shareholders, the company got liquidated and as such, had to bow out of this trade.²⁵¹ But within the nine years period of its operations in the slave trade in West Africa, the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading into Africa “sent about 259 ships to the West African Coasts and carried about 46,396 Black African slaves to the colonies in the Americas.”²⁵² This company finally gave way to the formation of a new British company called the Royal African Company.

The Royal African Company was therefore founded in 1672 to replace the liquidated Company of Royal Adventurers by the British Crown. It retained the terms and provisions contained in the former company and this time around, the king was enlisted as a member of the company together with a host of Royal men and women and the merchants of London. James, the duke of York and brother of king Charles II was appointed to head its board of directors.²⁵³ The Royal African Company has its base in the Gold Coast of Ghana, Cape Coast, and other British slave trading centres. To begin its operation in the Transatlantic slave trade, this company was ab initio made conscious of the importance of Black African slaves for the survival of the British colonies in the West Indies and as such, its primary responsibility was to make a smooth and steady supply of Black African captives as slaves to the English settlers in the New World. This primary responsibility was stressed in the Royal Charter that established this company in 1672 as follows: “The slaves are to be sent to all His Majesty's American plantations which cannot subsist without them.”²⁵⁴ Other responsibilities of this company included: to build trade forts and factories in West Africa and to support them militarily, to use martial laws to protect British trade in West Africa, to aid acquisition of more settlements for the English settlers in the West Indies by military means, where they amassed huge expanse of land for the cultivation of sugar-cane, indigo, tobacco and cotton-wool plantations and to protect militarily English possessions in the West Indies.²⁵⁵

For the development of these colonies therefore, the use of Black African slaves was not only necessary but also very expedient and their supply depended solely on the merchants and members of this company. In the exercise of its monopoly control over this slave trading, the English merchants working for this company ensured that the colonial planters did not have their

²⁵¹ Calendar of State Papers (CSP), p. 370.

²⁵² José, “The Slave Trade in the Caribbean,” p. 91.

²⁵³ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 201. Other politically highly placed members of this company and merchants of London are enlisted as Shareholders of this company on this page.

²⁵⁴ Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade*, Vol. 1, p. 193.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

independence and as such did not have to buy slaves from other slave ships belonging to the Dutchmen or the French slave merchants, or to set the pace for the sales of the goods produced in the colonies in the Americas. They had to fix the prices of slaves supplied to the settlers and planters which was always high for the planters to buy, and then determined for them the prices for which their (planters) products were to be sold to them. This was the fate of the planters in the English West Indies.²⁵⁶ All the clarion calls for intervention in this case made by the planters to their home government and colonial Governors for their independence fell on deaf ears.²⁵⁷

However, this condition later changed when at last in 1698, the new British ruling class repealed the monopoly control of this company and declared a free trade in the Transatlantic slave trade as a natural right of all Englishmen and traders. This abrogation was necessitated by the pressures mounted by other merchants from other English cities such as Liverpool's merchants and Bristol's Society of Merchants Ventures, who were constantly complaining about their exclusion from the "national cake" (profit accruing from the Transatlantic slave trade). This liberalization of the trade in human beings of Black African origin had the effect of introducing many hands in the business of the Transatlantic slave trade. Privateers and small business groups of merchants bought licences from the Royal African Company and joined the traffic on slaves. The competition, which arose among these privateers and the joint merchant group of companies, was such that each one was trying to outsmart each other in the supply of the Black Africans as slaves to the New World. And the West African nations became a battle ground and a war zone for all the European competing trading companies and merchants in their bid to catch slaves for their human cargoes for delivery to the West Indies. This competition became so high that the West Indies was flooded with Black African slaves such that the Royal African Company found it extremely difficult to compete with them and as such, had to bow out of this traffic in slaves in 1731. And between the period of its foundation in 1672 and 1731, this company carried about 350,000 Black Africans as slaves to the English West Indies colonies.²⁵⁸

Great Britain reached its height in her trading transactions and the monopoly control of the Transatlantic slave trade when she won the highly rated contract

²⁵⁶ Calendar of State Papers (CSP), p. 14, Petition of Merchants and Planters, March 1, 1661. This Collection contains the tactics of English slave merchants and the State to control the planters in the English colonies in the West Indies with particular reference to Barbados which fell into the hands of British military forces on January 11, 1652, and Jamaica in 1665.

²⁵⁷ For details of the complaints made by the English planters to their home government and how their demands were blocked by the slave merchants and shareholders of the Royal African Company, see, Calendar of State Papers (CSP), pp. 29, 30 & 45, Petitions from Barbados, May 11, & July 10, 1661. Cf. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 31ff.

²⁵⁸ Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 81.

(the so-called *asiento*) from Spain to supply slaves from the West African Coasts to the Spanish West Indies at the treaty of Utrecht in 1713 for a total period of 30 years. Conscious of the great fortune which this right will bring to Britain in the nearest future, the people and government of Great Britain welcomed this news with a great delight and celebrated it with a torchlight procession throughout the streets of London.²⁵⁹ In her speech to the British Parliament made on the 6th day of June 1712, Queen Anne (*1665, reigned 1702-1714) said proudly: "I have insisted and obtained that the *asiento* or contract for furnishing the Spanish West Indies with Negroes shall be made with us for thirty years."²⁶⁰ The terms of this *asiento* included among other things: the supply of 4,800 Black African slaves for a period of 30 years to the Spanish West Indies, payment of thirty-three Pesos in silver to the Spanish king for each slave delivered safely etc.²⁶¹

The British government however, did not waste time to "sell this great privilege for seven and a half million pounds to the South Sea Company, which carried out British trade transactions in the Spanish West Indies."²⁶² The South Sea Company was founded by Lord Treasurer Robert Harley and John Blunt in 1711 as a joint stock company and backed up by the British government for the purpose of trading in slaves and on other products with the Spanish West colonies and other parts of America to reduce its national debt. The shareholders of this slave company included all the British top brats such as, Queen Anne and her successor king George I, John Blunt (the company's director), Sir John Lambert, the earl of Halifax (founder of the bank of England), Sir Isaac Newton, members of the House of Commons and Lords and their speakers, as well as institutions such as the King's College and the University of Cambridge.²⁶³ In its operations in Africa, the South Sea Company was seen almost in all the West African nations and beyond in search of Black slaves. It had its base in Loango Bay (Angola and Congo), Gold Coast, Niger Delta (Nigeria), Dahomey (Benin), Senegal and Sierra Leone and in other places, where the British merchants had established slave trading centres for Great Britain. The ships in the service of this South Sea Company in 1720 numbering over 150²⁶⁴ had their base in London, Bristol and Liverpool. It was from these British ports that they took off for the triangular journey (Britain-West Africa- West Indies and back to Britain) that took almost three months for a round trip. On reaching the West African shores, these ships were

²⁵⁹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 236.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 235.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 238-239.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

stationed in different sea ports and British trading centres scouting for slaves and carrying their captured human cargoes to the Spanish West Indies such as Cartagena, Barbados, Jamaica, Cuba, Buenos Aires, Mexico, Portobelo, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Santo Domingo etc. The high rate of demand for the Black African slaves and its expediency for the works on the sugar plantation in these Spanish West Indies always put the captains of the South Sea Company under severe pressures to supply their human cargoes on time. With this mounted pressures as well as the fortunes to be made over-night, the British merchants and captains closed their eyes to the evils of the slave trade and promoted it in an unprecedented manner that is yet to be seen in the history of mankind. Through incessant slave raids and erupting crisis in the West African societies which were often incited by the trade merchants, it did not take them much time to bring West Africa into disorders and ruins. Wars became a daily phenomenon in most African societies organized with the sole intention of generating slaves. And when the British captains especially from Liverpool and military outfits on ground were not directly taking part in these wars among West African communities, they were seen insinuating and deceiving one community or the other to engage in war with a neighbouring community. They did this by supplying sophisticated guns and gunpowder manufactured in the British gun factories in Birmingham to the African chiefs and other titled men from the warring communities. Those captured in these wars were then handed over to the slave merchants as a collateral payment for these guns.

Other means of capturing their slaves included also kidnapping, arson and razing of villages at nights when the villagers were sleeping with their children. The English writer and Book author Frank Graham narrated how the merchants of Liverpool and their captains used to get their supply for slaves. This was done in collaboration with the local men such as the one called Accra, who was a notorious slave catcher and dealer working with the merchants of Liverpool. The aforesaid man was in the habit of taking Liverpool captains on board in a canoe and brought them on land. Together with his men, he then laid in ambush till night and when it was dark:

His men (slave catchers) ran into the villages with lighted torches and set fire to anything that would burn, making at the same time the most hideous yells to frighten and terrify the peaceful Negroes within their huts and cabins. It was not long before the two villages were on flames, out rushed the frightened Negroes for safety, when they were immediately pounced upon by Accra's men and bound hand and foot with ropes and chains, and then thrown into the canoes. In this way, they would kidnap as many as fifty and a hundred at a time.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ Graham, Liverpool and Slavery, p. 25.

Continuing, Frank Graham recorded a similar incidence that took place in 1769, when a Liverpool ship captain called Paterson commanded his men to set two villages in Calabar (Nigeria) on fire. Thus according to Graham: "During the conflagration, the poor Blacks were crying for help, Paterson's men seized on the Negroes, branded them and made them slaves."²⁶⁶ Also a deceptive tactic was employed by the merchants of Liverpool and their captains in their bid to get quick human cargoes for shipment to the West Indies. They would invite some native slave dealers to come on board the slave ships for a feast and dine with them. And after supplying them with enough strong drinks, the slave dealers would get themselves drunk and fell into deep slumber, and when they had gone so far in their slumber, then: "The ship would be got under-way, all sails set, and rapidly leave the shore. The slave traders on awaking would find themselves out at sea; they were stripped, branded, and put down the hold to share the fate of the other slaves."²⁶⁷ The capturing of innocent and very unsuspecting individuals was so rampant that no one was exempted from being captured at any given point in time. One may be a freeman today, but tomorrow, will turn out to be a slave. That was the order of the day. And there was no exception to this condition of life for the West African natives. Even the local chiefs of some West African communities could be made to suffer the same fate of the slaves. For instance, Frank Graham reported a case of a local chief and slave dealer, who just went to the Slave Coast to sell his slaves to the English slave merchants. Narrating what later became the fate of this slave dealer just few minutes after selling his fellow men, Graham recorded as follows: "But as he was returning from the ship with his valuables on him, he was seized by Accra, taken to the ship and sold for a better price. Thus he joined the slaves he had sold."²⁶⁸ And by means of these aforesaid plots and methods, the English merchants were able to get their slaves as much as they were able to carry with their numerous ships. Between 1721 and 1730 over 100,000 Black Africans were carried with the Company's ships to the Americas.²⁶⁹ These Spanish American colonies were so flooded with Black slaves during this period such that the slave masters and planters almost getting fed up with their huge numbers, began to discriminate among them and classify them as follows: "An Angolan Negro was a proverb for worthlessness, Coromantines (Ashantis), from the Gold Coast were good workers but too rebellious, Mandingoes (Senegal) were too prone to theft, Ibos (Nigeria) were

²⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 27.

²⁶⁷ Graham, Liverpool and Slavery, Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 26.

²⁶⁹ Hugh, The Slave Trade, p. 244.

timid and despondent, the Pawpaws or Whydahs (Dahomey) were the most docile and best-disposed.”²⁷⁰

The success of Great Britain in the Transatlantic slave trade was greatly contributed by the merchants of Liverpool. Liverpool began sending its ships (all built in Liverpool) on slave expeditions to West Africa in 1690s. In 1730, it has up to 17 ships carrying slaves to the West Indies and this number increased by seven times in 1771.²⁷¹ To show the extent of its contribution to the success of Britain in the Transatlantic slave trade, the historian Elisabeth Donann confirmed that: “In 1795, Liverpool has five-eighths of the British slave trade and three-sevenths of the whole European slave trade.”²⁷² Evaluating the success of Liverpool in monetary terms during the slave trade, the English Marxist writer Peter Fryer recorded that between 1783 and 1793: “Liverpool made a net income from this trade in excess of 12,000,000 pounds.”²⁷³ And judging from all this data, Frank Graham was therefore correct to assert that: “Liverpool may be looked upon as the slave town of the old world.”²⁷⁴ And by so being, she added much strength to the British success in the Transatlantic slave trade such that between 1680 and 1786 the British traders and captains carried more than two million Black Africans as slaves to their colonies in Virginia, Carolina, Barbados, Jamaica and other colonies and also to the colonies of other nations where the slaves were needed.²⁷⁵ This was confirmed by Eric Williams when he wrote: “Britain became supplier of slaves to both Spanish colonies and some French colonies and by so doing, she was not only the foremost slave trading country in the world but also she had become in Ramsay’s phrase “the honourable slave carriers of her rivals.”²⁷⁶ And as the foremost enslaving European nation, her annual import of Black African slaves at the peak of the slave trade in 1768 stood at 53,000 slaves. The annual import of other major European enslaving nations to the West Indies at this period was given as follows: “The French 23,000 slaves, the Dutch 11,000 slaves and the Portuguese 8,700 slaves.”²⁷⁷ The total number of Black Africans carried by these European enslaving nations to their various Brazilian, Caribbean and

²⁷⁰ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, pp. 37-38. Cf. Edwards, Byran, *The History, Civil and Commercial of the British Colonies in the West Indies*, II, London 1801, p. 72; Atkins, John, *A Voyage to Guinea, Brazil and the West Indies*, London 1735, p. 179.

²⁷¹ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 34.

²⁷² Donann, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade*, pp. 129-130. Cf. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 34; Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, p. 50.

²⁷³ Fryer, *Staying Power*, p. 37.

²⁷⁴ Graham, *Liverpool and Slavery*, p. 15.

²⁷⁵ Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies*, pp. 69-70. Cf. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 33.

²⁷⁶ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 34. Cf. Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, p. 48.

²⁷⁷ Milwood, *European Christianity and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 52.

North American colonies is difficult to estimate. Those of the slaves, who did not make it to their expected destinations of enslavement were unaccounted for. Some historians however, make do with the estimation made by Philip D. Curtin of the number of Black slaves supplied alive to the slave colonies. According to this estimation, the number of enslaved Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade stood at 10 million slaves.²⁷⁸ But the truth is that this figure remains very far from being the true figures of those Black Africans that were forcefully taken away from their fatherland throughout the long duration of the Transatlantic slave trade. The kind of treatment given to these Black African slaves by their white enslavers is not something to write home about. Let us briefly consider the appalling treatment of the Black African slaves during this slave trade.

5.5 Treatment of Black African Slaves in this Trade

The human status of the Black African slaves changed automatically in the eyes of the European enslaving nations as soon as they were captured and handed over to the European slave merchants. They ceased from being considered as fellow humans to becoming inferior and sub-human beings. Most often than not, these slaves were considered by their owners as mere tools of human labour, who in the Aristotelian language were viewed as “living possessions”²⁷⁹ of their masters. And by reason of this fact, they were treated like mere chattels, whose life and death depended solely on the whims and caprices of their white slave masters. This conviction is seen in the question asked by a British woman Mrs. Simmons, whose husband (John Simmons) was one of the owners of the famous Liverpool slave ship “Thomas” that was loaded with Black African slaves for sales in the West Indies in 1767. Shocked upon noticing how the Black African captives were being packed like ordinary commodities in this slave ship, Mrs Simmons approached the ship captain Peter Roberts and asked him, whether it was not cruel to pack so many poor people in so little a room. The answer she got from this ship captain reads as follows: “No!” They rather like it. You see, Mrs Simmons, they are badly treated in their own country, I mean the people as you call them; we don't call them that: to us, they are only slaves.”²⁸⁰ That the Black African captives did not qualify to be regarded as human beings by the slave ship captains, slave merchants and slave masters as the above citation indicates, is the underlining

²⁷⁸ Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade, A Census*, pp. 3-13. See also, Lovejoy, Paul, “The Volume of Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis,” *Journal of African History*, XXIII, 4(1982), pp. 473-502.

²⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, 1254b.

²⁸⁰ Conversation between Mrs Simmons and the Liverpool ship captain Peter Roberts on June 19, 1767, in: Graham, *Liverpool and Slavery*, p. 19.

factor that characterised the inhuman treatment meted out to these slaves and opened up a flood gate of other dehumanizing and degrading attitudes of the slave dealers towards the Black African slaves.

The agony of the Black African slaves began with their forceful capture, which was followed by the branding of the slaves with the initials of their slave owners. For instance, the initial "D.Y." which was seen on the bodies of several millions of Black African captives was given to the slaves belonging to the British Royal African Company bearing the initials of the Duke of York as governor of this English slave company. In the like manner, the initials "D.D" was branded on the slaves belonging to the merchants of Liverpool etc. According to Frank Graham, this branding of slaves takes the following process: "The slave was meant to kneel down, the branding iron was red hot, and then it was stamped on the poor Negro's forehead, breast, buttock or back according to the fancy of the brander."²⁸¹ This branding was followed by a temporary imprisonment in a slave dungeon located at the Castles of the various European enslaving nations in West Africa, where up to 500 men, women and children were kept in an underground with no air or light for weeks, before they were marched like herds of pigs through a dark and narrow tunnel to the Atlantic Coast, where the slave ships were kept in waiting to begin a journey of no return and of unimaginable future.

The inhuman treatment which these African captives received from the hands of the slave ship captains and their crew members during their "Middle Passage" is something that forces tears to flow down the cheeks of every man and woman that reads about them from the pages of historical books and magazines. With a total lack of the milk of human sympathy, these innocent men, women and children were left for days without food, kept in chains on their legs for weeks, mercilessly flogged and manhandled at the least provocation, butchered and were made to lie down in the ship's hold with their backs, just to make for space for the best and quickest possible financial gains. They were packed like tins of sardines in a sachet and were only allowed to occupy a space measuring only 5 feet in length by 16 inches in breath during the Atlantic crossing which lasted for months. Describing how the slaves were packed in the slave ships during the Middle Passage, Frank Graham recorded as follows: "The slaves were packed in the hold of the ship like animals. They had not so much room as a man in a coffin. They were placed lying on their back, one on the other, so close were they that you could not walk without treading

²⁸¹ Graham, *Liverpool and Slavery*, p. 28. Cf. Davidson, *The Black Mother*, p. 13.

on them but then they were only slaves. One kind hearted sailor, when passing over them, would remove his shoes so as not to hurt them.”²⁸²

Corroborating the above citation on the inhuman treatment suffered by the slaves during their transportation to the West Indies, Eric Williams stated as follows: “They were chained two by two, right leg and left leg, right hand and left hand, each slave had less room than a man in a coffin. It was like the transportation of black cattle.”²⁸³ On his own part, the English writer Chapman Cohen recorded a description of the stowing of the slaves in the British slave ships and how a lot of them were dying while being closely packed and fastened to each other. According to his records, the slaves were: “Thus, crammed together like herrings in a barrel, they contracted putrid and fatal disorders, so that they, who came to inspect them in the morning, had occasionally to pick dead slaves out of their rows and to unchain their carcasses from the bodies of their wretched fellow-sufferers to whom they had been fastened.”²⁸⁴ This manner of stowing the slaves in the slave ships like cattle had even a parliamentary approval of the governments of some European enslaving nations. For instance, the British government approved of this manner of packing of Black African slaves under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788. In the instructions given by the British Parliament in the said Slave Act, Black Africans were permitted to be stowed in the famous British slave ship called “the Brookes” in the following measurements: “The “Brookes” was allowed to carry a total number of 454 slaves. The slaves are to be stowed by allowing a space of 6 Ft. by 1Ft. 4 Inch to each man, 5Ft. 10 Inch by 1 Ft. 4 Inch to each woman, 5Ft. by 1Ft. 2 Inch to each boy and 4Ft. 6 Inch by 1Ft. for each girl.”²⁸⁵ The approval of this narrow space for the stowing of the Black African slaves was in the minds of these English enlightened Gentlemen of their time adjudged as the best comfort, which they could give to the Black African slaves during the Middle Passage. One can then imagine how the condition of the Black African slaves in the British slave ships looked like before this measure was taken to “improve” their lots while crossing the Atlantic Ocean to an infamous journey that severed them from their fatherland. They were then kept under such an excruciating and suffocating condition for the journey to the West Indies across the Atlantic waters that lasted for four months. Relating

²⁸² Graham, *Liverpool and Slavery*, p. 31; Donann, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade*, p. 132.

²⁸³ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 35. Cf. Donann, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade*, p. 132ff; Davidson, *The Black Mother*, p. 13.

²⁸⁴ Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, pp. 48-49. Cf. Ingram, John Kells, *The History of Slavery and Serfdom*, Boston 2000, pp. 151-153.

²⁸⁵ *British Slave Trade Act of 1788*, in: *Slave Trade: A Select Bibliography in Commemoration of the 200th Abolition of the Slave Trade*, Compiled by Nicole Bryan, et al, National Library of Jamaica 2007, p. 54. See also, Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, p. 51.

how hot and suffocating the slave ship's hold was, where the Black African slaves were packed on board during the Middle Passage, one British slave trader remarked that: "After remaining ten minutes in the hold, his shirt was as wet as if it had been in a bucket of water."²⁸⁶ And under this excruciating living state in the slave ships, the Black African slaves were still kept in chains fastened to the decks of the ships so as to prevent them from throwing themselves into the Atlantic waters with the intention of evading the dehumanizing treatments which had become their lot in the hands of the white slave dealers. This fact was echoed by Frank Graham when he recorded as follows: "During their transportation, they were chained together by means of ring-bolts fastened to the decks to prevent them from jumping over board, which many of them would gladly prefer, and some have succeeded in leaping into the sea, which to them, was a happy release compared to a miserable lifelong slavery."²⁸⁷ When the climate was conducive, the slaves were allowed in the mornings to come up on the deck of their slave ships, during which they were forced to exercise themselves in order to be delivered alive by the slave dealers. Most of the time, they were forced to beat some African drums and dance so as to distract them from their psychosomatic trauma and shocks that befell them during their capture and the uncertainties of their future in the land of their perpetual enslavement.

Their feeding during the Middle Passage was not something to write home about. It consisted of "raw yams and horse-beans served out twice a day, with half a pint of water after each meal."²⁸⁸ Those of them who fell sick were not attended to and were better thrown overboard to feed the sharks and other sea monsters. Relating the dispositions of the slave ship captains towards the weak and sick slaves during the Atlantic crossing to the West Indies, Frank Graham, aptly narrated how a British slave ship captain after examining the sick slaves would instruct three members of his crew in the following words: "I think these Niggers had better go overboard, they will leave us more room and help to feed the sharks. I see they (sharks) are in our track."²⁸⁹ What immediately followed such instructions was always a prompt elimination of such fateful Black Africans by means of drowning them and leaving them behind as food for the sharks parading the Atlantic waters with the expectations of finding such ill-fated slaves upon which they feasted and had their fill.

With this level of treatments totally devoid of human sympathy, it is no wonder then that there was a high mortality rate among the slaves as a result of malnutrition, dehydration, shock, trauma, lack of proper medical attention,

²⁸⁶ Graham, *Liverpool and Slavery*, p. 31.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 34.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 34.

crowded space in the “moving human coffin” called the slave ship, as well as a total lack of fresh air to breathe. The air in the slave ship was so hot and was poisoned with body odours which these slaves had no other choice than to inhale. The result was serious fever and dysentery which took a deadly toll on them. Those of them, who could no longer bear it dived into the ocean and left their fate at the mercy of sharks and other sea monsters. It is estimated that the death toll of slaves during the Middle Passage could be within the range of 50 to 100 slaves per voyage during the Transatlantic slave trade. For instance, one Englishman called Walsch narrated what he witnessed during his passage from Brazil in 1829 and described how a British slave ship “the North Star” was throwing the slaves overboard in the Atlantic waters. Narrating the untold misery and sufferings of these slaves he recorded as follows:

The slaving ship's human cargo was of five hundred and five men and women. The crew had thrown fifty-five overboard during their seventeen days at sea, and these slaves were all enclosed under grafted hatchways between decks. The space was so low that they sat between each other's legs, and stowed so close together that there was no possibility of lying down or at all changing their position by night or by day.²⁹⁰

There was also the case of one of the slave ships belonging to Liverpool popularly known as “Thomas” which was carrying 630 Black African slaves in 1767 to the West Indies and out of this huge number, 100 slaves lost their lives as a result of unbearable pressures mounted unto them by the English slave ship captain Peter Roberts and his crew members.²⁹¹

And on the plantations in the West Indies, the lot of the Black African slaves was not better off. They were forced to work under the scorching heat of the sun and in a state of indescribable inhuman conditions. In the words of Francis Liberman: “They were meant to work from morning till night under the burning heat and are exposed to the torrents of rain in winter.”²⁹² What matters for the slave masters and the colonial white planters was the gain and profit which the slaves were generating for them on their sugar, cotton, indigo and tobacco plantations as well as the wealth accruing from the gold and silver mines which the slaves had to dig deep in the ground to extract for them. And blindfolded by material gains, the white slave masters and plantation owners felt less concerned about the well-being of their slaves. As a result of these inhuman treatments, the life expectancy of these slaves was averagely placed at seven years for those of them, who made it to the plantation areas in the West Indies and North America. In the views of the famous American pioneer

²⁹⁰ Davidson, *The Black Mother*, p. 13.

²⁹¹ Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, p. 52.

²⁹² Libermann, *Lettres Spirituelles du Vénérable Liberman*, in: Burke, *Morality and Mission*, p. 36.

abolitionist Theodore Dwight Weld (1803-1896), the Black African slaves: “Were overworked, underfed, wretchedly clad and lodged, and have insufficient sleep. They are often made to wear round their necks iron collars armed with prongs to drag heavy chains and weights at their feet while working in the fields.”²⁹³

At the least occurrence of any observable mistake, they were punished with wickedness and the worst type of imaginable execution of “justice.” In an eyewitness account of such exercise of wickedness recorded in his book, Theodore Weld captured this kind of punishment more vividly when he wrote: “They are frequently flogged with terrible severity, have red pepper rubbed into their lacerated flesh, and hot brine spirits of turpentine etc. poured over the gashes to increase the torture.”²⁹⁴ Other kinds of severe punishments and mutilations were also meted out on them at the least sign of insubordination by their white slave masters at the plantation slavery. For instance, apart from castration of the male slaves considered insubordinate: “Their ears were often cut-off, their eyes knocked out, their bones broken, their flesh branded with hot irons.”²⁹⁵ Despite the fact that they were cultivating agricultural products such as maize, rice and other crops in their quantum, they were however poorly fed on the plantations. In the views of Francis Liberman, the Black African slaves were so poorly treated in a manner in which no other human race could be treated. According to him: “They are despised by the whites and treated like animals. No other people are despised as these are, none as badly treated.”²⁹⁶ Continuing, Liberman wrote as follows: “For food, all they have is some roots boiled with salt, cooked rice is their only bread. Once a year they might have meat. Men, women and children work without respite and with no recompense beyond the miserable nourishment they get...This is something to tear asunder any sensitive Christian soul.”²⁹⁷ It appears that Liberman did not understand clearly the economic mind-set of the white slave masters and owners of the plantation slavery, by trying to bring in morality into their slave holding system and their attitudes towards the enslaved Black Africans. It was rather the American sociologist and historian W.E.B Du Bois, who got the policy of these plantation owners right. According to him: “The policy of the West Indies and American plantation slave holders was to kill off the Negroes by overwork and buy more.”²⁹⁸ And this policy accounted for the harsh treatment and wicked behaviours of the plantation slave owners and their collaborators in the evil of

²⁹³ Weld, *American Slavery as it is*, p. 21. Cf. Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, pp. 68-69.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*; Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, p. 69; Burke, *Morality and Mission*, p. 36.

²⁹⁵ Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, p. 69.

²⁹⁶ Liberman, in: Burke, *Morality and Mission*, p. 36.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁹⁸ Du Bois, in: Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, p. 64.

the slave trade towards the Black African victims of the West Indies plantation slavery. And this offers the explanation for the high mortality rate of the plantation slaves. Writing on this, Basil Davidson remarked as follows: "There was misery, unending misery. There was so much death in the Americas that the whole slave populations had to be renewed every five years."²⁹⁹ A crystal example of this high rate of slave mortality on the plantation slavery in the West Indies is seen in the British colony of Jamaica. Between 1690 and 1820, this English colony alone harboured more than 800,000 Black African slaves. But in the 1830s, only 34,000 slaves were left on this Island.³⁰⁰ That means, within the space of ten years, the slave population of this colony was drastically cut to more than its half as a result of high rate of mortality caused by the unbearable inhuman sufferings to which these slaves were unceasingly exposed. This was the fate of the Black African slaves in the West Indies as well as in the North American European colonies during and throughout the long duration of their enslavement in these colonies. The reason why they were treated and kept under such inhuman conditions of living remained unknown to these slaves, who only saw themselves as unfortunate victims of an unjust economic system invented and designed by the Portuguese and other European enslaving nations whose contribution to the development and propagation of this baneful business in human beings were considered above. Such situation of theirs did not change until the abolition of the slave trade was effected in 1833, when British Parliament passed a resolution into Law called Slavery Abolition Act which was a follow-up of the Slavery Act of 1807 that outlawed the slave trade in the British colonial empires in the New World. And with this Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, the British government outlawed the institution of slavery in all her colonies. This brought about the actual abolition of slavery in all the British colonies on August 1, 1834. This abolition Act of 1833 also approved of the right of compensation for the plantation owners as well as the slave owners and set aside about 20 million pounds as compensation for their loss of slaves and property caused by the abolition of slavery. There was no thought of compensation for the enslaved and dehumanized Black Africans by the same Parliament that approved of compensation for the slave holders and plantation owners, an indication of the rightlessness of the Black African slaves in the face of the British Law and Legislatures. However, on April 27, 1848, the French government imitating the British government painfully denounced slavery in all her colonies and compensated owners of plantations. In this way the practice of slave trade which began many centuries ago and justified by all

²⁹⁹ Davidson, *The Black Mother*, p. 13.

³⁰⁰ Ingram, *History of Slavery and Serfdom*, p. 153; Cohen, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, p. 49.

the countries that gainfully participated in it was at least physically brought to a happy end by the same continent that established and propagated it.

But the question that is very agitating in the mind of most African historians is: Why is it that slavery and the slave trade which did not originate from Black Africa now ended up with Black Africans? What reasons were proffered as justifications for their enslavement and why did it take so many centuries before the condemnation and abolition of the Black African enslavement was effected? This question will form the kernel of our preoccupation in the next section of this work that deals on the subject of justifications for both slavery as an institution as well as the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans.

II. Justification for Slavery and Enslavement of Black Africans

1. The Catholic Church on the Subject of Slavery

1.1 Introduction

The ancient society in which the Catholic Church established itself was one that was replete with slaves and their masters. The early community of the faithful in Christ had its members drawn from a society with its social stratifications. When the early members of the faith in Christ (comprising of both slaves and their masters) turned around to accept the faith in Christ, they did not leave their social status behind them and the leaders of the Church of that period did not think of founding two Churches: one for the slaves and another for the slave masters. Instead, led by the spirit of oneness in Christ and the conviction that all men are created equal in the image and likeness of God, the leaders of the early Church allowed them as it were, to gather at prayers as slaves and masters under the same roof of those called to salvation in Christ. But the question here is: Did this assembling of masters and slaves under the same roof in the Church automatically remove the social compass that divided the two groups of believers in Christ? Did this seemingly oneness in Christ enjoyed by the slaves with their masters really change the status of both groups of believers in the society and in the family when they got back home at the end of the Church-service? The truth of the matter is that the slave status remained essentially unchanged. The early Church therefore concerned herself with the issue of striking a balance in the relationship between slaves and their masters. The social and economic problem associated with this matter was one, which the early Church unfortunately had to accept but at the same time attempted to look for a way out in promoting a brotherly relationship that will not negatively harm or rather affect the interests of both slaves and their masters. How then did the early Church handle this very challenging problem without compromising its vocation and mission as the light of truth and the vanguard of justice in a world full of injustice and one which was in a dire need of salvation?

This section of our work has the onerous task of investigating the very position which the Catholic Church took on the issue of slavery in the society in which she found herself. It has its goal of establishing the reason why the Church allowed slavery, gave justifications for its existence and even helped to establish the traffic in human beings when it has metamorphosed into a purely racist and

commercial business witnessed during the 400 years duration of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans.

1.2 Theological Foundation of Slavery in the Catholic Church

The Church's position on the issue of the institution of slavery is one that rested on two main pillars: first and foremost, on the Pauline teaching on slavery. Secondly, on the servant of God title of Jesus Christ found in the Christology of the Church with its basis on the interpretation given to the prophecy of Isaiah contained in (Isaiah 53:1-12). These themes are much interwoven with each other and are important in the understanding of the true position of the Church on the issue of slavery. And based on this intrinsic and intertwined nature of these themes, the admonition of the Tübingen professor of Church History Hans Reinhard Seeliger that these themes should not be treated in isolation with each other, has to be strictly observed in the treatment of the basis of the Catholic Church's teaching on the theology of slavery.¹ With this professorial admonition in mind, let us now consider these themes in their very context.

1.2.1 Slavery in the Views of the Apostle Paul

As already indicated in the above introduction, the nascent Christian Church established itself in a society that was not devoid of slaves. And among the early teachers of this Church who witnessed a-first-hand condition of the life of the slaves in the society was the man of Tarsus and the great Apostle to the Gentiles - St. Paul. As it were, the Apostle Paul could not conceive of another society in his time that was devoid of slaves and its attendant social problems. He preached in the Church whose membership consisted of slaves and masters and in which the slaves alone constituted a greater portion of the large congregation of believers in Christ. The Apostle Paul was aware that the economic and social burden of the society in which he lived and preached the liberating message of Christ lay in the hands of the slaves, whose status in the society was low in comparison with those of the freeborn. He was also very conscious of the fact that he was called to be in the same mission with the Founder of the Christian religion (Jesus Christ) who saw himself right at the beginning of His own liberating mission as the fulfilment of the messianic prophecy recorded by the Evangelist Luke with the following words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings

¹ Seeliger, *Theologie II, katholisch*, in: Heinz, Heinen, Winfried Schmitz, u.a., eds. *Handwörterbuch der antiken Sklaverei*, 2016.

to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free and announce that the time has come, when the Lord will save His people” (Luke 4:18-19). What Jesus said to His hearers in the synagogue at the end of reading this scriptural passage was very revealing and definitive of His messianic mission. To their hearing, He announced: “Today, this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21). And it was in the spirit of this defining mission that He called all His Apostles to proclaim this same message of liberation to His people. Those, held in the bondage of sins and slavery were meant to hear this message and experience in their lives its full liberating character.

The Apostle Paul was aware of this liberating message of Christ and was confronted with the sufferings and oppressions of the enslaved members of the society and as well members of his Christian congregation. How did he react to this fact of the naked reality of the degrading human condition of slaves who formed a greater percentage of believers in Christ? Did he develop a separate theology for slavery? The undeniable fact in this consideration is that unfortunately, Paul did neither call for the manumission of slaves nor for the abolition of the very oppressive institution that held Christian slaves in bondage. Instead, he was much concerned with the Christian life of his Christian community. Paul's major concern in his Christ-centred theology was guided by the question: How does a Christian convert irrespective of his social status live a life in Christ? Put in another way, Paul was concerned with the problem of how do slaves who are converted to the faith in Christ live their lives as Christians who are free in the Lord without compromising the social order of the society in which they lived? What does it mean to belong to Christ and at the same time be a slave of a human lord?

To be fair to Paul, and in order not to put words into his mouth which were not spoken by him, academic honesty in the study of Pauline theology demands that one makes a difference between authentic Pauline Letters on the one hand: where one could cite with a greater percentage of certainty what Paul really said and avoid saying things which Paul never said. And on the other hand, the Deutero-Pauline Letters as well as the Pastoral Epistles, where some thoughts, in keeping with Pauline tradition were attributed to him by the second and third generations of the leaders of the Christian Church. It is within the purview of this difference made herein, that Paul's position on the issue of the condition of slaves in the Christian Church of his day is to be made in this study.

The answer which Paul gave to the question of the condition of slaves who have become Christians is that all, who through the Waters of Baptism became Christians have now acquired a new status in life. They are now all in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ). That means, they are one with Christ and as such they are in the Lord (ἐν Κυρίῳ). And this implies that it is not the human status that determines a

life in Christ, rather it is grace which comes from the redemptive work of Christ. The death and the power of the resurrection of Christ becomes a paradigm upon which every human condition is to be measured. This grace now makes all the social differences found in the Greco-Roman world which used to separate human beings along sex, social status and ethnic divides are now a thing of the past among believers in Christ. They are no longer living in the flesh (*ἐν σαρκί*) but in the Lord (*ἐν Κυρίῳ*). Hence the proclamation of his epoch making liberating Christian message, and what the German New Testament Biblical scholar Martin Ebner rightly described as the “Magna Charta”² of the Pauline theology located in the Letter to the Galatians where Paul taught as follows: “It is through faith that all of you are God's sons in union with Christ Jesus. You were baptised into union with Christ and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ Himself. So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and freemen, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:26-28; I Cor. 12:13).

In this (what one could describe as the) “epicentre” of Pauline theology, all Christians are considered to be one in Christ, they live their lives in communion with Him and with one another. They are new creatures in Christ. Even the Christian slaves, whose dignity and social status was dangerously affected by the social order of things in the Greco-Roman classical world of antiquity were not excluded. Moreover, they are made part and parcel of this new order of things among believers in Christ. They are new creatures and share in the Oneness with Christ. They are the Lord's free and now enjoy the freedom of the children of God (Gal. 3:26; 1Cor. 7: 21-22, 12:13; Philemon v. 16). What Paul did to the slaves in this theology of the “free in the Lord” is that he accepted this condition of bondage of the slaves in the world of his days as a status quo ante. But he did not leave it at that but transformed it by giving them the status of sons and freemen whose acceptance of life in the Lord had now brought about the plan of God for the world in their lives. And this plan of God for the converted slaves shows itself in the structures of relationship to one another established by Christ, where everyone is respected and accorded his rights irrespective of his human social status.

And in concrete determination of how the freed in the Lord should now relate to one another, Paul made Christ as the fulcrum point around which their daily relationship to one another should rotate by employing the figure of Christ's incarnation as “ebed Yahweh” (servant of God) who by becoming man, emptied himself of all Godliness and took on a humiliated position of a slave. The Apostle Paul advised all to emulate this humble servant-attitude of Christ.

² Ebner, *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, p. 410.

And finding in this attitude of Christ the Christian emulative virtue of humility and selflessness, he made it the very bedrock upon which he based his entire teaching on the theme of slavery and recommended this attitude to all Christians in the following wordings: “Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, who though was in the form of God but did not count equality with God, something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, and coming in human likeness and found in the appearance of human beings, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even death on the cross.” (Phil. 2: 5-8).

This part of Paul's Letter is among the generally accepted authentic Pauline Letters and is popular among New Testament Biblical scholars as “Kenotic hymn” as a result of its appearance in the form of a hymn. Some New Testament scholars such as the Tübingen theologian Michael Theobald et al., remarked that this hymn did not originally come from Paul. In his view, by using this hymn in this passage, Paul was only drawing from another Christian source already known to him at the time of his writing this Letter.³ Despite this criticism, another New Testament Biblical scholar Gordon D. Fee regarded this passage as “one of the most exalted, most beloved, most discussed and debated passage in the Pauline Corpus.”⁴ The very catching word with which Paul called on the Philippians and extensively to all Christians to emulate the humility of Christ is expressed in Greek as “ekénóse” which stems from the word “κενοσ” translated in English as “empty.” Using this word “κενοσ” (empty), Paul made it the reference point of order in describing the attitude of mind of Christ in emptying himself to become a slave for the good of the entire humanity. By emptying himself and becoming a slave, Christ stripped himself of any dignity and right. It means that He has fulfilled all that it takes to be a slave in the Greco-Roman world, in which Paul lived and carried out his missionary works. These trademarks of a slave assumed by Christ in this hymn are namely: humiliation, loss of true identity, dignity and human rights, and totally being subjected to another person other than Himself, and in this sense, God. Expressing some other characteristics of a slave in the attitude of Christ in his self-emptying, Ambrosiater observed as follows: “He indeed was taken captive, bound and driven with blows. His obedience to Father took him even to the cross.”⁵ All these indicated that by emptying Himself, Christ really identified Himself with the slaves and became one of them. It was also in line

³ Theobald, *Der Philippenerbrief*, in: Ebner, *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, pp. 385-386.

⁴ Fee, “Philippians 2:5-11: Hymn Or Exalted Pauline Prose?” in: *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 2(1992): 29-46. See full Text of this article in: <http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk>, visited on August 22, 2013.

⁵ Ambrosiater, in: Edwards, ed. *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, (ACCS), Vol. 8, p. 246.

with this model of Christ that Paul identified himself as a “Slave of Christ.” (Cf. Rom. 1:1; 2Kor. 4:5; Gal. 1:10 etc.).

In the views of scholars such as Michael Theobald, three kernel points made themselves very outstanding in the attitude of Christ expressed in this hymnology namely: self-emptying even unto death, being raised up above every other creature in his resurrection and the reward with the giving of the name Lord (Kyrios).⁶ The attitude of Christ herein is one that depicts humility, selflessness and obedience unto death. This attitude of Christ in this hymn is set as a paradigm and a check-list for every Christian to emulate in relating to one another. In the views of Gordon Fee, Christians were not just called to imitate Christ in the sense of repeating exactly what He did by dying on the cross. It is a clarion call “to be like Christ in mind.”⁷ For him still, Paul’s summoning of Christians to imitate Christ does not just mean “do as I did,” but “be as I am.”⁸

In the light of this obedience, selflessness and humility of Christ, Paul preached to all Christians including the Christian slaves and their Christian lords to develop the mind of Christ in their relationship with each other. At the centre of the Christian slave-master relationship therefore, the figure of a humble and selfless Jesus should reflect as a model at all times. It is a Christ-centred relationship and therefore christological by nature. It should not be a lopsided type of slave-master relation that existed among unconverted slaves and their pagan masters in the Greco-Roman world of the first century Christianity, where the slaves were dehumanised and unjustly stripped of every right and dignity by the Roman Laws. It is rather a type, where both the slaves and their masters without making any social difference are bound together with the mind of the selfless and humble Christ marching unto the same road of salvation in Christ, with Christ and through Christ as the Master of both slaves and their masters.

This exhortation to develop the mind of Christ also included the readiness to accept sufferings and injustice in their lives as a way of partaking in the sufferings of Christ. And those who emulate this attitude of a humble and selfless servant figure have a reward whose fulfilment lies in the future (Parousia). That means, just like Christ was glorified and given a name which is above every other name, so also will they receive a reward by sharing in his glorified life. This hymnology in this passage therefore is all about encouraging Christians (slaves and masters alike) to be united with Christ in his selflessness,

⁶ Theobald, *Der Philipperbrief*, Ibid, p. 386.

⁷ Fee, *Philippians 2:5-11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?* Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

in his obedience and humility in all that they do especially in the context of their relationship with each other.

It was in the light of this model, that Paul also made his admonition to his Christian faithful together with their entire household comprising of both husbands, wives, children, slaves and freemen in Corinth in his first Letter to the Corinthians wherein he exhorted them in the following words:

Each one should go on living according to the Lord's gift to him and as he was when God called him... Everyone should remain as he was when he accepted God's call. Were you a slave when God called you, well never mind, but if you have a chance to become a free man, use it. For a slave who has been called by the Lord is the Lord's free man; in the same way a free man who has been called by Christ is His slave. God bought you for a price; so do not become slaves of men. My brothers, each one should remain in fellowship with God in the same condition as he was, when he was called. (1Cor. 7:17-24).

Anyone reading the above admonition of Paul at its face value would say with some iota of correctness that Paul encouraged slavery in a concrete way here. But having been acquainted with the analysis of the Pauline theology made above and to be fair to Paul, it seems not to be true that he was in support of the type of slavery in operation in his days. If the analysis made above in the Christian theology preached by Paul is anything to write home about, then one can argue in the context of the above that Paul really preached transformation in the practice of slavery and did not leave it as he met it before in his days. Another important point to note in the light of the above admonition is that Paul made this exhortation in the context of the anticipation of the imminence of the second coming of the Lord (*παρουσία*- Parousia), Paul reminded his hearers that: "This present world, as it is now, will not last much longer" (1 Cor. 7:31). And it was on this ground that he now applies his teachings on Christian life in the areas of the human conditions and social status of the slaves who have now been converted to the Christian faith. Indeed, Paul recognised that Christian theology which he preached is not in concordance with the social divisions in the human society of his days in the ancient city of Corinth. This society which harboured inequality among men was one that he could not change by his own accord. He accepted this condition in the life of the members of his congregation made up of slaves and their human masters. By preaching to them to accept their condition in which they were before they were converted to the new life in Christ, he taught them that such social status of being a slave or a master is something very immaterial before God. For him therefore, human condition for a believer in Christ is very secondary to his faith and new life in Christ and does not mean anything before God. Therefore, what matters most for a believer is his faith in God. Hence his lesson: a

Christian slave is the Lord's freeman and a Christian freeman or master is the Lord's slave. (I Cor. 7:23). And this in effect means, don't border yourselves, remain in your state, God knows already your status before you were called to serve Him.

But even at holding this position, Paul proved that he was not against manumission for those slaves who were in the position to attain it. Hence his words of encouragement to them: "But if you have the chance to become a free man, use it" (1Cor. 7:21b). That means, he did not oppose the idea of slaves regaining back their freedom but at the same time he did not set himself as a vanguard for the emancipation of his Christian slaves. And a typical example of his attitude to this fact is the case of the runaway slave Onesimus who came to him in his prison cell in Rome with the hope of regaining his full freedom as a slave. Rather than "angling" for this freedom, Onesimus was given a return "bus ticket" to his master Philemon in a form of a Letter. A brief analysis of this Pauline Letter will help us to put the attitude of Paul towards Onesimus in a proper context.

The Letter to Philemon in the opinion of the New Testament Biblical scholar Ingo Broer is the only authentic Paul's Letter addressed to a private person.⁹ It is among the Letters of Paul written during his incarceration in prison¹⁰ and the shortest of all Paul's Letters.¹¹ The period of its writing in the ancient city of Ephesus is believed to have been around 54 AD.¹² Its credibility as a genuine and authentic Letter of Paul has been attested to by the early fathers of the Church such as St. Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.¹³ During the period of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans, this Letter served in the hands of the Western slave masters especially the Southerners in America as a Pauline justification for the enslavement of Black Africans which they referred to as a "Pauline Mandate."¹⁴

As one can see, this Letter is an important document in the treatment of Paul's position on the issue of slavery. As its title shows, it was addressed to Philemon the Christian slave master of the runaway slave Onesimus and was conveyed by the slave Onesimus himself, who probably must have pleaded with Paul to plead on his behalf for pardon so as to escape the severe punishment he has incurred by running away from his master. In the views of Ingo Broer, with this Letter, Paul freed Onesimus from the severe punishment which faces any slave that runs away from his master, a punishment which included among others:

⁹ Broer, *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, p. 371.

¹⁰ Theobald, *Der Philipperbrief*, *Ibid*, p. 382.

¹¹ Ebner, *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, p. 403.

¹² Broer, *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, p. 379.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 371.

¹⁴ Jewett, *Paul the Apostle to America*, p. 67.

serious flogging, crucifixion, brand-marking with hot iron and mutilations such as cutting off of the ears and castration of male sexual organs.¹⁵ Having done this, Paul now argued for the acceptance of Onesimus no longer as a slave but as a brother in the Lord. Part of the plea made by Paul to Philemon in this Letter reads:

...so I make a request to you unbehalf of Onesimus, who is my own son in Christ; for while in prison I have become his spiritual father. At one time he was of no use to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me. I am sending him back to you now, and with him goes my heart. I would like to keep him here with me, while I am in prison for the gospel's sake, so that he could help me in your place. However, I do not want to force you to help me; rather, I would like you to do it of your own free will. So I will not do anything unless you agree. It may be that Onesimus was away from you for a short time so that you might have him back for all time. And now he is not just a slave, but much more than a slave: he is a dear brother in Christ. How much he means to me! And how much more he will mean to you, both as a slave and as a brother in the Lord. So, if you think of me as your partner, welcome him back just as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to my account.(Philemon 10-18)

Paul made in the above text a very pathetic reconciliatory plea to Philemon that can touch and move every Christian heart to have a change of mind toward this offending runaway slave. In the views of Martin Ebner, this appeal to accept back the slave Onesimus no longer as a slave but as his beloved brother who has now become a Christian through the waters of baptism is an appeal to Philemon to give up his social role as the master of the slave Onesimus in accepting him back as a beloved brother.¹⁶ Herein lies the foundation of the theology which Paul wants to establish with the case of this runaway slave Onesimus. With this case at hand, Paul has now come face to face with a concrete case of the status of a slave now turned Christian which throws up a challenge in the Christian theology which he has been preaching to his Christian congregation. With this concrete case at hand, Paul sets out to solve the question, if a slave who has now become a Christian could further retain his slave status in the house of his human lord or not. Is Onesimus free in the household of his Christian master both inwardly and outwardly? This is the point at issue in this Letter. In the views of Martin Ebner, this document therefore serves as an intervention by means of a Letter in a conflict situation in which the relationship between Christian theology preached by Paul and the social reality of the world of his days came into play.¹⁷ Paul's line of argument

¹⁵ Broer, *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, p. 373. Cf. Jewett, *Paul the Apostle to America*, p. 63; Ebner, *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, p. 407.

¹⁶ Ebner, *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, p. 404.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 403.

in the appeal made to Philemon here stems from the fact that just as he restrained himself from using his Apostolic authority to command Philemon to accept Onesimus back, by only appealing to him as a “brother” in faith to do so, so too should Philemon give up his authority in the flesh over Onesimus as his slave and begin to see him now as well as receive him as a fellow brother in the Lord.¹⁸ It is this theology that Paul was arguing for Onesimus in this Letter. The slave Onesimus, through his Baptism and conversion has now won a new status, he has become one with Christ and as such a new creature. His going back to the household of his Christian slave master Philemon should no longer be “business as usual,” he has undergone a fundamental change in the spirit and has been transformed into union with Christ.¹⁹ He is no longer to be treated like a slave in the flesh but like a brother in the Lord (Cf. v.16). And he has to be received, treated and accepted as such by Philemon. That means, this Letter is an appeal to Philemon to welcome Onesimus in the communion of believers in Christ which united him and Paul as brothers in Christ. This in effect means that Onesimus stands now on an equal par with both Paul and Philemon his slave master.²⁰ This is expressed by Paul as follows: “So, if you think of me as your partner, welcome him back just as you would welcome me” (Cf. v.17).

However, despite this Pauline argumentation here, one is still faced with a very agitating question in this kind of theology preached by Paul using Onesimus as a case study. Did Paul demand manumission for Onesimus in this theology? Surely, the answer is simply No!²¹ His demand for Onesimus to be treated as a brother is just a continuation of his preaching on the Christian life of believers in Christ, which he has been emphasizing in his Magna Charta as we saw in Gal.3:28, 1Cor.12:13 etc., where he stressed the egalitarian character of all believers in Christ and their relationship to each other, both in the Christian households and in the Christian communities founded by him.

Be that as it may, his stand point here is that the Christian message should have consequences for those who accept it, one that is able to change the status of the enslaved and so to say, lead them into the true freedom of the children of God (Gal. 3:21). Paul was therefore unable to push for this kind of freedom for the enslaved members of his Christian congregation who formed more than 80% of his entire congregation in the days of his missionary activities. Paul had in this case of a fleeing Christian slave a concrete case at hand of proving the liberating force of the Gospel he was called to preach but he unfortunately

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 404. See also, Jewett, Paul the Apostle to America, p. 68.

¹⁹ Jewett, Paul the Apostle to America, p. 68.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 66; Ebner, Einleitung in das Neue Testament, p. 404.

²¹ Broer, Einleitung in das neue Testament, p. 375. According to Ingo Broer herein, this letter to Philemon was not even understood in the Early Church as a demand for liberation of slaves.

missed such begging opportunity to have done so. He did neither attack the institution of slavery nor called for its abolition.²²

However, all said and done, he laid down a legacy for the treatment of the Christian slaves as human persons with dignity, equal to their masters in the Christian spirit of brotherhood of those united and redeemed by Christ. Following from this fact, no one can accuse Paul of taking a position that is lopsided and detrimental to slaves in his theology with the intention of promoting only the interests and dominance of the slave masters over their slaves as was the practice in the Greco-Roman society before him. But at the same time, by failing to call for the liberation of slaves and for the abolition of the very institution that oppressed them, he laid a foundation upon which the Deutero-Pauline Letters and the Pastoral Epistles were standing in commanding the slaves to obey their masters in an absolute manner. The effect of this was that the Magna Charta of Paul's theology was unfortunately dropped by the conservative wing of his school of thoughts in Ephesus represented by the Deutero-Pauline authors who were more interested in continuing the patriarchal elements of the Greco-Roman society that called for the subjugation of women, children and slaves to the authoritarianism of the *Pater familias* (Family father) seen in the early Christian “Haustafeln”(Household codes) rather than continuing from the tradition of egalitarianism introduced into Christian living and relationship by the Apostle Paul. Let us now briefly consider this Household codes in the Deutero Pauline Letters and in the Pauline Pastoral Epistles and see how they envisioned the relationship between slaves and their masters both in the Christian Households set-up as well as in the larger Christian communities.

1.2.2 Slavery in the Household Codes of the Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles: A Preamble

Deutero-Pauline Letters refer to the canonical Letters in the New Testament Bible which were believed by the theologians of the New Testament theology not to have been written by the Apostle Paul himself but by a second Paul, hence the term “deutero-Pauline Letters.”²³ The Apostle Paul, in his seven authentic Letters²⁴ wrote in anticipation of the imminent coming of Christ (1Cor. 7:31) and as such did not bother himself with the future of the Christian communities founded by him in the sense of putting in place some

²² Ebner, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, p. 411.

²³ There are six such Letters that were not written by Paul. These Letters are classified into two categories namely: Deutero-Pauline Epistles (Colossians, Ephesians and 2Thessalonians), and Pastoral Epistles (1Timothy, 2Timothy and Titus).

²⁴ The seven canonically accepted authentic Letters of Paul are: 1 & 2Corinthians, Romans, Galatians, Philippians, 1Thessalonians and Philemon.

organisational and managerial structures. It was therefore, after his death and the endless expectation of Christians for the fulfilment of the Parousia that the deutero-Pauline Epistles were written. These Epistles were therefore written after the death of Paul. But they were written in keeping with Pauline tradition, supposedly between 70 AD and 90 AD by a second generation leader of the Christian communities founded by Paul in the Asia Minor.²⁵ On the other hand, the Pastoral Epistles date back to the 90 AD onwards and were believed to have been written by a third generation leader of the Pauline Churches.²⁶

These Epistles were written first and foremost to establish organisational structures such as ministers as well as laid down instructions for the Christian Churches founded by Paul so as to provide Pastoral care for the Christians in these Pauline Churches. Secondly, they were written to defend the Christian message of Paul against the attacks of enemies who were all about teaching the Christians another Gospel other than the authentic message preached by the Apostle Paul.²⁷ They contain different social and ethical instructions given to the three pairs of relationship in the typical Greco-Roman Households and society such as husband/wife, parents/children and master/slave. These pairs of relationship have specific social roles and economic functions to play in the management of the Households (*oikonomia*) as well as in the society at large so as to ensure that order and maintenance are established in the Households. The various roles emphasized in the Household codes are performed within the context of *pater familias* which the Roman law made to be very strong, by giving the father (as the head of the family) unrestricted powers and authority over his wife, children and slaves. These instructions targeted at guiding these pairs of relationships in the Christian households and communities are what is being referred to as “Haustafeln” (Household codes) or “Pauline Paranesis.” The position of the deutero-Pauline authors on the issue of slavery is contained in the Household codes found in these deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles.

The Household codes of these Pauline Epistles have their origin outside the Christian tradition.²⁸ Raymond C. Collins listed in his work various sources of the Household codes in the Hellenistic literatures such as the works of: “Aechylus, *Supplant Women* 701-709; Aristotle, *Rhetoric to Alexander* 1; Isocrates, *Demonicus* 16; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.4.18-24.”²⁹ Other sources in philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish literatures which are contemporary to the New Testament included: “Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.10. 1-23; Seneca, *Epistle* 94.1; Philo, *Decalogue* 165-167; Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.14 and Josephus, *Against*

²⁵ Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie*, pp. 7 & 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁸ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, p. 244.

²⁹ Collins, *1&2 Timothy and Titus*, p. 337.

Appion 2.23-29 etc.”³⁰ The typical instructions contained in these sources were appropriated by the early Christian Church leaders to suit the life of Christians in their various household set-ups and communities as centres of the Christian living and worship. These Household codes are found in the New Testament Epistles such as: Ephesians 5:22-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1; 1 Timothy 2:1ff, 8ff, 3:1ff; Titus 2:1-10; 1 Peter 2:18-3:7 respectively. And the earliest of these Household codes in the early Christian tradition is contained in the Letter to the Colossians especially in Col. 3:18-4:1. Our consideration of slavery in the light of the Household codes of the deutero-Pauline Letters and Pastoral Epistles in this work will be restricted only to the passages relevant to our subject of discussion, namely master-slave relationship in the Pauline tradition.

1.2.3 Slavery in the Household Codes of Deutero-Pauline Letters (Col. 3:22-4:1 & Eph. 6:5-9)

This passage (below) in the Colossian Household code is the Christian version of Jewish and Stoic Household codes and is very unique in its call for an improved relationship among the members of the third pair of relationships (master and slave) in a typical Greco-Roman *Haustafel*. In the views of Andrew T. Lincoln, it is the oldest of the Christian instructions for the management of the Christian households which comprises of husband and wife, parents and children, master and slave.³¹ In the instruction given to this last pair of relationship, the deutero-Pauline author of this Letter to the Colossians summoned the slaves to obey their masters as though they were obeying Christ. The slaves were exhorted to carry out their duties to their masters with a disposition that comes from the heart and not the type that is led by an eye service done with the sole intention of pleasing their masters. This exhortation is made clearer in these words:

Slaves, obey your human masters in all things, not only when they are watching you because you want to gain their approval; but do it with a sincere heart because of your reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as though you were working for the Lord and not for men. Remember that the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve. And every wrongdoer will be repaid for the wrong things he does, because God judges everyone by the same standard. Masters, be fair and just in the way you treat your slaves. Remember that you too have a Master in heaven (Col. 3: 22-4:1).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Andrew T. Lincoln, “The Household Code and Wisdom Mode of Colossians,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 74(1999), 93-112.

In the above passage, we notice that the egalitarianism which Paul proclaimed in his theology of Christian living in Gal. 3:28 and in his Letter to Philemon is completely lacking in this instruction given to both masters and slaves in a Christian household set-up in their roles and relationship to one another. This instruction focused more on the slaves indicating that they are the weakest partners in the three pairs of relationships subordinate to the *pater familias* in a household. On the other hand, the masters were given only short lines of instruction indicating that they know how to use their powers to command and so there was no need to instruct them for too long. The need to keep the slaves who outnumbered their masters in the ancient city of Colossae in Asia Minor under absolute control of their masters warranted the long exhortation given to them.³² They needed to be pruned and cultivated by the use of such instructions in order to become good slaves with the desired conducts of pleasing their masters.

Their obedience to the masters or to the *pater familias* does not leave any room for discussion at all. The command to obey their masters is given in an imperative tone. This is a clear indication that this Household code followed the pattern of the Household codes of the Greco-Roman set-up, wherein the slave had neither rights nor any human dignity but only duties. And one of such duties is to obey their masters in an absolute manner. And for the deutero-Pauline author of this Epistle to the Colossians, by obeying their masters and serving them from their hearts, the slaves are obeying and serving Christ, and so, they are living a righteous life worthy of their call as Christians. Herein lies the christological import of the Christian Household code.

The duties and sufferings of the slaves were also given an eschatological dimension. This Parousia dimension serves at the same time as the motivation given to them for their duties. The eschatological import is seen in the heavenly reward which the slaves will inherit at the end of time (Col. 3:24). This should be a source of consolation for their loss of worldly inheritance as right-less persons before the Roman law which assigned to them only duties without reward in the service of their fellow men. In other words, they will be “equal recipients of the eternal life with their masters.”³³ Even at this motivation with heavenly inheritance, they were warned that Christ who not only sees the outward conducts of men but also their inward disposition is the very One that is watching them while carrying out their duties to their masters. That is why they have to do it conscientiously by reason of the fact that He will judge and reward everyone (including slaves and their masters) according to his good or bad conducts (Col. 3:25). And in the opinion of Chris de Wet, this idea of

³² Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, p. 162.

³³ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, p. 257.

bringing Christ as the watch-tower over the conduct of slaves in their daily duties is an artful manner of making them more submissive and virtuous in doing their duty. According to him, it is a method that is “more effective than any technologies of surveillance in the Greek and Roman handbooks of *oikonomia* due to its key features- its permanence and thoroughness.”³⁴ The second motivation given to the slaves is seen in the fact that the same Christ is also observing the injustices they suffer from the hands of their masters and will not fail to judge the masters and give retribution to them according to their own merits.

And turning to the slave masters in (Col. 4:1), the deuterio-Pauline author of this Epistle also reminded them of the fact that they have also a Master in heaven and ipso facto, they are slaves of Christ. It was on this ground that he reminded them of their Christian duty toward their slaves and pleaded with them to treat their slaves with fairness and kindness in the awareness that retribution comes from Christ the just Judge, who does not look at the social stand of persons in judging them but rewards everyone according to his conducts.³⁵

In the Letter to the Ephesians especially in (Eph.5:21-6:9) the same Household code like the one above was also addressed to the three pairs of relationship in the Christian Households namely: husband and wife, parents and children, master and slave. By reason of the fact that we are considering this Household code in the context of its position on the master slave relationship in the early Christian Church, we therefore restrict our study of this subject to the verses of this Household code alone that deal on the third pair of relationships namely: masters and their slaves. This part of the Household code under consideration here is found in (Eph.6:5-9).

In its content and context, the master-slave relationship in this code did not deviate from the one contained in the Letter to the Colossians treated above. It has a different author and depended much on the Colossian Household code in both content and style.³⁶ The deuterio-Pauline author of this Epistle is believed to have come from the school of Pauline tradition in Ephesus and was of a Hellenistic descent.³⁷ The date of its writing is somewhat controversial. But the New Testament Biblical scholars such as Marlis Gielen proposed that it was

³⁴ Chris Len de Wet, *Slavery in John Chrysostom's Homilies on the Pauline Epistles and Hebrews: "A Cultural Analysis,"* A Dissertation, University Of Pretoria 2012, p. 404.

³⁵ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, p. 260. For further readings, see: Charles Francis Moule, *The Epistle to the Colossians and Philemon: The Cambridge Greek New Testament Commentary*, Cambridge 1962, p. 127ff; Peter T. O' Brien, *Colossians and Philemon*, World Biblical Commentary, Texas 1982, pp. 218-219.

³⁶ Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie*, p. 14.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 15.

written between 80 AD and 100 AD.³⁸ Its place of operation and realisation is also in the Christian households (*oikos*) and in the Christian communities.

The author of this Household code also dedicated a large part of the entire code to the exhortation to slaves, summoning them to be submissive to their masters with fear and trembling as a way of pleasing and serving God. This fact is made clearer when these verses read as follow:

Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling; and do it with a sincere heart, as though you were serving Christ. Do this not only when they are watching you, because you want to gain their approval; but with all your heart do what God wants, as slaves of Christ. Do your work as slaves cheerfully, as though you served the Lord and not merely men. Remember that the Lord will reward everyone, whether slave or free, for the good work he does. Masters, behave in the same way towards your slaves and stop using threats. Remember that you and your slave belong to the same Master in heaven, who judges everyone by the same standard (Eph. 6:5-9).

As the above text shows, four long verses were allotted to the slaves by the author of this Letter, listing how they are to relate to their masters while discharging their duties to them as Christian slaves. But on the other hand, only one verse was dedicated to the duty of the master towards his slaves. Scholars of the New Testament Pauline theology such as Timothy G. Gombis et al., have found the reason for this long attention being paid only to the slaves in these Household codes. For these New Testament scholars, it was as a result of the large numbers of the slaves in the Christian communities where they served as the addressees or recipients of the deutero-Pauline Letters that made the author of this Letter to focus more on them than on their Christians masters.³⁹ The fact that the Household codes pre-existed Christian tradition and patterned itself after those of the Greco-Roman society which emphasized absolute authority for dominance over the subordinate members of the household by the *pater familias*, is another strong reason for this lopsided character depicted in the Christian Household codes. And this manifested itself in the exhortation to absolute obedience of the slaves to their masters which has to be done in the spirit of fears and trembling understood as an equivalent of the fear of God.⁴⁰ This obedience demanded of the slaves here in the concrete *oikonomia* relationship serves as the fulfilment of their service to the Lord as slaves of Christ.⁴¹ By carrying out their work as though they are serving Christ, the duties of slaves were given the same christological justification for their works as

³⁸ Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie*, p. 17.

³⁹ Timothy Gombis, *A Radically New Humanity: The Function of the Haustafel in Ephesians*, in: <http://www.etsjets.org/files>, visited on August 17, 2013.

⁴⁰ Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie*, p. 301.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 302.

slaves as we saw in the Household code of Colossians 3:22-4:1. And by so doing, they are fulfilling their call to live a Christian life. And as a motivation for the slaves in their duties, they were promised a reward whose attainment does not belong to the present life but to the life to come, where they will receive their reward from the hands of Christ in accordance with their conducts. In the like manner, the masters were reminded in verse (6:9) that a reward is also awaiting them in the hands of the same Master that judges and rewards everyone irrespective of his social stand in this present life. In the light of this, masters were exhorted not to use threats in their relationship with their slaves, but were advised to be kind to their slaves. The motivation for doing so is that they also have the same Master in heaven with their slaves. Hence the manner in which they treat their slaves, so too should they expect the Master par-excellence to treat them at the end of times.

In summa, the *Haustafel* in the deutero-Pauline Letters considered herein manifested the typical characteristic of the *Haustafel* in the ancient Greco-Roman household set-ups especially in the areas of hierarchical and authoritarian pattern of the family.⁴² However, the deutero-Pauline authors in keeping with the Pauline tradition transformed these codes into Christian instructions for the Christian families by giving them both christological and eschatological imports. The fear of the Lord as a just Judge and Master of both master and slave is given to the masters as a principle that should guide them while relating with their slaves. This same principle of having the same Master with their slaves, brings the master to a sort of “equality” with his slave, but a type that is not in the flesh but one that exists only in the spirit, and whose sphere of operation lies only in the Parousia. This principle transformed at least the dignity of the slaves in the Christian *Haustafel* from what it used to be in those of the ancient Greco-Roman *Haustafel*, where the worthlessness of slaves and the lord-ship and absolute authority of the *pater familias* were to some extents overemphasized. Despite the attempts made in these Household codes by the deutero-Pauline authors to Christianise the master-slave relationship in the management of the *Oikonomia* (family management), they are still many poles away from the master-slave relations envisioned and proclaimed by the Apostle Paul in his *Magna Charta*. Let us now consider how this relationship looks like in the Pauline Pastoral Epistles.

⁴² For further readings, see the following: Michael Parsons, “Slavery and the New Testament: Equality and Submissiveness,” *Vox Evangelica* 18 (1988), pp. 90-96; Timothy Gombis, “A Radically Different New Humanity: The Function of the *Haustafel* in Ephesians,” *Journal of the Evangelical Society*, 48/2 (June 2005), 317-330.

1.2.4 Slavery in the Household Code of the Pauline Pastoral Epistles (1Timothy 6:1-2 & Titus 2:9-10)

1Timothy and Titus are among the Pastoral Epistles which deal on community leadership and Pastoral care of the early Christian households and communities. According to a New Testament biblical scholar Gerd Häfner, the Pastoral Epistles were addressed to the co-workers of Paul (Timothy and Titus) in his regions of missionary works in Asia Minor respectively.⁴³ Timothy was appointed to provide Pastoral leadership and care in the Churches founded by Paul in Ephesus, while Titus was charged with the leadership and Pastoral care of the Christian communities founded by the Apostle Paul in Crete. Both Epistles form a unit collection and bear the name of Paul in the New Testament Bible as their author, even though Paul is not responsible for their authorship.⁴⁴ Hence the position of many New Testament Biblical scholars that the Trito-Pauline Epistles are pseudepigraphic. That means, they appear to have been written by Paul, but in the actual sense, they are not authentic Pauline Epistles.

As we are already acquainted with, the centre of the early Christian living was in the households (Oikos). And in the same vein, the family provided in the opinion of the New Testament scholar Raymond C. Collins “the basic unit of the social organisation of early Christianity.”⁴⁵ And this being the case, those appointed to take charge of the pastoral and structural care of the Christian households and communities also made provisions for instructions guiding the behaviours of the members of the Christian households and communities in the areas of their duty and relation to one another. They were charged with the duty of pasturing the Church of Christ well in their regions by keeping watch over the sheep of Christ and giving corrections when necessary to the flock of Christ so as to assure order and unity among believers in Christ in their various Christian families and communities. The instructions made available by these leaders to guide family members and their communities in their pairs of relationship are provided in the Household codes of 1Timothy and Titus. And as a rule guarding this study on the master-slave relationship in the Household codes of the Pauline Pastoral Epistles, we restrict this search only to the part of the exhortations contained in these two Epistles under discussion which are ad rem to this theme. And in that case, the light of this inquiry will be focused on the Haustafel of 1Tim. 6:1-2 and Titus 2:9-10 respectively.

⁴³ Häfner, *Die Pastoralbriefe (1Tim/2Tim/Tit)*, in: Ebner, *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, p. 456.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, p. 345.

In the exhortations to slaves in the Haustafel of 1Tim. 6:1-2, slaves are summoned like in the deutero-Pauline Letters of Colossians and Ephesians, to obey their Christian masters and submit to them in all things and at all times. This exhortation is made clearer when the author of this Epistle commanded as follows: “Those who are slaves must consider their masters worthy of all respect, so that no one will speak evil of the name of God and of our teaching. Slaves belonging to Christian masters must not despise them, for they are their brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their work are believers whom they love.” (1Timothy 6:1-2)

Unlike the first two exhortations in the Household codes of Colossians and Ephesians, the Household code of 1Timothy 6:1-2 as the above text shows, dedicated only two verses to the weakest partner (slave) in the pairs of relationships among the subordinates of the *pater familias* in a Christian household *oikonomia*. This Household code was only addressed to slaves and no mention was made of the masters. And that being the case, no provision was made to remind them (masters) that they have also a duty towards their slaves. By so being, it manifested a lopsided exhortation which is a typical character of the Household code of the Greco-Roman *Oikonomia*, where the *pater familias* are raised to an unchallengeable lordship with commanding authoritarian powers and the slaves were only a living *cum* speaking instruments of labour in their hands. It was a system that held the *pater familias* as untouchables both in their households as well as in the society in which they lived. And in the context of this system, the slaves who have now become Christian converts and as such free in the Lord and equal in the faith in Christ with their Christian masters (*pater familias*) should not in the light of their faith now think and behave in a manner that claims actual equality with their masters. Hence they are commanded by the author of this Epistle to consider their masters as subjects of their respects. The motivation and at the same time the theological justification for this command is that by disrespecting their masters, slaves will provide an occasion for people, especially unbelievers to deride and make caricature of the Divine Name and of the Gospel of Christ preached to them (Cf. 1Tim. 5:14). And this would bring a lot of disaffection to the Christian faith.

The second motivation for this command to the slaves is that the masters are their brothers. This motivation is theologically founded on the message of salvation, which considers all believers in Christ as members of the same family (family of God) and as such children of God redeemed by Christ (Cf. Gal. 3:21). And this links itself with the third motivation for the command given to slaves. They should remember that the beneficiaries of the works they do are their brothers in the Lord whom they love. Those referred to here, are the other members of the Christian households who are not slaves. Therefore, the

care for the wellbeing of the brothers in the Lord should motivate them to do their works even better. In this manner, they fulfill their Christian calling virtuously.

Also very noticeable in the exhortations given to the slaves in this Household code is the complete absence of reward, whether in a temporal sense or in an eschatological manner like in the case of the Household codes in both Letters to the Colossians and Ephesians. The reason for this failure was not given by the author of this Pastoral Epistle. By leaving the reward for the works of the slaves so open to conjectures might lead one to think that the author of this Epistle considered the works of slaves in the light of their status in the Greco-Roman society where their works were seen as a loan-less and thankless job.

The same character depicted in the above observations made in the Household code of 1Timothy was also present in the Household code of Titus 2:9-10. The same lopsided exhortation to the slaves as noted above was also made without allotting even a word of exhortation to the masters. Being Christian slaves in the service of their Christian masters is not a guarantee for claiming equality with their Christian masters and so the slaves are exhorted to obey their masters in all things and at all times. This fact is expressed when the author of this Epistle admonished them in the following words: "Slaves are to submit to their masters and please them in all things. They must not answer them back or steal from them. Instead, they must show that they are always good and faithful, so as to bring credit to the teaching about God our Saviour in all they do." (Titus 2:9-10).

Despite the manifested similarity of this Household code with the one of (1Tim. 6:1-2) above, the Household code in Titus 2:9-10 has also its own uniqueness. Slaves were not directly addressed like we saw in those of the deuterio-Pauline Letters of Colossians and Ephesians. It stresses the need for the Christian virtues and moral behaviour among Christian slaves. Against the backdrop that some slaves in the Greco-Roman society stole sometimes from their masters in order to attend to their own personal needs and as such made themselves untrustworthy slaves, the author of the Epistle to Titus exhorted Christian slaves to refrain from acts of stealing from their masters and to make themselves trustworthy by means of a virtuous life of fidelity, obedience, docility and goodness. The author of this Epistle did not stop at demanding full respect and obedience from the slaves toward their masters but also went as far as discouraging slaves from engaging themselves in any act of insurrection against their masters. Bearing in mind that slaves in the society were adjudged to be human beings without even the right to express their own feelings when wronged by their masters, this author forbade them to challenge their masters by answering back to them even in the face of unjust treatment and insulting words.

The motivation given to the slaves for doing all this and for remaining docile slaves is not something material or eschatological, but simply to cultivate in them virtuous living and to make them true and credible witnesses to the message of God preached to them. Also the reward for the virtuous services done to the masters was not expressed just like in the one of 1Timothy 6:1-2 considered above. And this means that the author of this Epistle did not consider it necessary to remind the Christian masters either to treat their slaves with fairness and kindness as their fellow brothers in the Lord or to pay them just wages for their duties.

Summarily, the Household codes of the Pauline Pastoral Epistles considered in this study were addressed only to slaves in the services of their masters within the ambient of the Christian families and communities. The authors of these two Pauline Pastoral Epistles while claiming to remain in the Pauline tradition, made an aberration of the Christian liberating and egalitarian message preached by the Apostle Paul, by making the condition of the slaves in the Christian Church of their times worse than what Paul postulated for the Church of his days. It is very surprising to learn that they could not use the authority of the Gospel reposed on them by the Apostle Paul to either improve on the lots of the slaves in their Churches or to suppress the practice of slavery at least among those who believed in the One Lord and One Master Jesus Christ. Instead, they only succeeded in making them better and more pliable slaves. And by so doing, they supported their enslavement as well as perpetuated this institution of subjugation. Their failure to have condemned this enslavement gave room for the continuation of the institution of slavery as part of the tradition of the Church that existed after them.

The import of all this Pauline tradition on the issue of the fate of the slaves is that the early Church of this tradition accepted slavery as an institution willed by God. This led to her acceptance of it without raising any moral questions about its goodness or badness and as such did not concern herself with its condemnation, talk-less of finding ways for its abolition. Instead, she concerned herself in keeping with Pauline tradition with the task of making it a humanitarian institution. The consequence of this is that those slaves, who formed the greater part of the early community of the faithful in Christ, could not find a change in their status as slaves in the Christian Church. They came to the Christian worship as slaves and left as members of this Church after worship also as slaves. Their equality with their masters applied only during divine service in the Church. But before the law as well as in their homes, in the light of the Christian household set-up, they ceased to be equal with their masters. The rest of the preaching of equality of all men and “oneness in Christ” among believers in the early Christian community became only a spiritual equality before God. That implies that being a Christian did not

warrant automatic change in the status of a bondsman. Christianity which the Apostle Paul preached in his time and the one continued by the Pauline school of thought (represented by the authors of the deutero-Pauline Letters and Pastoral Epistles), was so to say, not a reform-oriented or revolutionary Christianity, so as to challenge the social order of the Greco-Roman society. Jean Marc Ela was therefore correct, when he appraised this Pauline tradition on the subject of slavery as: “A theology which shunned revolution in its entirety. One notices in it the paternalism that was promoted by a religion that mixes itself up with a conservative society.”⁴⁶ The teaching of St. Paul on slavery and those of his school of thought is so to say, not a licence to set a slave free from his bondage in the sense that slaves should emulate Christ who though was God did not hesitate to assume the position of a slave and undertook the title of ebed Yahweh (servant of God).

1.3 Slavery in the Light of Servant of God Title of Jesus Christ

The suffering servant of God (ebed Yahweh) found in Isaiah 53: 1-12 is another theological basis upon which the early Church built her position on the issue of slavery. This servant song in this passage is the last of the four servant songs of Isaiah. The interpretation given to this prophecy in the Christology of the Catholic Church is the identification of the Isaiah's suffering servant with the incarnation and death of Christ. The suffering servant of Isaiah's prophecy became a prefiguration of Jesus Christ as the true servant of God who will accomplish the mission of God in the world through a total obedience to the Father. This servant in the servant song of Isaiah initially occupied an exalted position and then renounced this position by way of self-humiliation. His unique humiliation was so appalling that his true status as Lord was beyond human comprehension. His suffering and death was very substitutionary in the sense that he suffered and died for the sins and iniquity for which he never committed: “For ours were the infirmities that he bore, ours the sorrows he suffered, pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, he bore the punishment that makes us whole, the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:4-5).

Using this servant text of Isaiah together with the Pauline hymnology in the Letter to the Philippians 2:6-11 treated above, the Church saw in the suffering

⁴⁶ Ela, Gott Befreit, p. 71. The German-born New Testament Exegete Martin Ebner also showed his disappointment to this failure of the Church in the days of Paul to attack the institution of slavery when he said: “It is a factum that the Magna Charta of the Gospel preached by Paul did not help the early Church to assume a position in the society that is against the institution of slavery and therefore vied for its abolition.” See, Ebner, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, p. 411.

and humiliated Christ an example for those who suffer and bear the burden of punishment for which they never knew anything about. In this Christology of “formam servi accipiens” (taking up the form of a servant), the Apostles and early Church fathers summoned all Christian faithful to follow this unreserved humility and unconditional obedience of Christ to God in all their dealings as humans so as to be glorified with Christ at the end of times. And in the same vein, applying this teaching to the theology of the early Christian fathers on the theme of slavery, slaves were presented with the figure of the suffering Christ for emulation. This was done with the goal of making them to feel complacent with their conditions of suffering and bondage as the way of the faith. Just like God allowed His faithful and innocent Servant (δούλος Θεοῦ) to bear the burden and punishment for the iniquities of all men, so also did He allow the slaves to bear the burden of the society that holds them in bondage.

Other examples which depicted Christ's acceptance of the title of God's servant and His efforts to inculcate this servant-attitude to His followers were also given in the New Testament Scriptures. Jesus identified Himself as ebed Yahweh in the following words: “For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). And when His Apostles openly expressed their wishes over political ambitions on who will be the greatest among them, He dissuaded them from developing dictatorial ideas that will enable them to lord authority over to their subjects. And as an alternative to such authoritative ideology, He presented to them an image of a servant-related-disposition towards one another that will make the greatest among them to be the servant of all. In this image of a servant-leader, He taught them as follows: “You know that the rulers of the heathen have power over them, and the leaders have complete authority. This, however, is not the way it shall be among you. If one of you wants to be great, he must be the servant of the rest; and if one of you wants to be first, he must be your slave” (Matthew 20: 25-27; Mark 10: 42-44). And in a practical demonstration of His servant-leadership character, He even performed signs depicting the meanest duty of a slave by washing the feet of His Apostles including those of Judas Iscariot who even betrayed Him. And at the end of this slave-service, He gave His Apostles the injunction to do exactly the same as He did in the following words:

Do you understand what I have just done to you? He asked. You call me teacher and Lord, and it is right that you do so, because that is what I am. I, your Lord and Teacher have just washed your feet. You, then should wash one another's feet. I am telling you the truth: no slave is greater than his master, and no messenger is greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know this truth, how happy you will be if you put it into practice!” (John 13:12-17)

And when it came to the turn of His Apostles to carry-on the message of their Master, the author of the Petrine Pastoral Epistle while putting words into the mouth of Peter as the head of the twelve Apostles,⁴⁷ borrowed a leaf from this servant-leadership character of Jesus Christ with foundation on the prophecy of (Isaiah 53:1-12) and called on all Christian slaves to submit entirely and unconditionally to the will of their pagan masters as well as to the state authorities.⁴⁸ While providing succour to the slaves and other Christians undergoing all sorts of injustices and unnecessary sufferings from the hands of the pagan rulers and slave masters during the serious persecution of Christians in the Roman Province of Asia Minor, the author of this Petrine Epistle presented to them the figure of the prophecy of the suffering servant of Isaiah which has its fulfilment in Christ as an emulative figure. Just like Jesus suffered innocently for the iniquities of others, so too should the slaves accept even the undeserved sufferings they receive from the hands of their masters, and that God who rewarded Jesus for His sufferings will also reward them for suffering innocently. This Petrine teaching on the theme of slavery is made vividly clear in the following admonitions given to slaves in the form of the Greco-Roman Household code:

You servants must submit to your masters and show them complete respect, not only to those who are kind and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. God will bless you for this, if you endure the pain of undeserved suffering because you are conscious of His will. For what credit is there if you endure the beatings you deserve for having done wrong? But if you endure suffering even when you have done right, God will bless you for it. It was to this that God called you, for Christ himself suffered for you and left you an example, so that you would follow in His steps. He committed no sin, and no one ever heard a lie from His lips. When He was insulted, He did not answer back with an insult; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but placed His hopes in God, the righteous Judge. (1Peter 2:18-23)

⁴⁷ The First Petrine Epistle is among the Pastoral Epistles of the New Testament. Its authorship among New Testament of Bible Scholars is somewhat controversial. However a greater majority of the biblical scholars of the New Testament do agree among themselves that the Apostle Peter was not responsible for its authorship. Evidence of this fact is seen in the fact that it was written during the serious persecution of Christians that arose during the reign of the emperor Domitian around 81-96 AD which was after the death of the Apostle Peter. According to Marlis Gielen, the author of this Petrine Epistle was of a Greek descent and wrote in Greek language. The place of its writing was believed to be in Asia Minor and not in Rome by an author who was ad rem with the Pauline theology, style and language of writing. And coupled with the fact that there is lack of evidence of Peter's relationship with the people of Asia Minor, Gielen noted that this Epistle was written not by Peter but by an author probably from the Pauline School of thought in Ephesus or one from his missionary areas in Asia Minor. For Further details on these facts stated herein, see, Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie*, pp. 20-22.

⁴⁸ Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie*, p. 373.

With this theology of the servant of God and the exhortation given to the slaves to accept their subjugated conditions of life and undeserved sufferings as Christ did, the early Christian Church found a theological fulcrum point upon which she built her strong position on the issue of slavery which she held firmly for centuries.

In summa, the various themes discussed above served as the theological foundations upon which the Church rested in the construction of her basic teachings on the institution of slavery and the slave trade itself. In the opinion of Hans Reinhard Seeliger, it was based on these theological foundations that the Church theologically speaking, did not find any negative image in slavery, but rather considered it as something that was in conformity with the society and whose acceptance by the early Christian community would not hamper the progress of the nascent Church, but instead, would guarantee her acceptance and existence in the society already replete with slaves.⁴⁹ These theological foundations made the Church to be very rigid and reluctant in shifting her position on slavery even when such reasoning had been overtaken by time as witnessed in the centuries age-long duration of the Transatlantic slave trade, when she still held tenaciously unto her age-long dispositions towards enslavement of people of other religious convictions. She did not only hold a firm positions on the issue of slavery but also went as far as making drastic laws in form of decrees made through her many Councils and synodic conferences to protect her teachings on slavery as well as to checkmate those who might dare to challenge such teachings in favour of the enslaved members of the Society. Such decrees made in the early period of the existence of Church for the protection of the institution of slavery will now form the next subject matter of our discussion.

1.4 Slavery and the Decrees of Church Orders and Councils

The position held by the Church as noted in the above consideration of the theological foundations of the Church's teaching on the institution of slavery exposed the very reason why the Church supported as well as protected an oppressive institution of slavery for so long a time in the history of her existence. Her means of protecting this institution was through the numerous decisions taken by the various Councils she convened in the history of her operations in the human society. Her decrees had the goal of discouraging both new thinkers from putting up any new convincing ideas that will challenge her age-long position on the issue of slavery. One of the oldest documents of the early Christian Church which contained some of the decisions of the Church

⁴⁹ Seeliger, *Theologie II*, Katholisch, *Ibid*.

on the institution of slavery is the *Didache*.⁵⁰ In the section containing the disciplinary ordinances of the early Church, one notices the position of the Church articulated in the conviction based on the theological foundations of the teaching of the Church on slavery as considered above. In her position articulated in this document, the Church did not criticize slavery but only stand for giving it a humanitarian face as Paul and the deuterio-Pauline authors maintained in the Letters as we have seen in the Household codes contained in their writings above. Thus following the examples of the Household codes of the deuterio-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles, the Church admonished slaves and masters in this document as follows:

Do not be harsh in giving orders to your slaves and slave girls. They hope in the same God as you, and the result may be that they cease to revere the God over you both. For when he comes to call us, He will not respect our station, but will call those whom the spirit has made ready. You slaves, for your part, must obey your masters with reverence and fear, as if they represented God.⁵¹

At the general Council of Gangra (in the North-east of Ankara-Turkey) held in 345 AD, the Council fathers who sat at this Council were greatly influenced by the spirit of the Pauline tradition contained in the Household codes of the deuterio-Pauline authors. And led by the dictates of this Pauline Paranesis, the Council fathers legislated against the freedom of slaves by means of manumissions and prescribed the punishment with excommunication for anyone who will encourage slaves to run away from their masters. In the third Canon of this Council, the Council fathers decreed that: "If anyone shall teach a slave, under the pretext of piety or religion to despise his master and to run away from his service, and not to serve his own master with good will and all honour, let him be anathema."⁵²

The Council of Carthage in 419 AD also upheld this decree and even went as far as refusing to acknowledge the rights of enfranchised slaves to testify in Law court. This same attitude was again seen in the decision of pope Leo the Great (*391, papacy 440-461) in 443 when he commanded that no slave should be admitted into the priesthood without the consent of his master.⁵³ This papal

⁵⁰ *Didache* is an ancient document of the Catholic Church that gives insight into the operations of the Church in the first 100 years of her existence. It is sometimes called "Doctrina Apostolorum," or "The Lords Teaching through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations." There is no exact date for its writing and as such, it is believed among scholars that it was written between 80 AD and 100 AD.

⁵¹ *Didache*, chpt. 4, vv. 9-11, in: Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, p. 9.

⁵² Council of Gangra in 345, Canon 3.C.J.C., *Decretum Gratiani*, II, C.XVII, Q.IV, c.37, in: Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 30. See also, Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 31; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 89; Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, p. 19.

⁵³ Pope Leo the Great, in: <http://www.ewtn.com//library/ma>, visited on November 28, 2013.

decision was again confirmed by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD.⁵⁴ In the fourth Canon of this Council, slaves were denied admission into the monasteries as Catholic monks without the permission of their masters. According to this Canon: “No slave is to be taken into the monasteries to become monk against the will of his own master. We have decreed that anyone who transgressed against this decision of ours is to be excommunicated, lest God's name be blasphemed.”⁵⁵

At the fourth Council of Orleans in France which met in 549, the Council fathers refused to acknowledge manumission of slaves whose forefathers were slaves of the Church. In Canons 31 and 32 of this Council, the Council fathers decreed that such slaves must be returned back to the Church as slaves of the Church wherever they were found. The new masters of the aforesaid slaves who refused to obey this decree were handed down with the punishment of excommunication.⁵⁶

During the papacy of pope Gregory I (*540, papacy 590-604), slaves were not only restricted access to the priesthood and to the monastic life as decreed by pope Leo the Great and approved by the Council of Chalcedon, but also they were restricted from entering into marriage with Christian women and men respectively. This law forbidding marriages between Christians and slaves continued to be effected in both the Western and Eastern Christian Churches until 1095 AD. It was only at this time that the emperor of the Byzantine Church repealed it for the Christians of the Eastern Church and gave slaves access to Christian marriage and wedding. But this prohibition continued to have effect in the Western Church until the later part of the Middle Ages.⁵⁷

At the fourth Council of Toledo (in modern Spain) held in 633 AD which was attended by 62 local bishops, slavery was approved by the Council fathers as a practice that was in conformity with the divine Law. Canons 59, 66-69 as well as 74 of this Council, prescribed punishment with the loss of all slaves belonging to any proselyte Christian. Also Jews born of Christian parents who decamped the Christian faith and accepted Judaism were punished with the loss of slaves belonging to them. This Council also upheld the decrees of the fourth Council of Orleans regarding slaves whose forefathers belonged to the Church as Church slaves. It promulgated that such slaves be returned back to the bishop of the local Church who owned them and prescribed excommunication

⁵⁴ The Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD was the fourth Ecumenical Council of the Church which met in this City of Chalcedon in the modern day Turkey. It was attended by 600 Bishops, mostly from the Eastern Roman Empire who discussed the subject of the two natures in Christ.

⁵⁵ Council of Chalcedon, Canon 4, in: Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, p. 19. See also, Norman, P. Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, New York 1990.

⁵⁶ Cf. The fourth Council of Orleans in 549, Cc. 31 & 32, in: Zanca, *Ibid*, p. 20.

⁵⁷ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, pp. 108-110.

as punishment for those who resisted this decree.⁵⁸ This Council also forbade the local bishops to manumit such Church slaves and if a bishop eventually freed such slaves, the Council fathers mandated his successor to return them back into the bondage of slavery or in the alternative make compensations for them. Thus according to this Council, any bishop that sets free a slave of the Church “must in the presence of the Council, give to the Church in compensation two other slaves of like value.”⁵⁹ This same Council also promulgated that: “Children of clerics should become the slaves of the Catholic Church to which the cleric-father belonged.”⁶⁰

Following this prohibition, the third Lateran Council of 1179 held in Rome forbade Christian kings and their subjects to give any military or commercial aid to the Saracens in the wars with the Christian Crusaders. It decreed that any Christian caught rendering such assistance to the Saracens will not only be made to lose all his possessions but also would be made to become a slave. This decree was spelt out in Canon 24 whose content partly reads: “Therefore, we declare that such persons should be cut off from the communion of the Church and be excommunicated for their wickedness; and that Catholic Princes and Civil Magistrates should confiscate their possessions, and that if they are captured, they should become the slaves of their captors.”⁶¹

With laws and prohibitions such as the ones considered above, the Church was able to protect her approval and position on the institution of slavery for many centuries against people who might bring about contrary views on the morality of slavery. And by so doing, she found it very difficult to change her views on the question of slavery. Her teaching on the origin and cause of slavery contributed much to the factors that made her to hold firmly on her position on slavery for so long a time. Let us now consider her views on the origin and cause of slavery in the world of men.

⁵⁸ Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, p. 20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 21.

⁶⁰ Canon XV, q. Viii, C. 3, in: Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 56.

⁶¹ Decree of the third Lateran Council in 1179, C. 24, in: Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, p. 21; Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 56.

2. Early Patristic Authors and the Origin of Slavery

2.1 Brief Introduction

The early patristic authors were influenced by the teaching of St. Paul and other Apostles on the theme of slavery. They did not only accept the Pauline tradition on the issue of slavery and continued to propagate it, but also they concerned themselves intensively with the problem of its origin and cause in their theological reflections and writings. Their position on the very origin and cause of slavery was much influenced by the tradition laid down by an early Jewish biblical exegete and philosopher Philo of Alexandria (c.20 BC-50 AD) whose biblical exegesis greatly influenced the early Christian doctrines. Philo, who was a forerunner of Neoplatonism traced the origin and cause of slavery back to the sin of the first parents of mankind in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2-3). For him, Adam and Eve became as a result of their sin slaves of their own passion and Eve moreover lost her freedom as a result of her sins.⁶² According to him, it was original sin that subjected both Eve and other women to men, due to her disobedience against God, she fell a little deeper into slavery with other women.⁶³ Both Adam and Eve were punished with the loss of their original state in Paradise and were made to live a life of dependency.⁶⁴

Following this line of thought, both the early Greek and Latin patristic authors found the origin of slavery and its cause in the original fall of the first parents of mankind. In line with the Stoics, they accepted the ethical maxim which states that: "All men are by nature created free and only by the domination of libido are ethically enslaved."⁶⁵ That means, slavery was not natural to man. They also accepted the Christian principle which states that all men are created equal by God. If then slavery is not something natural to man and all men were created equal by God, how then did human subjugation (actual slavery) enter into the human society? Saddled with the problem raised by this question, the early patristic authors took a different approach altogether. The patristic authors of Greek (Eastern) origin represented by the Cappadocian Church fathers such as St. Basil of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. John Chrysostom sought explanation to this problem in mystical Neoplatonism. For them, man's ultimate nature as a being created in the image and likeness of God is defined by his relation to God, who is his prototype.

⁶² Philo of Alexandria, *De Opificio Mundi* LX, 167, in: *Philonis Alexandrini Opera* 1,58f. English translation in: C. D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo*, p. 23.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶⁵ Stoics Philosophical Maxim, (SVF III, 352), in: Klein, *Sklaverei in der Sicht der Bischöfe*, p. 207.

The first parents Adam and Eve were called to participate in the life of God so as to find in Him their true humanity. That means, man is fully human, if and only if he participates in God. Man's failure to do so leads to his loss of freedom and by so doing, he became a slave to his body and to the world in which he lives. For them also, actual slavery was caused by a lack of wisdom in man especially in the case of the curse of Ham and that of Esau respectively. And this being the case, they recommended that those who lack wisdom should be led by those, who are in the possession of it.

On the other hand, the early patristic authors of Latin (Western) origin represented by St. Ambrose of Milan, St. Augustine of Hippo etc. went the way of practical Neoplatonism and considered the problem of slavery in the human society from a legal point of view. For them, slavery is penal by nature. It was a penal measure taken to restore the disturbed primordial human condition in paradise distorted by the sin of disobedience. Owing to this sin of disobedience against God, the first parents of mankind fell short of God's grace. And the punishment they received for their sin was slavery. And from this state of loss of the original status, human nature was weakened and became dominated by "concupiscentia mali" (lust for evil). The effect of this was that human beings became slaves of sin (*servi peccati*). On the issue of the cause of actual slavery, they taught that it was due to the personal sin of Ham that his father cursed him with enslavement as a punishment due to his foolishness. This was the basic thought of the early patristic authors on the issue of the where about of actual slavery. And this position influenced their acceptance of the practice of slavery in the society in which they lived.

In order to have an insight into their various positions and teachings on the institution of slavery and its origin, a one on one exposition of their writings on this theme under discussion is considered very expedient for this survey.

2.2 St. Basil of Caesarea and Slavery

St. Basil of Caesarea (*329, bishopric 370-379) was the Greek bishop of Caesarea Kayseri in Turkey. He believed that all men are created equal by God and that no one is by nature a slave of another man.⁶⁶ Despite this position, he accepted the condition of slavery which reigned in the society where he lived. His justification for slavery is predicated upon three main points namely: (i) on account of conquest or war, (ii) on account of poverty as in the case of Egyptians being oppressed by Pharaoh and (iii) on the fact of a lesser degree of

⁶⁶ St. Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto* 20, 51(F.C. 12, 227ff); (PG 32,4; 159-160). English version in: Schaff, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (NPNF)*, Vol. VIII, p. 32.

possession of the human wisdom that exists in some human beings.⁶⁷ In his view, this last example of the origin and cause of slavery whereby those in possession of a lesser degree of wisdom are subjected to the wise is a better condition of life for all those who lack wisdom. And this, in his opinion would be adjudged by “any righteous inquirer into the circumstances to be not a sentence of condemnation but as a benefit.”⁶⁸ In order to substantiate this position biblically, he cited the case of Ham and his two brothers in (Genesis 9:18-27) as a perfect example of an actual slavery. In his opinion, Ham was cursed with actual slavery as a result of his foolish behaviour against his father Noah. He also made reference to the case of the two sons of Isaac: Esau and Jacob in (Genesis 27: 37-40) and interpreted the fate of dependency of Esau on his younger brother Jacob as something that was caused by his foolishness or lack of wisdom. And based on this lack of wisdom in him, his father, the aged Isaac cursed him with the bondage of enslavement saying: “I have made him master over you, and you shall serve under your brother” (Gen. 27: 37 & 40).⁶⁹ The foolishness of Esau in this incident lies in the fact of his “gluttony or overindulgence in material goods.”⁷⁰ And in the enslavement of Canaan, St. Basil taught that Canaan became unteachable as a result of the curse that he inherited from his father Ham and as a result of this curse, he and his descendants were deprived of the virtue of wisdom and are therefore condemned to slavery.⁷¹

By locating the cause of slavery in the lack of intellectual wisdom in both Esau and Ham and his son Canaan, St. Basil followed the path of Aristotelian recommendation of slavery to those who lack intellectual wisdom as we shall see in the next chapter of this work. And it was based on this tradition that he supported slavery as an institution. He however, opted for the humanitarian and kind disposition of masters towards their slaves just like other patristic writers did in keeping with the Christian Household codes of the Pauline tradition.

⁶⁷ St. Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto* 20, 51(F.C. 12, 227ff); (PG 32,4; 160-162). English version in: Schaff, NPNF, Vol. VIII, p. 32.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Cf. Schaff, NPNF, Vol. VIII, pp. 32-33. This position here was taken in conjunction with the views of Origen in his: *Hom. in Ios.* 3,4 (SC. 71, 140), in: Klein, *Die Haltung der kappadokischen Bischöfe*, p. 49.

⁷⁰ St. Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. De Ieiunio* 16 (PG 31, 172). Cf. Klein, *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

2. 3 St. Ambrose of Milan and Slavery

St. Ambrose (*330, bishopric 374-397) was the bishop of Milan. His position and the justification he gave for slavery is contained in the Epistle he addressed to his friend and successor Simplicianus. As a Latin Church father, he maintained in this Epistle that slavery is penal by nature and as such, it is a consequent for original sin. He located the origin of actual slavery in the sin of Ham against his father Noah. And by reason of this fact, Ambrose believed that before the Deluge and the curse of Ham, there was no servitude.⁷² And in this sense the statement referring to Noah's drunkenness, which was believed to have been made by him, comes true here: "There would not have been slavery today, if there was no drunkenness."⁷³

Using the Pauline teaching in (1 Cor. 7:23) where Paul said: "God bought you for a price, so do not become slaves of men" (*Pretio empti estis, nolite fieri servi hominum*), Ambrose stated that true freedom lies in the wisdom to know that one is free in Christ. This was made in reference to the Stoics, who believed that anyone who is wise is a free man (*omnis sapiens, liber est*) and its opposite that holds that anyone who is not wise is a slave (*omnis insipiens serviat*).⁷⁴ Having this principle as his point of departure, St. Ambrose of Milan was able to develop his thesis on the origin of slavery. For him therefore, lack of possession of true wisdom in Christ is the origin of slavery. In his view, slaves (fools) are those who are not in possession of true wisdom in Christ and vice versa. They do not possess the ability to exercise power even over themselves and as a result of this, they subject themselves to the law of nature and have to live under the evils of slavery (*mala servitus*).⁷⁵ On the contrary, the wise does not need any change, he is standing on the unshakeable rock of Christ, he can adequately lead himself and can exercise power over himself.⁷⁶

Using this paradigm as his point of departure, he delved into the scriptural text of (Genesis 9:18-27) that narrates the household crisis in the family of the patriarch Noah. St. Ambrose saw in Ham an example of one, who has no wisdom and as such condemned to be a slave. In the light of this, he said of Ham and his two brothers as follows:

⁷² St. Ambrose of Milan, *De Noe* 94 (CSEL 32, 1; 481).

⁷³ St. Ambrose of Milan, *De Helia et Ieiunio* 5, 11 (CSEL 32, 2; 419); Klein, *Sklaverei in der Sicht der Bischöfe*, p. 41. It reads in Latin thus: "Non esset hodie servitus, si ebrietas non fuisset."

⁷⁴ St. Ambrose of Milan, *Epist. VII*, (CSEL 82,1; 45).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* See also, Klein, *Sklaverei in der Sicht der Bischöfe*, p. 17.

⁷⁶ St. Ambrose of Milan, *Epist. VII*, (CSEL 82,1; 45).

was not Noah the first, who directed his attention wisely to his stupid son Ham, who had laughed at his nakedness and derided him, he cursed him, saying: Cursed be Ham, a household servant shall he be unto his brethren, and he charged his brethren to be his master, who thought it wisely to honor the dignity of an old father.⁷⁷

With the help of this scriptural text, St. Ambrose argued that those, who find themselves in the condition of ignorance should therefore be led by the wise. And he cautioned that the wise, in whose hands lies the power and authority to lead the unwise, should treat him with care and affections so as to help him achieve his goal in the society. However, what St. Ambrose postulated here is not different from the position of Aristotle that those who are by nature wise and strong should have dominion over those who are by nature intellectually weak.⁷⁸ But the difference lies in his emphasis on the wise leading the unwise with the goal of helping him to attain the morality that he needs to develop himself so as to be part of the social order of the society. For him therefore, slavery is not evil, if it would lead the unwise to better himself in the society.⁷⁹ This position made him like other early Church fathers not to have committed himself to the task of condemnation of the institution of slavery.

2.4 St. Gregory of Nyssa and Slavery

St. Gregory of Nyssa (*335, bishopric 372-395) was the younger brother of St. Basil and bishop of Nyssa. Like his fellow Cappadocian Church fathers, St. Gregory of Nyssa believed in the original order of things in Paradise, where there was no dependency. In this primordial human condition, man was given authority to govern over animals but did not need anyone to govern and to direct himself.⁸⁰ His teaching on the equality of all men is contained in his Fourth Homily on the Lord's Prayer. In this Homily, he stressed that in this natural state of man, there was nothing like old or young age, no sickness, no weakness or misery and no slavery, because God did not create slavery and it was not His will that inequality should be found among men. Man was the very crown of God's creation and as such, no one was by nature a slave of another.⁸¹

⁷⁷ St. Ambrose of Milan, Epist. VII, (CSEL 82, 1; 45-46). The Latin version of this citation reads: "Nonne primus Noe quam advertisset quia insipienter filius suus Cham riserat nudatum patrem, maledixit ei dicens: Maledictus Cham, servus domesticus erit fratribus suis, et praeposuit ei fratres eius dominos, qui sapienter patris senectutem honorandam putarunt."

⁷⁸ For the position of Aristotle on the slaves of nature, see, the next sub-section of this work.

⁷⁹ St. Ambrose of Milan, Epist. VII, (CSEL 82,1; 46-47; 63).

⁸⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa, De Hominis Opificio III,1 (PG 44, 134-135 & 138). English version in: Schaff, NPNF, Vol. V, pp. 390 & 391.

⁸¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, De Hominis Opificio IV,1 (PG 44, 135). Cf. Schaff, NPNF, Vol. V, pp. 390-391. See also, Gregory of Nyssa, Or. Dom. IV (PG 44, 1162-1163).

He was appointed a ruler over the beasts, which were devoid of rational powers of man.⁸² For him still: “The only proper slaves of mankind are animals devoid of intelligence.”⁸³

With this position, St. Gregory of Nyssa has to grapple with the problem of the whereabouts of the issue of slavery among men in his time. And he sought for this in the fact that God, who created man rational and free gave him the free choice to either remain in this godly nature or to choose the opposite. By departing from acting and living in a manner different from his original state of nature, man brought enslavement unto himself by the choice he freely made.⁸⁴ He chose to be in the bondage of sin by rebelling against God in the Paradise of Eden. Through his action, man, who was meant to rule over nature and the beasts of nature became instead a slave of nature and of his passions, he was thrown out of the Paradise and he fell into slavery and was condemned to mortality.⁸⁵

On the effect of personal sin on one's life, St. Gregory of Nyssa made references to the sin of Ham and the curse placed over him by his father as an example of how sin could lead to actual slavery. And by so doing, he maintained that actual slavery came into being as a result of the sin of Ham.⁸⁶ And it was based on this, that he accepted slavery and found justification for it. That notwithstanding, he became the first early Church father that criticized the practice of slavery in the human society.

2. 5 St. John Chrysostom and Slavery

St. John Chrysostom (*347, bishopric 397-407) was a bishop of Constantinople in the fourth century and a famous early Church father who concerned himself with the issue of slavery in the Church. Like the other Church fathers considered above, he maintained that man was by nature created free. The loss of man's freedom took place in the Paradise of Eden through the sin of disobedience. For him still, actual slavery entered into the human society through the sin of Ham. This teaching on the cause of actual slavery is

⁸² St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Hominis Opificio*, XVI, 4 (PG 44, 136). Cf. Schaff, NPNF, Vol. V, p. 404.

⁸³ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Ecclesiasten Homiliae*, IV (PG 44, 665). English version in: Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 33.

⁸⁴ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Mortuis Oratio*, (GNO, IX, 54). Cf. *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae*, 2, 1,6 (FC 16,1; 170), in: Klein, *Ibid*, pp. 198-199.

⁸⁵ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratione de Beatitudinibus III*, 4 (GNO, VII 2; 106); *Or. Dom. V*, 3 (GNO, VII 2; 62), in: Klein, *Ibid*, p. 199.

⁸⁶ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae*, 4,2,7 (F.C. 16,1; 292), in: Klein, *Ibid*, p. 201.

contained in his 29th Homily on the Book of Genesis, where he treated the household crisis in the family of Noah and traced the behaviour of Noah in his drunkenness as a result of ignorance on the part of Noah. For him, Noah was the first man to plant the wine and the first to get drunk by it.⁸⁷ On the issue of the behaviour of Ham towards his father Noah, St. John Chrysostom asserted that Ham sinned by laughing at his father's nakedness and was justly rewarded with the punishment with slavery for his personal sin.⁸⁸ And by connecting personal sin with slavery, he identified three main sources of slavery in the human society namely: (i) The subjection of the woman under her husband as a result of the fall of man in Paradise. (ii) The subjection of one man to another, which he called actual slavery caused by the sin of Ham against his father Noah. The effect of this sin of disrespect was that Ham became a real slave with all his descendants. (iii) Slavery of violence or man's inhumanity to man which was caused by Nimrod through his desire to reach the highest political power on earth in order to dominate the entire human race.⁸⁹ He interpreted the sin of Ham as a lack of love and as a sign of his wickedness.⁹⁰

In all these sources of slavery, St. John Chrysostom was able to relate them with sin and by so doing slavery became for him on the one hand, the consequence for the sin of the first parents, and on the other hand, the punishment meant for the personal sin of Ham. And this was passed unto every generation via procreation and personal sins of men.⁹¹ With this identification of sin as the cause of slavery, St. John Chrysostom found justification for slavery and maintained that it is most appropriate for slaves to remain in servitude.⁹² He further recommended in his preaching that slaves should prefer the security of their enslavement to the uncertainties of freedom.⁹³ This justification which he gave to the institution of slavery also greatly influenced his teaching on the relationship between slaves and masters

⁸⁷ St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Genesim 29, 6 (PG 53, 269-270). English version in: Hill, transl., St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on Genesis 18-45, Vol. 82, p. 202.

⁸⁸ St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Genesim 29, 6 (PG 53, 271-272). See also, Sermones in Genesim 4, (PG 54, 595), in: Maxwell, Slavery and the Catholic Church, p. 35.

⁸⁹ St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Genesim 4, 1/3 (SC 433, 218-238), in: Grieser, Die Antike Sklaverei, in: Theologische Quartalschrift Tübingen, 192 (2012), p. 8. For the reference made to the third origin of Slavery caused by Nimrod here, See, Hom. in Genesim 29, 8 (PG 53, 272). And for the reference he made to Ham, See his: De Lazaro Concio 6, 7 (PG 48, 1037-9); In Epistulam ad Ephesos, Homilia 22, 2 (PG 62, 157).

⁹⁰ St. John Chrysostom, De Lazaro Concio 6,7 (PG 48, 1038).

⁹¹ St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Genesim 5,1 (PG 53, 48-49).

⁹² St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Epistulam ad Philemonem Argumentum, (PG 62, 703-704). English version in: Schaff, NPNF, Vol XIII, pp. 545-546.

⁹³ St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Epistulam ad Philemonem Argumentum, (PG 62, 704). Cf. Schaff, NPNF, Vol XIII, p. 546; Maxwell, Slavery and the Catholic Church, p. 31; Ad Illuminados Catecheses 12, 25, in: Garnsey, Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle, pp. 31-32.

which was very lopsided in the sense that he continued to demand absolute obedience from the slaves.”⁹⁴

And with this kind of disposition towards slaves, St. Chrysostom not only supported slavery as an institution accepted by the Church but also made it to appear favourable and defensible both by the Church and by the slave masters.

2.6 St. Augustine of Hippo and Slavery

St. Augustine of Hippo (*354, bishopric 394-430) supported the idea of the patristic authors on slavery. On the issue of the whereabouts of slavery in the human society, he taught that God created all men equal and in this natural human condition there was no dependency and control of one man over another. Such control was given by God to men to exercise only over irrational animals. In this regard, he said: “This is prescribed by the order of nature: it is thus that God has created man...He did not intend that His rational creature who was made in His image, should have dominion over anything but the irrational creation, not man over man, but man over the beasts. And hence the righteous men in primitive times were made shepherds of cattle rather than kings of men.”⁹⁵ Having made this declaration, he then traced the origin of slavery in the fall of man in the Garden of Eden and stated that sin is the cause of slavery (*prima servitutis causa peccatum est*). In the light of this, he said: “The primary cause of slavery then is sin, so that man was put under man in a state of bondage, and this can be only by a judgement of God, in whom there is no unrighteousness, and who knows how to assign divers punishments according to the deserts of sinners.”⁹⁶ With this, he implies that slavery is a penal measure introduced by God in order to preserve the natural order of things. This idea is made clearly when he wrote: “But by nature, as God first created us, no one is the slave of either man or sin. This servitude is however, penal, and is appointed by that law which enjoins the preservation of the natural order and forbids its disturbances; for if nothing had been done in

⁹⁴ St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Epistulam I ad Timotheum*, XVI (PG 62, 587-590). Cf. Schaff, *NPNF*, Vol. XIII, p. 465. Cf. Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, p. 12.

⁹⁵ St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. XIX, 15 (CSEL40,2, 399-400). English version in: Dods, *The City of God*, p. 693. See also, *Augustine's Doctr. Christi*.1,23(CChr32,19) where he said in Latin: “Cum vero etiam eis qui sibi naturaliter pares sunt, hoc est hominibus, dominari affectat, intolerabilis omnino superba est.”

⁹⁶ St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. XIX, 15 (CSEL40, 2, 400). Cf. Dods, *The City of God*, XIX, 15, p. 694; Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle*, p. 47.

violation of that law, there would have been nothing to restrain by penal servitude.”⁹⁷

With this identification of the origin of slavery, he now went on to trace the whereabouts of actual slavery in the human society. According to him, actual slavery was caused by the sin of Ham against his father. Prior to this sin of Ham, the word slave never existed in the scriptures until after the Deluge. In reference to this, he wrote: “For it is with justice, we believe that the condition of slavery is the result of sin. And this is why we do not find the word “slave” in any part of Scripture until righteous Noah branded the sin of his son with this name. It is a name, therefore, introduced by sin and not by nature.”⁹⁸ This led him to acknowledge as a rule, the dependency of women on their husbands on account of their being in possession of lesser degree of reason compared to their men folk. Based on this, husbands should rule over their women and their children. In this position, St. Augustine accepted the philosophical position of Plato and Aristotle who taught that those who are naturally better endowed with wisdom and as such are intellectually strong, should lead and govern those who are by nature intellectually weak.⁹⁹ But in such a relationship between slaves and masters, St. Augustine recommended a paternalistic form of order (*Pater Familias*) and advised slaves to emulate the “*exemplum humilitatis Christi*”¹⁰⁰ by obeying their masters in all things. This was made clearer when he admonished: “The Apostles admonished slaves to be subject to their masters and to serve them heartily and with good-will, so that if they cannot be freed by their masters, they may themselves make their slavery in some sort free, by serving not in crafty fear but in faithful love...”¹⁰¹

With this position, St. Augustine not only accepted slavery but also made it theologically and morally defensible. This did not give him any room to launch any attack or criticisms on the institution of slavery and made him to be silent on the issue of its abolition.

In summa, the early patristic authors were unanimous in their teaching on the institution of slavery and generally did not consider slavery as something natural (*ius naturale*) in the context of the natural slavery theory propagated by Aristotle. For them, it does not belong to the nature of man who was created in

⁹⁷ St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. XIX, 15 (CSEL40,2, 400). Cf. Dods, *The City of God*, Book XIX, 15, *Ibid.* See also, Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, p. 15.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* Cf. Dods, *The City of God*, p. 693.

⁹⁹ Cf. Plato, *The Republic* Bk. V, 469c; Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk. 1, 1254b. The position of these two great Ancient Greek Philosophers on slavery shall be discussed in details in the next sub-section that follows.

¹⁰⁰ St. Augustine of Hippo, *Conf.* 7, 20 (CSEL 33, 166).

¹⁰¹ St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. XIX, 15 (CSEL 40, 2, 401). Cf. Dods, *The City of God*, Bk. XIX, 15, p. 694.

the image and likeness of God to be a slave of another man. Slavery therefore, is a consequent for sin which disturbed the original order of things in the Garden of Eden. But the actual slavery witnessed in the history of mankind which subjects one man to his fellow man came into being as a result of the personal sin of Ham who was punished with enslavement by his father. Slavery in this sense becomes atonement for personal sin. The continuation of this enslavement throughout the history of man was as the result of the continued existence of the sins of men. This position continued to dominate the Church's teaching on the issue of slavery throughout the first and the second millennium of her existence. She continued to support enslavement of people even in the high medieval period with the help of the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Let us now consider the position of the Church on slavery in the second millennium of her existence in the human society.

3. St. Thomas Aquinas and Spanish Theologians on Slavery

3.1 Brief Introduction

The influence of the Apostolic Church fathers and early patristic authors on the theme of the institution of slavery in the first 1000 years of existence of the Church was so enormous that the tradition laid down by them was one, whose impact continued to dominate the Church's position on the theme of slavery and its justification for another millennium. The Church's theologians and Christian authors who showed remarkable interests on the theme of slavery did not make a major breakaway from the influence of the patristic position on slavery. Instead, the Church in this period continued the patristic theology of slavery. This traditional teaching on slavery was again put high on course in the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas (1228-1274), who was a highly rated theologian and “doctor Angelicus” of the entire Middle Ages Christianity. His influence in theology was so enormous that his name was almost synonymous with Christian theology of his days. In his teaching on slavery, Aquinas accepted the patristic view of slavery and allowed himself to be influenced by a good chunk of Platonic cum Aristotelian theory of natural slavery.¹⁰² The influence of these two fathers of classical philosophy on both Aquinas and the Thomistic tradition was one that runs like a red thread throughout the theological reflections of the Scholastics especially among the Thomistic

¹⁰² Aquinas, II Sentences, d.44, q.1, a.3., IV Sent. d.36, q.1, a.1, ad. 2. English version in: Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 46. See also, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q.57, a.3, ad. 2, S.T. I-II, q.94, a.5, ad. 3.

tradition propagated by the fifteenth and the sixteenth century theological School of the Spanish University of Salamanca, who preoccupied themselves with much discussions on the subject of slavery especially in the context of Spanish Crown's conquest, colonisation and enslavement of the Indians of the West Indies. The discussion about to be made in this chapter will enable us to establish the kind of face which slavery wore during the period of the Thomistic tradition so as to know the stand of the Church's teaching on the subject of slavery in the period of the worst practice of slavery in the history of human society namely, the Transatlantic slave trade.

3.2 Influence of Plato and Aristotle on Aquinas' Position on Slavery

It was generally believed by theologians after him, that Aquinas brought into Christian theology some of the classical and philosophical ideas of Aristotle and Christianised the pagan thoughts in them. But in the case of the Aristotelian pagan position on slavery, Aquinas left it un-baptised. In their philosophy of slavery, Plato (c.427 BC-347 BC) and Aristotle (c. 384 BC-322 BC) who were the fathers of ancient Greek philosophy held the view that slavery is natural in the sense that some people were born to be slaves and others were born to be freemen. Expressing this view in his "Republic," Plato remarked that: "Everyone should remain in a condition of life in which he was born and which is his own by nature."¹⁰³ While believing in the fact that some people were by nature born stronger and wiser than others, he accepted as proper a condition of living, whereby one man is subjected to another as a slave. This Platonic position is made vividly clear when he maintained that: "...Nature herself intimates that it is just for the Better to have more than the Worse, the more Powerful than the Weaker; and in many ways she shows, among men as well as among animals, and indeed among whole cities and races, that justice consists in the Superior ruling over and having more than the Inferior."¹⁰⁴

Aristotle who was a student of Plato bought the idea of justification of slavery given above by his master. With his platonic influence, he stated in his "Politics" that a slave is a slave because he was born so. That is to say that nature made him a slave. In attempting to proffer a definition for a slave, Aristotle based his definition of "slave by nature" (Physei Doulos) on the level of the virtues, wisdom and intelligence which one possesses. Those who are in

¹⁰³ Plato, *The Republic*, Book V, 469c. Cf. Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 69.

¹⁰⁴ Plato, *The Republic*, *Ibid.* For further readings on the views of Plato on the issue of Slavery see: Platon, *Der Staat* Bk. IV, ed. Olof Gigon, pp. 287-288; Plato, *The Law*, Bk VI, 776c-778a, in: Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle*, p. 23.

higher possession of these attributes are for him masters who should govern and dominate those who are in lesser possession of these virtues as their slaves. It was based on this criterion that he defined his concept of a slave by nature in these words: "The lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is another's and he who participates in rational principle enough to apprehend, but not to have such a principle, is a slave by nature."¹⁰⁵ He considered the subjection of those with lesser possession of the aforesaid principles to slavery not only as justified but also very expedient. According to him: "It is clear then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter, slavery is both expedient and right."¹⁰⁶

His justification for natural slavery was based on two grounds: firstly, it was based on the relationship between man's reason and his emotions. That is to say that a slave is to his master, what emotions are to reason. This evaluation of the worth of a slave to his master led him to identify a slave merely as one of the instruments needed for the management of a household. This identification of slaves as "living instruments" was made in part IV of his first Book on Politics, where he wrote as follows:

And as in the arts which have a definite sphere the workers must have their own proper instruments for the accomplishment of their work, so, it is in the management of a household. Now instruments are of various sorts; some are living, others lifeless; in the rudder, the pilot of a ship has a lifeless, in the look-out man, a living instrument; for in the arts, the servant is a kind of instrument. Thus, too, a possession is an instrument for maintaining life. And so, in the arrangement of the family, a slave is a living possession, and property a number of such instruments; and the servant is himself an instrument which takes precedence of all other instruments.¹⁰⁷

Secondly, his justification for natural slavery was also based on the relationship between man and beasts or rather between body and soul. That means, a slave is to relate to his master in the same manner in which a beast relates to man or in the same way the body relates to the soul. And it was on this ground that he did not see much difference between a slave and an animal based on the services both render to their owner in the household. In the light of this, Aristotle maintained that: "The usefulness of slaves diverges little from that of animals, bodily service for the necessities of life is forthcoming from both, from slaves and from domestic animals alike."¹⁰⁸ In this sense therefore, he

¹⁰⁵ Aristotle, Politics, Book 1, 1254b. Cf. Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 69.

¹⁰⁶ Aristotle, Politics, Book 1, Ibid. See also, Aristotle, Politics, Book 1, 1254b, 25-27, in: Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ Aristotle, Politics, Book 1, Part IV, Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Aristotle, Politics, Book 1, 1254b, 25-27, in: Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle*, p. 35.

emptied slaves of their humanity by assigning to them a status of not belonging to themselves but to their masters. He identified such a position as the proper nature and office of the slave in relation to his master. According to him: "The master is only the master of the slave; he does not belong to him, whereas the slave is not only the slave of his master, but wholly belongs to him. Hence we see what is the nature and office of a slave; he who is by nature not his own but another's man, is by nature a slave; and he may be said to be another's man who, being a human being, is also a possession. And a possession may be defined as an instrument of action, separable from the possessor."¹⁰⁹

Apart from those whom he called slaves by nature, Aristotle also recognised another type of slavery. He accepted the fact that even those who were naturally born free could as a result of war lose their freedom and become slaves of their captors. This kind of slavery is what he called "slavery by law or convention." And with regard to this type of slavery he said: "For the words slavery and slave are used in two senses. There is a slave or slavery by law as well as by nature. The law of which I speak is a sort of convention - the law by which whatever is taken in war is supposed to belong to the victors."¹¹⁰

In justifying war as a means of enslaving people who were not slaves by nature, Aristotle traces the root cause of war in the possession of superior virtue. Those who are in possession of superior virtue are by nature furnished with the means to exercise force. In their ability to do this, they are equipped with the power to invade other people's territory, possess them and their goods through the use of force and violence. As a matter of fact, he recognised such people as those who are to rule over others. This view was expressed when he said:

The origin of the dispute, and what makes the views to invade each other's territory, is as follows: in some sense virtue, when furnished with means, has actually the greatest power of exercising force; and as superior power is only found where there is superior excellence of some kind, power seems to imply virtue, and the dispute to be simply one about justice (for it is due to one party identifying justice with goodwill while the other identifies it with the mere rule of the stronger). If these views are thus set out separately, the other views have no force or plausibility against the view that the superior in virtue ought to rule, or be master.¹¹¹

In his notion of slaves of nature, Aristotle sounded somewhat discriminating in the sense that he identified only the barbarians as slaves by nature, whereas his countrymen - the Hellenes or Greeks are not slaves by nature. This implies in his opinion that humanity is divided into two: the masters and the slaves, or put

¹⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, Part IV, *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* Cf. Herrmann-Otto, *Grundfragen der antiken Sklaverei*, p. 42.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

in another way, the Greeks and the barbarians, those who have the right to command and those who are born to obey. The Greeks are born to command and the barbarians are born to obey. And ipso facto, it is the natural order of things that the Greeks should have control over the barbarians. Specifying this difference in the two races he introduced on the theme of slavery, he asserted: “Wherefore Hellenes do not like to call Hellenes slaves, but confine the term to barbarians. Yet, in using this language, they really mean the natural slave of whom we spoke at first; for it must be admitted that some are slaves everywhere, others nowhere.”¹¹² Those who are slaves everywhere in his view are the barbarians and those who are nowhere slaves of anyone are the Greeks. While driving this point home, he asserted that: “The same principle applies to nobility. Hellenes regard themselves as noble everywhere, and not only in their own country, but they deem the barbarians noble only when at home.”¹¹³

In summa, Aristotle held the view that all men were not born equal, some were born masters while others were born slaves to serve the masters. And as a rule, this is in his opinion very expedient. Expressing this as a natural order of things, he said: “That some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.”¹¹⁴ And the masters for him are the Greeks while the barbarians are non-Greeks. This Aristotelian philosophical justification of slavery later formed to a greater extent the basis of Thomistic position on slavery upon which the Christian Europe depended much in her treatment of other people as inferior especially the Indians and the Black Africans in the period of the discoveries of the New Worlds (Caribbean and African societies).

3.3 St. Thomas Aquinas and Slavery

After reading the first Book of “Politics” of Aristotle, Aquinas confirmed many centuries later the views of Aristotle that it is not out of place if some people were born to serve others throughout their lives. By so doing he approved as something natural for some people to be reduced to the status of an animal by their fellows as Aristotle did. This approval is contained in his Commentary on Book II of the Sentences as well as in his epochal work *Summa Theologica*, where he treated the subject of dominion. In the first place, he accepted the patristic traditional teaching on the equality of all rational creatures as contained in the “*Moralia*” of St. Gregory the Great as well as the affirmation of this principle by St. Augustine in his *City of God*. Secondly, in the aforementioned

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Cf. Steimer, Bruno, ed. *Lexikon der Kirchengeschichte*, Bd. 2, Freiburg 2001, p. 1569.

Thomistic works, Aquinas identified two types of dominion namely: dominion for the sake of domination (*ad dominandum*) and dominion for the sake of government (*ad regimen ordinatus*). The first type of dominion refers to the rule of a tyrant, whose primary intention and concern is to work for his own private advantage to the detriment of his subjects. He identified this tyrannical dominion as a servile subjection or slavery. Making reference to this kind of dominion, he said: "Subjection is of two kinds; one is that of slavery, in which the ruler manages the subject for his own advantage, and this sort of subjection came in after sin."¹¹⁵

The second type of dominion refers to the relationship between the king and his subjects whose primary goal and intention is to work for the good of his subjects and not just to promote the king's private advantage. Aquinas identified this type of dominion as an economic or civil subjection. He argued that even if there were no sin, this type of subjection would have obtained in the human society because, some people from the moment of birth, could not have been able to lead themselves and that being the case, would need to be led by others who are wiser and stronger by nature. And shedding more light on this kind of dominion, he wrote:

But the other kind of subjection is domestic or civil, in which the ruler manages his subjects for their advantage and benefit. And this sort of subjection would have obtained even before sin. For the human group would have lacked the benefit of order had some of its members not been governed by others who were wiser. Such is the subjection in which woman is by nature subordinate to man, because the power of rational discernment is stronger in man. Nor is inequality among men incompatible with the state of innocence.¹¹⁶

In the above citations made on the two types of subjections or slavery, Aquinas combined two traditions here in order to drive home his point on the theme of slavery. On the one hand, is the early patristic and Augustinian position, whereby he identified the cause of slavery as sin. Together with the early Church tradition, he accepted the equality of rational creatures before God as well as the fact that before the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, there was no slavery and that actual slavery only came into being when man behaved like irrational creatures as in the case of the personal sin of Ham.

On the other hand, he adopted the Aristotelian tradition of natural slavery based on the fact that natural inequality among men brings about the condition of subjection, whereby the wise and the strong is compelled to rule and direct

¹¹⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 92, art. 1, ad. 2, in: Gilby, ed. *Summa Theologiae*, 60 Vols. See also, Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition*, p. 69.

¹¹⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *Ibid.*

the weak and the dull subject in the fulfilment of the social order in the society. And like St. Augustine, Aquinas believed that the natural equality of men that existed before sin in the Garden of Eden refers only to age, sex, moral, mental and physical qualities. Equality of all men as created in the image and likeness of God does not negate the fact that there were differences in perfection, whereby some people are by nature more intelligent, stronger and more attractive than others.¹¹⁷ It was on this note that Aquinas accepted the view of Aristotle on the inequality among rational creatures. And with this differentiation made, Aquinas does not on one hand believe in a natural condition, whereby a rational creature becomes just a means of production and realisation of an end of another rational creature. But on the other hand, he did accept this situation of actual slavery based on the fact that the rational creature behaves in an irrational manner like in the case of Ham. This differentiation becomes clearer when he maintained that: "Insofar as he is a truly integral being, the rational creature is not ordained to another as an end. But if this should occur, it will only exist insofar as man is similar to irrational creatures on account of sin."¹¹⁸

While endorsing the patristic understanding of the personality of the enslaved, Aquinas parted company with the Aristotelian reduction of the person of the enslaved to that of a chattel. Together with the patristic authors, he believed that the enslavement of one man by another is only a matter of bodily enslavement and as such has nothing to do with the freedom of the soul possessed by every human being - slaves and masters alike. He was here more interested in the inner freedom of man than in his physical enslavement. And this corresponds to the patristic mentality which held that a "bondsmen was inwardly free, and spiritually the equal of his master."¹¹⁹

Furthermore, Aquinas also accepted the just war theory which Aristotle introduced into the institution of slavery as a justified means of generating slaves. According to Aristotle, a ruler is just, while in possession of superior virtues, he uses war as a means to extend his kingdom or territory. For him still, a war is just, when it is waged against men, who though intended by nature to be governed, will not submit. Thomas Aquinas developed this position further and gave three conditions to be fulfilled in order for a war to be just. First and foremost, the war has to be authorised by a recognised ruler of a known territory or kingdom. Secondly, the reason for carrying out this war must be genuine and lastly the participants of this war must have the good and genuine

¹¹⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 96, a. 3.

¹¹⁸ Aquinas, *Commentary on Book II of the Sentences*, d. 44, q. 1, ad. 3, in: Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition*, p. 67. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 92, a. 1, ad 2.

¹¹⁹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 30.

intention of using this war to bring about something good and to avoid evil.¹²⁰ By so doing, Aquinas did not only accept and defend slavery as an institution but also justified war as a just title for the propagation of slavery. This position led him to lose sight of developing any attacks on the institution of slavery and as a result of this, he did not lead any campaign for its abolition. This thomistic justification of both slavery and the just war theory was entirely accepted by the Church and later taken up and defended by the Scholastics as well as the moral theologians of both Spanish and Portuguese origins in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Let us now consider their various views on the theme of slavery and its justification in the enslavement of the so-called slaves of nature.

3.4 Francisco de Vitoria and Slavery

Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546) was one of the fathers of the school of Salamanca in Spain, whose ideas and works helped to influence the thought of this school in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Under his rector-ship, the theologians of the school of Salamanca rose up to challenge academically the moral and theological background of the Spanish sovereignty over the Indians. His views on the theme of slavery were made in the context of the enslavement of the Indians by the Spanish government and Conquistadors. De Vitoria and his colleagues in the school of Salamanca reacted against the inhuman treatment and enslavement which the Spanish Conquistadors meted out to the Indians, dispossessing them of their fundamental human right to self-dominion, private property and freedom. This evil was carried out under the umbrella of mission and violently imposing on them the ruler-ship of the Spanish monarch and the authority of the Roman Pontiff- the pope.

In debating the moral justification of the colonial invasion and dominion of the Spanish kingdom over Indians, De Vitoria attacked the just war theory upon which the Spanish kingdom and Conquistadors based their invasion and occupation of the Indian territories and held the view that the Spanish war of occupation and invasion of Indians was not a just war. And based on this point, he refused to recognise any claim of the Spanish title to ownership and governance over the Indians. This argument is contained in his lectures “De Indis et de Jure Belli.” In this document, De Vitoria was much interested in investigating whether the Indians had the human right at all to private property and to self-dominion, or if they fell into the category of a barbarous folk or slaves by nature according to the Aristotelian theory of natural slaves. After examining this fact, he was able to establish that the Indians possessed private properties before they were enslaved by the Spaniards. And that being the case,

¹²⁰ See the Thomistic conditions for a just war in Section III, chapter one of this Book.

they were not slaves because, slaves in the Aristotelian sense of the term are chattels and as such, do not have the right to possess private properties. While exposing the logic in the Aristotelian postulation of the slave by nature in relation to the Indians, De Vitoria stated:

It seems not to be so, because the slave does not have dominion over things, namely: the slave cannot have anything of his own, and what he acquires, he acquires for his master. But those barbarians are slaves. Therefore, the proof is done. Aristotle makes it just right when he says: "Some are slaves by nature. It is more fitting for them to serve rather than to command." These are but those, whose reason is not sufficient enough to govern themselves, but only to accept commands, and those, whose power consisted more in physical than in spiritual matters. Do such people exist at all? They are mostly these barbarians, who, in reality do not seem to differ from wild animals and who are completely unsuited to rule themselves. Undoubtedly, it is better for them to be dominated by others than they to govern themselves. Aristotle thinks, and it is of course true, that people of this kind are slaves. Therefore, they cannot be masters. If therefore Indians were slaves, they could then be taken into possession by the Spaniards.¹²¹

With this Aristotelian argument on slaves by nature, De Vitoria went on to disprove the claim of the Spanish Conquistadors whose reason for invading West Indies was predicated on the fact that Indians are barbarians. He based his conviction on the fact that prior to the Spanish invasion and colonization, Indians possessed the human reason and were able to rule themselves and owned private possessions. And that being the case, they were human beings, reasonable as the Spaniards are, and as such have the right to rule themselves, retain their territories and private property. The counter argument which he employed in this proof of the humanity of Indians reads as follows: "However, that these (Indians) were in peaceful possession of the public and private things, contradicts the argument that they were slaves. Therefore, one must view them as masters of their own until proven otherwise. And under this condition, they should not be disturbed in their possession."¹²²

However, due to his thomistic cum Aristotelian background, De Vitoria did not fully accept that Indians were not among the so called barbarians and slaves by nature. He is somewhat convinced that Indians were not fully in possession of the human reason and as such could not organise themselves and pattern their state after those of the Europeans. On this note, he thought that they could be regarded as slaves by nature. This idea is made clearer when he wrote: "The said barbarians, as has been earlier said, were not entirely devoid of human reason, but they differ so little from the irrational beings that they are

¹²¹ Vitoria, *De Indis et jure Belli*, in: Priesching, *Von Menschenfängern und Menschenfischern*, p. 110. Cf. Vitoria, *De Indis, Recenter Inventis et de Jure Belli*, edited by Schätzel, p. 29.

¹²² Vitoria, *De Indis et Jure Belli*, in: Priesching, *Ibid.*

apparently unsuited according to our human and civic beliefs, to establish a legitimate state and to govern it by themselves.”¹²³

Furthermore, De Vitoria reviewed in the second part of his Lectures a seven-point claim of ownership title of the Spaniards over the Indians. He absolutely refused to acknowledge them as a legitimate basis for the Spanish claim of occupation and justification of dominion over the Indians and their properties. The titles of the Spanish kingdom over the Indians which he refused and refused to accept are: (a) That the Spanish king is the king of the whole world. (b) That the pope has temporal authority over the whole world. He has only spiritual authority over the Christians and not over non-Christians. (c) That the right to discover a new land does not in any way warrant legitimate right of ownership over such territories. And so, India was owned by those who lived there before the arrival of the Spaniards. (d) That refusal to convert to Christianity is not a ground of justification for carrying out a just war on unbelievers in the sense that unbelief is not an offence against the Christian faith. (e) That the misbehaviour of unbelievers especially in moral matters such as incest or cannibalism is not a just reason for carrying out a just war against unbelievers. (f) That the Indians had no free choice in the claim of the Conquistadors that they freely accepted and chose the Spanish king as their lord and ruler. (g) That the Spaniards cannot claim that it was in the fear and respect of God that they were called to serve as God's instrument of punishment for the sins of Indians against God. And as such, the Spaniards were not God's instrument as they claimed to be.¹²⁴

Despite this rebuttal made on the seven-point claim of ownership title over the Indians, De Vitoria was not convinced that the Indians were fully in possession of rational reason. They still appeared in his mind as those who had not passed the test of not being a barbarous folk and as such are slaves by nature as postulated by Aristotle. It was based on this lack of conviction that he accepted the continued exercising of Spanish dominion over the Indians. However, in this acceptance, he called for caution in the manner in which the Indians were being treated. He recommended in the course of the Spanish continued domination and enslavement of the Indians a humanitarian manner of leading the Indians so as to help them to improve on their condition of living as well as to eschew any exploitative behaviour geared toward serving the interest of the Spanish kingdom to the detriment of the Indian folk. In other words, De Vitoria, after all he said positively about the Indians, accepted the continuation of their condition of being slaves in the hands of the Spanish Conquistadors.

¹²³ Vitoria, *De Indis et de Jure Belli*, in: Priesching, *Ibid*, p. 112; Schätzel, *Ibid*, p. 115.

¹²⁴ Vitoria, *De Indis et de Jure Belli*, in: Priesching, *Ibid*, p. 111; Schätzel, *Ibid*, p. 51.

His conviction that they were slaves by nature was unambiguously exposed when he maintained:

As I said before, one might recognize this without any need for further evidence, but with the restriction that it will only serve for the benefit and good of those people and not to serve for the benefit and advantage of the Spaniards. In view of the eternal salvation, this means namely, a great danger for the souls if it happens to serve only the interest of the Spaniards. One could add to this point, what I have said above, namely, that the Indians are slaves by nature. And all the barbarians seem to be such slaves, and so, they could be treated like slaves.¹²⁵

On the justification of the use of the just war theory as a means of carrying out war against the pagans, De Vitoria accepted this theory and sanctioned its usage to fight against unbelievers as well as approved it to reduce pagan captives into the status of slaves. For him a war against the pagans is a just war, and Christians are permitted to make wars against them and even to capture both men, women and their children and use them as slaves. This point was made clear when he wrote:

So long as the war is going on under those stipulated conditions, one can indiscriminately rob all enemies and can take into possession all their goods, so too is it permitted to lead all the enemies, the guilty as well as the innocent into prison. This is the case in the war against the pagans, a perpetual war in which it is never possible to obtain satisfaction for the injustice and the damage done. Therefore, it is without any doubt permitted, to lead both the women and the children of the Saracens into captivity and into slavery.¹²⁶

With this position on slavery, one is wont to say that De Vitoria supported slavery and did not condemn it. Like St. Aquinas, he accepted the enslavement of barbarians as slaves of nature and even went as far as identifying Indians with the term barbarians, an identification which was neither made by Aristotle in his theory of natural slaves nor by Thomas Aquinas whose theological view point he represented and enlivened at the University of Salamanca. By so doing, he laid a foundation which will later be applied by the Portuguese and the popes of the fifteenth century papacy as justification for the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans.

¹²⁵ Vitoria, *De Indis et de Jure Belli*, in: Priesching, *Ibid.*, p. 112; Schätzel, *Ibid.*, pp. 115-117.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* Cf. Priesching, *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114; Schätzel, *Ibid.*, p. 157.

3.5 Bishop Bartolomé de Las Casas and Slavery

Bartolomé de Las Casas was born in 1484 in Seville where he also spent his childhood. He attended the Cathedral School in Seville and later studied history and philosophy. His father Pedro de las Casas was a merchant, who together with two of his uncles was among the crew that accompanied Columbus in his second voyage to the Island of Hispanola in the New World in 1493. At the age of 18 years he applied to do a military service in the New World and his application was granted by Governor Nicolas de Ovando (1460-1518) who was the governor of the New World from 1502-1509. After receiving tonsure, he arrived in Haiti in 1502 with the hope of making a huge wealth as well as earn some Church's benefits. His journey to Rome helped him to decide to become a priest. He got ordained in 1507 in Rome and celebrated his first mass in the New World in the same year. After his ordination, he took part in the military conquest of Cuba in 1511 as a military Chaplain and conquered the island of Cuba for the Spanish Crown. This military raid was conducted under the military command of Diego Velezquez de Cueller and Panfilo de Narvaez. As a reward for his services, Las Casas received a colony (Encomienda) which he personally managed with many slaves who cultivated his colony. According to Michel Clevenot, Las Casas "received a colony which he managed and directly supervised without any qualms of conscience."¹²⁷ In preparation for the Pentecost celebration of the year 1514 he came across a passage in the 34th chapter of the book of Sirach which reads:

Ill-gotten goods offered in sacrifice are tainted. Presents from the lawless do not win God's favour. The Most High is not pleased with the gifts of the godless, nor for their many sacrifices does He forgive their sins... whoever offers sacrifice from the holdings of the poor; The bread of charity is life itself for the needy, whoever withholds it, is a murderer. To take away a neighbour's living is to commit murder; to deny a labourer his wages is to shed blood. (Sirach 34: 21-26).

The words of this biblical text made him to re-think his position towards the many Indians whom he had kept as slaves. As a sign of his repentance, he gave up his colony and his plantation and engaged himself in the defence of the unjustly treated and enslaved Indians and fought for their rights. His engagement for the right and protection of the native Indians was predicated on his determination to know if the Spanish claim of title of ownership over the Indians and their enslavement of them by means of military invasion of their territories was a just title or not. After examining this war of invasion over the Indians, he was able to establish that the only just claim to the Spanish title

¹²⁷ Clevenot, in: *Geschichte des Christentums XVI*, Vol. 8, p. 112.

of ownership over the Indians consisted in the conferment of the papal authority contained in the mission Bulls of pope Alexander VI issued to the Spanish Crown in 1493 for mission and conversion of the natives of the New World.¹²⁸ Las Casas also recognized and accepted six legitimate grounds upon which a just war could be carried out by the Christians against the unbelievers and used this as the basis for adjudging the Spanish invasion as unjust. These are: (i) Against unbelievers in general living in the territories formerly belonging to the Christians. (ii) Against unbelievers living in those territories formerly belonging to Christians particularly those of them, who are in the practice of some acts contrary to natural law such as incest and cannibalism. (iii) Against all those in the practice of blasphemy - Christians and unbelievers alike. (iv) Against unbelievers who unjustly attack Christians. (v) Against unbelievers who hinder Christians from carrying out their missionary activities. (vi) Finally, when the war is carried out by Christians as protection for the innocent victims of human sacrifices and cannibalism.

Like other theologians and canonists such as Cardinal Thomas de vio Cajetan (1469-1534) have argued before him, Las Casas maintained that the just war theory could not be a legitimate title for the invasion of pagans who were never under any Christian kings or who lived in territories that never belonged to the Christians. With the logic of this argument, Las Casas upheld that the Spanish war of invasion waged against the Indians of the West Indies was not a just war, and as such, it did not warrant the Spanish Conquistadors any legitimate title to deprive the natives of India of any right to freedom, self-dominion and to private property. But if that is the case, what else could be adjudged as a just title to the Spanish claim of right of ownership over the Indians? As earlier indicated above, the only Spanish Crown's just title to the claim over India and the natives of West Indies recognized by Las Casas was papal authority. He accepted this authority on the grounds that papal authority is a worldwide authority and that the Christian king has a temporal power over the whole world.¹²⁹

Also the idea of Aristotelian slaves by nature was employed in the Spanish claim of ownership over the Indians. For instance, the Scottish Philosopher and theologian John Major (1467-1550) who as a professor at the university of Paris claimed in 1510 that the Spanish invasion of the Indians does not give them any right to deprive the native Indians of their freedom and the right to private possessions. He however, justified the Spanish enslavement of the natives as a just slavery. This was predicated on the fact that the native Indians fell into the

¹²⁸ See the treatment of the three Mission Bulls of Pope Alexander VI in 1493 in the next section of this work.

¹²⁹ A full discussion of this worldwide papal authority will be made in section III of this work.

category of the Aristotelian slaves by nature. For him therefore, Indians were slaves of nature and needed to be led and directed by the wiser and superior Spanish race. His proof for this was that Indians were barbarians, and being so, they are “naturalis servi.”¹³⁰ For him still, the fact that Indians have the right to self-dominion and to private property does not nullify the mission title of the Spaniards and their right of intervention in a pagan land involved in primitive practices such as the eating of the human flesh and the offering of human beings as sacrifices to the pagan gods. Owing to the fact that the “native Indians are slaves by nature, it is justified to conquer them as well as to rule over them by the Spaniards.”¹³¹

John Major was not alone in the conviction that barbarians are slaves by nature. In 1512, the Jurist Juan Lopez de Palacios Rubios (1450-1524) who was the canonist and Jurist attached to the Spanish Crown was also influenced by this claim. As a professor at the school of Salamanca and Valladolid and the main editor of the Spanish “Requirimento,” he believed that the natives Indians were not only slaves by nature but also barbarians. The truth of this position is contained in this aforesaid document scripted by him and read out to the native Indians by the Spanish Conquistadors, instructing them to submit themselves peacefully as vassals to the authority of the pope and to the temporal powers of the Spanish king or face enslavement during the conquest of the New World. In this document, Juan Lopez in the name of the Spanish king commanded the Indians to submit themselves to the ruler-ship of the Spanish king and to the authority of the pope in the following words:

If you do this, you will do well and you will do that for which you are obliged to do. If you do not do it or reject it maliciously, so I let you know that I will enter your territories by force and with the help of God I will use force against you and fight you in every way I can, and will force you to submit under the yoke and obedience of the Church and of her Highnesses. And I will capture and enslave your people, your wives and children and sell them as slaves and rule over them, as instructed by the king, and I shall take away your goods, and inflict upon you all sorts of harm and evil as much as I can do. ... And I assure you that the killings and damages that will result from this war will be at your own costs and will not be those of the king or the men who have come with me.¹³²

¹³⁰ Major, *Commentary on Aquinas Sentences*, in: Priesching, *Ibid*, p. 123.

¹³¹ Major, *Commentary on Aquinas Sentences*, in: Priesching, *Ibid*, pp. 123-124. Cf. Gilberto da Silva, *Am Anfang war das Opfer*, Rene Girard aus Afroidiolateinamerikansicher Perspektive, *Beiträge zur Missionswissenschaft und interkultureller Theologie*, Bd. 16, Münster, Hambrug 2001, pp. 156-160.

¹³² Rubios de Palacios, “Requirimento” in: Reinhard, *Geschichte der europäischen Expansion*, Bd. 2, p. 58.

Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490-1573) a philosopher, theologian and humanist attached to the palace of the king of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire under Emperor Charles V also defended the Spanish war of invasion of the West Indies as a just war. As a disciple of Aristotle, he translated the Aristotelian work "Politics" from the original Greek language into Latin. He was so much influenced by this work such that he accepted the Aristotelian theory of natural slavery hook line and sinker and applied this theory to the native Indian population during the so-called Valladolid debate of 1550 with Las Casas. In his defence of the Spanish Crown's interests in the New World, he described the native Indians as slaves by nature, barbarous, raw and cruel beings. In a brief definition of those he called slaves by nature, he said that: "Those whose condition is such that their function is the use of their bodies and nothing better can be expected of them, those, I say, are slaves of nature. It is better for them to be ruled thus."¹³³ With these Aristotelian attributes of natural slaves, he justified their invasion and enslavement on the grounds that it corresponded to the natural order of things that the perfect and wiser race should lead and govern over an imperfect and dull race like the Indian race. According to him:

When I give a brief résumé of the previous disputation, you did set out four reasons, each of which proves the justice of the war, which the Spaniards waged against the barbarous Indians. This is the first argument, because the Indians are by nature slaves, barbarians, crude and cruel beings, they rejected the rule of the wise, powerful and noble, rather than admitting it for their own good, as a principle that comes from a natural justice, according to which the material body should be subjected to the form of the soul, the desire to reason, the irrational animals to rational man, that means, the imperfect should be subjected to the perfect, the worse to the better. For this is the natural order, which the divine and eternal law command everyone to preserve in all places and at all times.¹³⁴

And by arguing in this manner, he defended the Spanish Crown's right of conquest, colonisation, enslavement and evangelization of the Indians as just and expedient. But Las Casas refuted him by arguing that even if Indians were slaves of nature, wars should not be used against them as a means of evangelizing them. Rather, they should be treated and respected as rational human beings whose conversion should be made not by the use of force but by peaceful means. This conviction of Las Casas was the motivating force that inspired him to fight the fight of his life in defending the rights of the native Indians as well as to liberate them from their enslaved condition. And this, he did with the help of the Archbishop of Seville Diego de Deza (*1444, bishopric

¹³³ Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, *Democrates Segundo, o de las Juntas Causas de la Guerra Contra los Indios*, ed. Angel Losada, Madrid 1951, pp. 19-20.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 83ff.

1487-1523) who assisted him to have a direct audience with the Spanish king Ferdinand II (*1452, reigned 1479-1516) on December 23, 1515. After a brief discussion with king Ferdinand II on the plight of the native Indians in the New World, the audience was re-scheduled to take place on January 23, 1516. But before this date, the king died and was succeeded by his 16 years old son Charles I of Spain, who later became the emperor Charles V (*1500, reigned 1519-1556) of the Holy Roman Empire.

On September 17, 1516 Las Casas was appointed the universal Procurator of the Indians of the entire West Indies by emperor Charles V with the post of representing the affairs of the Indians at the palace of the king in Spain. With his new appointment, he now set out to improve the plights of the Indians by mounting pressures on the king to set out some laws that will protect the Indians against the cruel treatment they suffered in the hands of the Spanish Conquistadors. And to achieve this, he made some recommendations to cardinal Ximenex Cisneros (1437-1517) who at this time was the interim director of the region of Haiti on how to alleviate the sufferings of the Indians. And in one of his memoirs, he recorded the plea he made to the king informing him about the deteriorating condition of the Indians who were dying in their thousands as a result of the harsh treatment they suffered in the hands of the Conquistadors. In this brief report, he recorded among other things: "And so it came to be that the Indians while they are badly treated and less-cared for and even exposed to very harsh working conditions, have reduced in their numbers from one million souls who formerly were found in this Island of Española, to now, fifteen or sixteen thousand, and they will all die, if they are not quickly saved."¹³⁵

In his effort to set them free from enslavement and from the hard work at the gold and silver mines and on the sugar plantations, he recommended to the Holy Roman emperor Charles V in 1535 that Black Africans should be forced to replace the dying population of the Indians in the strenuous work at the plantations in the New World. According to Christian Delacampagne, this recommendation was made to the king because: "The Indians were in no way prepared for the physically demanding forced labour, which the Europeans imposed on them, be it on the field-work and in the sugar cane plantations or even worse in the gold and silver mines."¹³⁶

Following this recommendation to the king, a commission of inquiry was set by the king of Spain to look into this recommendation. While discussions were going on, Las Casas wrote a letter to emperor Charles V again requesting him to pronounce liberty to the Indians and to authorize the importation of Black

¹³⁵ Las Casas, *Memoirs III*, in: Neumann, *Las Casas, Die ungläubliche Geschichte*, p. 75.

¹³⁶ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 153.

Africans to be used as slaves for the tedious works at the mines and sugar plantations in the New World. In his Letter of 1535 to king Charles V, Las Casas suggested among other things: "That the remedy of the Christians is this, that his Majesty should think it right to send to each one of the islands 500 or 600 Black Africans or whatever number that seems appropriate."¹³⁷ His efforts to set the Indians free however, saw the light of the day in 1537, when pope Paul III (*1468, reigned 1534-1549) in agreement with emperor Charles V, issued the Bull "Sublimus Deus" where he condemned the enslavement of the newly converted Indians as an unjust slavery and defended their humanity. In this Bull, pope Paul III explained:

We know well that the Indians as real people, have not only the ability to receive Christian faith, but also with utmost readiness rush to embrace it as we have come to know ... We define and explain in this letter, regardless of all that was previously in force and what still obtains, that the said Indians and all other people who in future will come in contact with Christianity, should not be deprived of their liberty and private property.¹³⁸

With the papal authority of this Bull, the enslavement of Indians was condemned as an unjust slavery and with the force of this condemnation, the native Indians were thenceforth freed from the bondage of slavery and their lot fell on Black Africans on the strength of the suggestions made by Bishop Las Casas.

This victory of Las Casas and the enslaved native Indians was brought to its heights in 1542, when emperor Charles V enacted new rules aimed at bringing the Encomienda (Colonisation) of Indians to an end. This law however, was repealed as a result of the heavy protest from the Spanish Conquistadors in the New World. Despite this withdrawal of the aforesaid law, Las Casas was happy towards the end of his life on earth that he was able to set the Indians free from the inhuman hands of enslavement as we read in his last document published only after his death in 1556 where he expressed as follows:

God in His infinite goodness and mercy considered it good to choose me in my unworthiness for His service to all those people we call Indians and who were the original owners of all these kingdoms and countries, in order to defend them against the untold outrageous insults and torments that we Spaniards have meted out upon them, without any regard to reason and justice, so as to lead them back to the very liberty which was originally theirs from the beginning of times.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 98.

¹³⁸ Paul III, "Sublimis Deus," Document of Archivo Secreto Vaticano (ASV), A.A.Arm. XXXVII, Vol. 15, Fl. 145rv. Cf. Clevenot, in: *Geschichte des Christentum*, Vol. 8, p. 114.

¹³⁹ Las Casas, in: Clevenot, *Ibid*, p. 115.

This state of satisfaction of his mind did not last long after seeing with his very eyes the weight of the sufferings and unjust treatment which he brought to bear upon the Black Africans in his bid to liberate the Indians. Thus he wrote in his work *Historia de las Indias* as follows: "I realised that it was wrong to seek to replace one form of slavery with another."¹⁴⁰ And he showed remorse of his conscience when he confessed that he was not certain whether his ignorance and good intention of liberating the Indians at the expense of Black Africans would excuse him before the bar of Divine Justice.¹⁴¹ Even though he regretted his decision that Black Africans should replace the Indians in the works of enslavement in the New World, his regrets however, could no longer redeem the great harm he inflicted on the Black Africans by leading them to the "slaughter house" of the chattel slavery witnessed during the long duration of the Transatlantic slave trade. And in the views of Lewis Hanke, beyond this brief acknowledgement of guilt, there is no indication that: "The protector of the Indians publicly condemned the enslavement of Negroes or advocated their emancipation."¹⁴² And based on this, Las Casas "is considered as one of those responsible for the misfortune of the Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade."¹⁴³ His disposition towards the Black African race in the opinion of Christian Delacampagne made him to be among those who were driving out Satan with the power of Beelzebul rather than using the Spirit of the God of Jesus Christ to cast out demons.¹⁴⁴ He died on July 18, 1566 in Madrid.

But one thing is here clear: in all his defence of the humanity and freedom of the native Indians that made him to go down into history as the defender of Indians, Las Casas did not condemn slavery as an institution but accepted it as part of the social order of things in the human society. His acceptance of slavery made him to feel very complacent toward working for its eradication in the entire human society. Instead, he supported its continuation and propagation with his recommendations to emperor Charles V that Black Africans should be held as slaves in place of the Indians of the West Indies. What actually informed his decision and recommendation of the enslavement of Black Africans to the concerned authorities of his time as a remedy for the continuation of the slave works at the plantations and in the silver and gold mines in the New World will be made known in the course of the development of the next chapter of this work.

¹⁴⁰ Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, p. 129.

¹⁴¹ Las Casas, *Historia de Las Indias*, p. 111, & pp. 274-275. Cf. Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 170.

¹⁴² Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indian*, p. 9.

¹⁴³ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 197.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

3.6 Domingo de Soto and Slavery

Domingo de Soto (1494-1560) was a student of Francisco de Vitoria and one of the pillars of the theological thoughts of the school of Salamanca. Like his mentor Francisco De Vitoria, De Soto further propagated the Thomistic position on the issue of slavery. His position on slavery was made in the context of the defense of the enslaved Indians of West Indies. As a member of the school of Salamanca, he questioned the morality and justice of the Spanish invasion and colonisation of the territories that belonged to the natives of the West Indies and challenged their claim of title of ownership over the Indians. He accepted as well as supported slavery as a means of leading those who were in lesser possession of human reason to attain their goal in the social order of the society but not in the sense in which it was taught and propounded by Aristotle. For him therefore, there are no slaves of nature, and slavery is not something natural. This view was made when he said that from the point of view of natural law “no other rights can abrogate the natural rights of man, for man is by nature created free. Slavery, wherein one is subject to the dominion of another is contrary to nature.”¹⁴⁵

Having refuted this Aristotelian position of natural slavery, De Soto was then faced with the question of whether a man can have dominion over another man or not. He answered this question in the positive. According to him, slavery is only of “*ius gentium*” (human law) and not of “*ius divinum*” (Divine law) or “*ius naturalis*” (Natural law). In contra distinction to the natural slavery of Aristotle, De Soto maintained that, it was not based on nature that some people are born to serve as slaves more than others. Rather it was based on the human law that some are slaves of their fellow human beings. And this is justified when it is geared towards serving an end, such as to help the dull and the weak in the manner of living, or to serve as a penalty for a crime that normally should have merited punishment with death for an offender. What he was referring to in this explanation is the case of war captives, whereby captors spared the lives of their war captives by condemning them to slavery. In explicating his position on slavery, De Soto said:

Slavery is of the *ius gentium* and nevertheless is dispensed with, so that Christians, when taken as prisoners of war, are not reduced to slavery.... When the philosopher Aristotle says that there are men who are slaves by nature, he is not considering the natural law in itself. Since there is no reason for one to serve more than another. If we consider human nature in itself, it can be only when ordered towards some end, such as one being

¹⁴⁵ De Soto, *Justicia et Jure*, Book IV, q. 2, a. 2, in: Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition*, pp. 166-167.

subordinated to the authority of another, or to be freed from the penalty of death in a war. This is rather of the *ius gentium*.¹⁴⁶

He however accepted the condition of slavery, whereby the weak and the more ignorant submit themselves to the dominion and authority of the wise person with the aim of being taught and led by the wise in order to learn the manners of living in a social order. For him, this condition of slavery does not run contrary to human freedom. The view was clearly expressed when he maintained that: “The submission of the more ignorant to the wise so that they can be instructed in the manner of living in the society is not of itself contrary to liberty.”¹⁴⁷ Going a step further to drive his point home on the issue of slavery, De Soto made a differentiation between *ius* (right) or *dominio* (ownership) and *dominium* (lordship) or *dominatus* (tyranny) in Book IV of his *De Justicia et Jure*. According to him, *ius* is a faculty of exercising the use of something freely, which is the same thing as dominion. In this sense, one can have this *ius* to order someone freely, but does not have dominion over him. That being the case, dominion can be applied over both freemen and slaves. On the other hand, *dominium* or *dominatus* is employed in the negative sense of dominion. It refers to a tyrannical usage of this faculty (*ius* or *dominio*) to use someone freely to serve one's personal interests or end, to the detriment of another.¹⁴⁸

Having made this differentiation, he delved into the subject of a just title and just slavery. It was while discussing this theme that he identified three types of titles that can make slavery to be a just slavery namely: (i) *Ex natura* of Aristotle, whereby the wise and the strong directs others for the good of all. (ii) Contractual slavery, whereby one sells oneself into slavery due to indebtedness. (iii) Slavery as penalty, whereby prisoners of war are forced into slavery rather than being put to death. Based on this last point, he justified the use of war as a means of generating slaves especially when it involves pagans and other unbelievers of the Christian faith. In this just war theory, he exempted Christians taken as war prisoners from being led into slavery. This, according to him is against the law of the Nations. Providing the reason why Christian prisoners of war should not be enslaved like the pagans, De Soto referred to the authority of the work of a fourteenth century theologian and canonist Petrus de Palude (1280-1342), who in his work “*Liber Quartus Sententiarum*” forbade the reduction of Christian prisoners of war to the status of slaves but at the same time sanctioned the use of pagan and Muslim war prisoners as slaves by Christians. While quoting this canonist, De Soto said:

¹⁴⁶ De Soto, *De La Justicia y Del Derecho en diez Libros*, in: Brett, *Ibid*, p. 152.

¹⁴⁷ De Soto, *De La Justicia*, *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁸ De Soto, *De Justicia et Jure*, Book IV, q. 1, a. 1, in: Brett, *Ibid*, p. 154.

Peter de Palude introduced an International law by saying that this law, generally speaking, as a result of the deeds of the Romans and due to the agreement of all Nations declare namely, with the effect that prisoners of war belong to those who have taken them into captive. Nevertheless, it should be noted that a prisoner in the case of a war among Christians, precisely as a result of this law does not belong to those who captured him, and moreover, that such a prisoner of war can escape without committing any offence.¹⁴⁹

It was on the grounds of this law of the Nations coupled with the Christian rule that Christians should not be enslaved that De Soto just like De Vitoria before him did, forbade the use of Christian captives as slaves. But on the contrary, he approved of the use of pagans, Muslims and other unbelievers captured at war as slaves by the Christians. His approval of this rule is vividly seen when he said:

But how does this stand with captured unbelievers? To this I answer: These people are real slaves. That is how it stands according to pope Sylvester. It was stated there that slaves who were caught in a just war, could not escape punishment for mortal sin. But I believe that such a person commits a mortal sin by escaping or attempting to flee, especially if he is a purchased slave. But not however, when it comes to war captive slaves, though Sylvester is convinced of the opposite.¹⁵⁰

With this stand on the issue of slavery, it is clear that Domingo de Soto did not condemn slavery but accepted its practice within the ambient of a human law and thereby moved away from the Aristotelian concept of slaves by nature. By emphasizing on the just means for a just slavery, he only approved of the existing position of theologians and canonists that existed before him.

Summarily, from the foregoing arguments and positions of the theologians of the Spanish University of Salamanca in view of the morality and the justice of Spanish invasion and enslavement of the native population of the West Indies, one is wont to say that slavery as an institution was never condemned, rather one notices a continued propagation of the patristic position on slavery. But one thing is clear among them, namely: they accepted the use of war as a legitimate means of enslavement of people. But this title of a just war when applied to the Spanish invasion and colonization of the West Indies could not hold any water in its content in the sense that the Indian territories were never territories that ever belonged to the Christians or once under the powers of any Christian kings. But the justification which they gave to this invasion and

¹⁴⁹ De Soto, *De Iustitia et Iure*, in: Priesching, *Von Menschenfängern und Menschenfischern*, p. 117. The cited work of Peter de Palude is, *Liber Quartus Sententiarum*, 4, d. 15, q. 5. For further details on Law of the Nations, see, Justenhoven, & Stüben, eds. *Kann Krieg erlaubt sein?* p. 113.

¹⁵⁰ De Soto, *De Iustitia et Iure*, in: Priesching, *Ibid*, p. 117; Justenhoven & Stüben, *Ibid*, p. 113.

enslavement of the native Indians found another ground which was based on the assumption that Indians were barbarians. By maintaining such a position, a shift has been made from the early Church position on slavery which was based on the introduction of sin in the Garden of Eden and which never considered slavery and its cause from the view point of inferiority of a particular race to another. By dwelling much on the pagan philosophy of Aristotle, race and inequality among men had been introduced into the discussion of the Church on slavery and served as a means of justifying it. That means, inferiority and nationality of a particular folk could be employed as a just title of enslaving them as well as depriving them of their rights to freedom, self-rule and to private possessions. The impact of this position in the discussion on slavery was made to bear on the Black Africans in the justification of their enslavement during the Transatlantic slave trade. Also, the justification of the just war theory by these theologians considered above as a means of capturing unbelievers as slaves will feature a great deal in the discussions on the justification of the enslavement of Black Africans. Its contribution to the justification of the enslavement of Black Africans was enormous such that it formed the basis upon which pope Nicholas V (1447-1455) wrote his *Romanus Pontifex* which authorized the capture, enslavement and humiliation of the Black African race by the Portuguese. It served as a license in the hands of the Portuguese for all the wars waged to generate slaves in the whole regions of the West African Coasts. With much dependence on scholastic theology therefore, the Church did not bother much to redress her position on the enslavement of Black Africans. Her complacency to eschew her teachings on slavery of this Aristotelian influence brought about a further humiliation of the Black African race through the development of another dangerous stereotype which has its roots in the Christian Bible and purports to say that Black Africa is a cursed race of Ham.

4. Slavery as Consequence for the Sin of Ham

4.1 Brief Introduction

The early patristic authors who laid foundation for what we now know as the position of the Church on slavery were able to establish in their theological reflections that actual slavery, which is a condition of life, whereby one man becomes subjected to his fellow human being as a slave never existed before the Deluge. According to them, this slavery was introduced into the human society by the patriarch Noah as a punishment for the personal sin of his son

Ham, who laughed at his father's nakedness and made fun of it. In the interpretations given to this curse, it was accepted that it was a curse with a dual punishment with enslavement and the blackness of the skin-color of both Ham and his descendants. And based on this theory, medieval and modern Christian authors of Europe and America purported to say that Black Africa is the continent of the accursed Ham and his descendants, and as such, Black Africa is a cursed continent. This belief is not only found among leaders of the Christian Church but also among politicians, men and women of substance as well as some University scholars of European and American origin.

This chapter therefore sets for itself the goal of establishing the new face of the interpretations given to this curse as the cause of actual slavery and how this gradually developed into a colossal monument of an anti-Black sentiment in the hands of both medieval and modern Church theologians as a theological proof that Black Africans are the direct descendants of the accursed Ham and as such, they are the accursed race of Ham destined for perpetual enslavement, a prophecy which in the views of these theologians and other Christian writers found its fulfilment and justification in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade.

4.2 The Myth of a Cursed Race: Curse of Ham

The biblical passage of Genesis (9:18-27) contains the story of the family of Noah after the Deluge as well as the curse of Ham by his father Noah. This passage is the oldest passage in the Bible that deals with the origin of actual slavery. It is also the most recurrent text of the entire Bible used to justify the enslavement of Black Africans. In the views of Felder C. Hope, this passage “has achieved notoriety in many quarters because, it contains the so called curse of Ham.”¹⁵¹ As the story goes, Noah was the first man on earth that planted a vine-yard after the great flood that destroyed all creatures. And after getting himself drunk from the fruits of his work, he was overcome by a deep sleep and left himself naked. Ham, his second son, saw his nakedness and went away without covering it. Later, his other two brothers - Shem and Japheth learnt of this and entered the tent with their eyes closed and covered Noah's nakedness with a linen cloth without looking at it. When Noah awoke from his sleep, he cursed Ham for his behaviour and blessed his brothers with the following words: “Accursed be Canaan, he shall be his brother’s meanest slave. He added; blessed be Yahweh, God of Shem, let Canaan be his slave! May God expand Japheth, and may he live in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his slave (Gen.

¹⁵¹ Hope, Stony The Road We Trod, p. 129.

9: 25-27).”¹⁵² This story is being considered by some biblical scholars as an “early Hebrew rationalization for Israel's conquest and enslavement of the Canaanites who were presumed to have descended from Ham's son Canaan.”¹⁵³ On the other hand, this account was employed by some members of the Abrahamic religion to justify racism and the enslavement of Black Africans who were assumed to have descended from Ham. The reason given for this identification of Ham with Black Africans was based on the biblical passage of (Genesis 10: 1-32), which assumed that the entire humanity originated from the sons of Noah after the great flood. According to this account, the accursed Ham and his descendants were believed by the propagators of this myth to be the forefathers of Black Africans while the blessed Shem and Japheth were said to be the forefathers of Europeans, Americans, Asians and peoples of the other continents of this world. With this allocation of who is who in this myth, it was believed by the medieval and modern scholars of Western Christendom that Africans and especially the Black Africans were direct descendants of Ham and were therefore placed under a divine curse. But the question begging for an answer here is: Is this belief rooted in anything theological, ethnological, geographical, racial or otherwise? Why was this connection made between Ham and Black Africans? A brief examination of the meaning of the word Ham among Bible scholars gives us a clue to the connection made between Ham and Black Africans. Over and above all this, it will help us a great deal to know what it really means when Christian authors and theologians refer to Ham as the father of the Negroes or Black Africans.

4.3 Meaning of Ham

The word “Ham” is an English translation for the Hebrew word חָם which is often transliterated in the Hebrew Bible as Cham. In its usage in this Hebrew Bible, it was always employed to refer to the mythical character of one of the three sons of the patriarch Noah named Ham. Ham is frequently associated with the Ethiopians, Egyptians and the Cushites as their progenitor as one can see in the writings of many early Christian writers. It is indeed difficult to ascertain the reason why this association was ever made up to the present time that Ham was the father of Black Africans. But many scholars accept the one view that is based on the etymology of the Hebrew word “Ham” which is often associated with black or dark. For instance, the work of a third century B.C. Jewish rabbi Hiyya translated the word “Ham” as blackness and explained

¹⁵² See, The New Jerusalem Bible, Standard Edition, p. 28.

¹⁵³ Gowan, Genesis 1-11: Eden to Babel, p. 110.

Ham's blackness as God's punishment for his sin in the Ark during the Deluge.¹⁵⁴

The equation of the Hebrew name Ham with the adjective hot or black was for the first time introduced into the Christian literature through the writings of the first century Alexandrian Jew, philosopher and exegete Philo (20 BC-50 AD). Scholars versed in Jewish Studies such as David Goldenberg, Sylvester Johnson et al., accepted the view that it was from the writings of Philo that the early fathers of the Church extracted their information in their interpretation of the word "Ham" as hot or black.¹⁵⁵ Philo, in his interpretation of biblical names established that: "Ham means heat or hot"¹⁵⁶ and used this to refer to the character of both Ham and his son Canaan as representations of vice in its passive and active sense respectively. According to him: "Ham represents quiescent passive vice, and Canaan represents vice in the active state."¹⁵⁷ Going deeper in his explanation of the character of Ham and his son, Philo said: "Ham the son of Noah is a name for evil in the quiescent state and the grandson Canaan for the same, when it passes into active movement. For Ham is by interpretation heat and Canaan tossing. Now heat is a sign of fever in the body and of evil in the soul."¹⁵⁸ Even though Philo interpreted Ham as heat or black and using these attributes, he equated Ham and his son Canaan with evil or wickedness, he however, did not equate Ham with Black Africa. But his equation of Ham with blackness and darkness to mean everything negative and evil is a dangerous explosive material laid down by him, upon which the Church fathers and other Christian writers later on based their interpretations of the curse of Ham. These negative traits associated with Ham were used by them to refer to Black Africans in such a way that Ham became in their hands almost a synonym for Black Africans.

It was based on this tradition that an early Church father Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD) adjudged Ham as the source of all evils in the world. In his work titled "Recognitions of Clement," he not only identified Ham as the one that invented the act of magic in the society, but also held him responsible for the continued existence of magical acts in the world. According to him: "One of the sons of Noah, by name Ham, unhappily discovered the magical act, and handed down the instruction of it to one of his sons, who was called Mesraim,

¹⁵⁴ Rabbi Hiyya, in: Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, pp. 102-103; Johnson, *The Myth of Ham in the 19th century American Christianity*, p. 29.

¹⁵⁵ Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 150.

¹⁵⁶ Philo of Alexandria, *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesim II, 65 & II, 77*. English translation in: Yonge, *The Works of Philo, Complete and Unabridged*, p. 836, & p. 839.

¹⁵⁷ Philo, *De Sobrietate X, 44*. English translation in: Yonge, *The Works of Philo*, p. 231. See also, Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 150; Haynes, *Noah's Curse*, p. 26.

¹⁵⁸ Philo, *De Sobrietate X, 44-45*; Yonge, *The Works of Philo*, p. 231.

from whom the race of the Egyptians and Babylonians and Persians are descended.”¹⁵⁹ In the same light, St. Augustine of Hippo described Ham as a “symbol of the man in isolation, the clan-less, lawless, heartless man, who like heathen ethnics, did not know God.”¹⁶⁰

This denigration of Ham and his descendants was gently accepted and was given a glamorous boost in the works of modern Christian authors who went as far as identifying Ham as a Black man. In the light of this, an American born pro-slavery apologist and a prolific writer Josiah Priest (1788-1851) wrote in his famous work “Bible Defence of Slavery,” that Ham was born a Negro. According to him: “Ham is the youngest son of Noah, the father of the Negro race.”¹⁶¹ For him still, Ham in the language of Noah “signified anything that had become black, it was the word for black, whatever the cause of the color might have been, the same as the word black means in the English tongue.”¹⁶²

Taking a step further in his association of Ham with the Negroes, he ascribed to him all the physiological features of the Black man in order to prove that Ham was really the father of the Black man. This anti-Blacks sentiment was revealed when he said: “Thus far, we have shown that the very name of this youngest son of Noah is an evidence of no small account that he was born a Negro, with all the physical, moral and constitutional traits, which mark and distinguish that race of men from the other two races.”¹⁶³

Also the word “hot” is another adjective that has been linked with the name Ham. As it were, some scholars have used this word to make reference to the location of the presumed children of Ham. And as a result of this, it was believed that the descendants of Ham were situated in the hot regions of the world namely in Africa. Regarding this belief, Herder recorded in his work that: “The name of Ham denoted “heat” and his descendants occupied the warmest regions of the earth towards the Torrid Zone.”¹⁶⁴ In the light of this assumption, Reverend Samuel Dunwody (1799-1852) affirmed in one of his preachings in 1837 in South Carolina as follows: “It is by no means improbable that the very name Ham, which signifies burnt or black was given to Ham prophetically on account of the countries that his posterity were destined to inhabit.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Clement of Alexandria, “Recognitions of Clement,” Book IV, Chp. XXVII, (ANFa 8, 140).

¹⁶⁰ St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei*, XVI, 2 (CSEL 40,2; 124). Cf. Dods, *The City of God*, Book 16, 2, p. 522. See also, Hannafold, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West*, p. 95.

¹⁶¹ Priest, *Bible Defence of Slavery*, p. 34ff.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Herder, *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Man*, Part II, p. 342, in: Rosenmüller, *The Biblical Geography of Central Asia*, Vol. 1, pp. 106-107.

¹⁶⁵ Dunwody, in: Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 143.

But all these anti-Blacks suppositions read into the word “Ham” have been counteracted by a renowned author and a Jewish studies scholar David Goldenberg, who made a groundswell study on the Hebrew meaning of the word Ham and was able to establish that this word “Ham” does not mean just black or dark as many authors have postulated. According to him: “One thing is however absolutely clear. The name Ham is not related to the Hebrew or to any Semitic word meaning “dark” or “black” or “heat” or to the Egyptian word meaning Egypt.”¹⁶⁶ With this position, he denied any relatedness of this Hebrew name with either Africa or Black Africans. In an unmistakable tone, he said: “To the early Hebrews then, Ham did not represent the father of hot, black Africa and there is no identification from the biblical story that God intended to condemn black-skinned people to eternal slavery.”¹⁶⁷

These anti-Blacks sentiments read into the word Ham which Goldenberg moved to correct herein, will be recurrent in the interpretations made by some Jewish scholars as well as the medieval and modern Christian writers while discussing the theme of the curse of Ham as a dual curse of slavery and the blackness of the skin-color of Black Africans. This will enable us to know the dangerous role which it played in the justification of the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade.

4.4 The Curse of Ham and Dark Skin-Color of Black Africans

Both ancient, modern, Jewish and Christian sources made a connection of the curse of Ham with the dark skin-color of Black Africans and viewed this as a mark of fulfilment of this curse on the Black African race as true descendants of Ham. These Jewish and Christian sources found in this myth the source of the peculiar skin-color of Black Africans. In some Jewish literature such as the Babylonian Talmud of the 4th century, it was believed that Ham was punished for his misconduct in the Ark with the darkening of his skin. Presenting this incident to its readers, this work reads: “Our rabbis taught: three copulated in the Ark, and they were all punished - the dog, the raven and Ham. The dog was doomed to be tied, the raven expectorates (spits its seeds into its mate's mouth), and Ham was smitten in his skin.”¹⁶⁸ Some other Jewish commentaries described the nature of this curse as the “darkening” of Ham’s skin and tended to trace this smitten skin to the blackness of Ham’s descendants. For instance, the Bereshit Rabbah remarked that: “Ham himself emerged from the Ark

¹⁶⁶ Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 149.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Talmud Bavli, Sanhendrin 108b. Cf. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible*, p. 79; Haynes, *Noah's Curse*, p. 24.

black-skinned.”¹⁶⁹ Presenting this punishment of Ham, this text partly reads: “...The dog received a certain punishment, and Ham became a black man, his face is blackened as a punishment and his issue is declared counterfeit.”¹⁷⁰ This same punishment with dark skin color was repeated in the Legends of the Jews with the following words: “...This law of conduct had been violated by none in the Ark except by Ham, by the dog and by the raven. They all received a punishment. Ham's was that his descendants were men of dark-hued skin.”¹⁷¹

Furthermore, the Talmudic folklore popularly known as the Jewish Midrashim, which is a part of the collection of stories and legends in the Babylonian Talmud completed around 600 AD did not only connect this curse of Ham with the blackness of his descendants but also became the first ever known written document that linked this story with other Negroid features and thereby portrayed the idea that Ham was really the forefather of Black Africans. In the light of this, the Talmudic myths taught that:

Ham is told by his father Noah that: because you have abused me in the darkness of the night, your children shall be born black and ugly, because you have twisted your head to cause me embarrassment, they shall have kinky hair and red eyes; because your lips jested at my exposure, theirs shall swell; and because you neglected my nakedness, they shall go naked with their shameful elongated male members exposed for all to see.¹⁷²

The said descendants of Ham who were cursed to go naked were also identified in this Jewish work to be the Egyptians and the Ethiopians (Blacks). This identification was made by Ginzberg when he pointed to its historical fulfilment when Ham's descendants were led away naked and in chains into exile by the Assyrian king. Referring to this captivity of the descendants of Ham, Ginzberg recorded as follows: “Naked, the descendants of Ham, the Egyptians and Ethiopians were led away captive and into exile by the king of Assyria, while the descendants of Shem, the Assyrians, even when the Angel of the Lord burnt them in the Camp, were not exposed, their garments remained upon their corpses unsinged.”¹⁷³

Again, Berossus the Chaldean (c. 290 BC) who was a famous Babylonian writer, historian and astronomer also made a connection of this curse with Black Africa. In his great work “History of Babylonia,” he held the view that Ham was exiled to Africa as a punishment for his misconduct. According to him: “In

¹⁶⁹ Bereshit or Genesis Rabbah, Gen.Viii, 16, in: Neusner, ed. Genesis Rabbah: The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis, Vol. 2, p. 32.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 32-33.

¹⁷¹ Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, p. 166.

¹⁷² Talmudic Folklore or Jewish Midrashim, in: Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, p. 169; Peterson, Ham and Japhet, p. 44; Haynes, Noah's Curse, p. 25.

¹⁷³ Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, p. 170.

punishment for his transgression, Ham was banished to the dark regions of Africa, forever carrying the taint of corruption.”¹⁷⁴

In the early and late medieval Christian sources, this same connection of the curse of Ham with the black skin-color of Black Africans was not only accepted but also was given tremendous considerations. For instance, Origen said in view of the Egyptians as descendants of Ham as follows: “Not without merit therefore, does the discolored posterity imitate the ignobility of the race he fathered.”¹⁷⁵ Also the famous medieval Christian work “Cursor Mundi” kept alive the above connection made between the curse of Ham and black skin-color with its tripartite division of mankind. This work, which appeared in (c.1300 AD) assigned particular geographical locations as dwelling places to the three sons of Noah. According to this source, Shem and his descendants were freemen and were located to Asia. Ham, the accursed one and his descendants were slaves and were sent to Africa, while Japhet and his descendants were nobles and knights and were located to Europe. In this representation, this work stated as follows: “Of Sem freemen, of Japhet europ knyght (knights), of Cham the maledight (of Ham the accursed)... Asie to Sem, to Cham affrik (Africa), to Japhet europ.”¹⁷⁶ In the light of this position, an Italian born Dominican Friar Johannes Annius of Viterbo (1432-1502) linked this curse of Ham with Africa and considered it as the determinant factor that forced Ham to abandon his undisclosed place of domicile and relocated to Africa. Expressing this view, he said: “As a result of his sin, Ham is exiled to Africa.”¹⁷⁷ The connection made with this curse of Ham with Black Africans among Catholic authors and sources attained its apogee in the modern period. All the negative characteristics and the evil remarks that were made about Ham and his son Canaan above were not only confirmed and accepted but also were transferred unto the Black Africans as the new bearers of these negative traits emanating from the curse of their progenitor Ham. It was in the light of this tradition that the fifteenth century born German cleric, humanist and ethnographer Johannes Böhm (1485-1535) used this curse to cast aspersions on the image of the Black Africans by associating them with the accursed race of Ham. In his 1520 published famous work “Omnium Gentium Mores, Leges et Ritus,” Johannes Böhm, did not only describe Africans as the accursed descendants of Ham but also as a barbarous folk, whose behaviours and ways

¹⁷⁴ Berossus the Chaldean, *History of Babylonia*, in: Hannaford, *Race*, p. 91. Cf. Haynes, *Noah's Curse*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁷⁵ Origen, *Homilia in Genesim XVI,1* (PG 12, 246-247). English version in: Heine, *The Fathers of the Church*, XVI,1 (F.C. 71, 215).

¹⁷⁶ “Cursor Mundi,” in: Haynes, *Noah's Curse*, p. 30. Cf. Albert B. Friedman, “When Adam delved,” in: Benson, ed. *The Larned and the Lewed*, pp. 227-229.

¹⁷⁷ Annius of Viterbo, *Antiquitatum*, 115v, in: Whiteford, *Curse of Ham in Modern Era*, p. 59.

of life are in partnership with those of the beasts of the earth. This description was clearly made when he wrote: "Ham's derision of his father led to his exile. After spending a short time in Arabia, Ham and his progeny lived in Egypt in Africa. Due to their barbarous nature, it was very difficult to differentiate between them and the beasts of the forest."¹⁷⁸ Continuing, he further said that: "As a result of Ham's prodigious powers of reproduction, Africa could not contain his progeny and thus the darkness of Ham's sin spread across the world. And wherever his descendants are found, ignorance of true piety and horrible slavery follow suit."¹⁷⁹

This manner of identification of Black Africans with the accursed Ham in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century Europe was further developed in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries respectively and it continued to influence the major publications of these centuries such as the dictionaries of the Bible, international biblical commentaries and Encyclopaedias etc. For instance, the work of the French born celebrated biblical scholar and a Benedictine abbot Augustine Calmet (1672-1757) titled "Dictionary of the Holy Bible" published in 1722 in France bore an eloquent testimony to this fact. This work is a very important Christian work of this century that kept the myth of a cursed race alive in the modern period and made it to become almost a popular household story in America that linked Black African slaves working at the sugar plantations with the accursed descendants of Ham. This work of a Catholic biblical expert gave credence to the belief that the Hebrew name "Ham" means "burnt," "swarthy" or "deep black"¹⁸⁰ and injected more energy to the assumption that Ham cajoled his father Noah and was punished along with his Black African descendants with a curse of blackness of their skin-color. While quoting a work of an undisclosed author titled "The History of the World," Calmet asserted that Ham was given the whole of Africa as a result of his curse which turned him and his descendants into black skin color. Making this position clearer, he recorded that: "Noah assigned to Ham the nations of Africa. The occasion of the color of his sons was that Noah being one day asleep discovered his nakedness, and Ham passed that way without covering him; on which accounts his descendants are born with black complexion, and the gift of the prophecy was taken from them."¹⁸¹ Applying the contents of the above citation in his bid to link Ham with the Black Africans, Calmet moved on

¹⁷⁸ Böhm, *Omnium Gentium Mores*, B1r.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* The Latin version of this citation reads: "Nec tenebrae illae rerum tantum in Aegypto steteret: sed quas cunq̄ue, a principio terras tennerunt, a Chamo procreati: verae pietas ignorantia simil et infanda servitus cepit."

¹⁸⁰ Calmet, *Dictionary of the Holy Bible: With the Biblical Fragments*, Vol. 1, p. 605.

¹⁸¹ *The History of the World* translated from the *Khelassut Ul Akhbar of Khondemeer*, in: Calmet's *Great Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, Vol. IV, p. 21.

to proof that Ham was the progenitor of Black Africans and that the skin-color of his descendants resulted from the curse which forced him to be sent to Africa and this color marked them out for enslavement. In stating his Proof, he said: "Our present business is with Ham only: first, Noah assigned Africa to Ham. Secondly, whoever inhabits Africa becomes of a black complexion from the nature of the country. Thirdly, whoever inhabits Africa is liable to slavery, from the nature of the country; so that to mention Africa, is to include the ideas of blackness and slavery."¹⁸²

For him still, Africa is a cursed and a useless continent and by so being, it was neither allotted to Shem nor to Japhet by the patriarch Noah based on the fact that both of them were blessed. Ham therefore, was punished for his crime with the gift of Africa. Putting this position clearer, he said: "Since Africa was to be peopled, by whom should it be colonized? Not by Shem, for he had a better soil in Asia; not by Japhet, for his enlargement could not have been accomplished in Africa. Ham as the younger son, had the least valuable allotment."¹⁸³ Continuing, he pointed out that this enlargement of Japhet with a great portion of areas and the diminutive areas assigned to Ham is not only a logical and a conclusive proof of the accursed nature of Ham and his descendants but also a geographical fulfilment of the sacred prophecy of Noah made in cursing his son Ham. Maintaining this position, Calmet concluded his inquiry in the following manner: "Now compare this with the diminutive portion of Ham: inferior in dimensions, in temperature, in fertility and in salubrity; the contrast is very striking. Now this fact justifies the authority of Noah's prophecy. And it justifies too this sacred record of it, of which this geographical statement is a full and undeniable confirmation."¹⁸⁴

Another epic work that kept alive the traditional rabbinic and Christian anti-Blacks sentiment in reading this passage in Genesis under discussion was the work of a brilliant English biblical scholar Thomas Newton (1704-1782). In this work titled "Dissertations on the Prophecies," which was first published in 1759, Newton referred to the Black Africans as an accursed race of Ham based on their skin-color. According to him: "We might almost as well say that the complexion of the Blacks was in consequence of Noah's curse."¹⁸⁵ He pointed at the ignorance, barbarity and misery of Black Africans as an indubitable fact of their labouring under this curse. And to prove this fact, he referred to their various subjugation by the Romans, the Saracens and the Turks as follows: "The whole continent of Black Africa was peopled principally by the children of Ham: and for how many ages have the better parts of that country lain under

¹⁸² Calmet, Calmet's Great Dictionary of the Holy Bible, p. 21.

¹⁸³ Ibid, p. 23.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Bishop Newton, Dissertations on the Prophecies, Vol. 1, p. 16.

the dominion of the Romans, and then of the Saracens and now of the Turks? In what wickedness, ignorance, barbarity, slavery and misery live most of the inhabitants?"¹⁸⁶ Continuing, he made a case with their enslavement as another sign of the fulfilment of the curse upon Black Africans. This, he showed by referring to their being enslaved and sold like the wild beasts of the earth especially during the period of the Transatlantic slave trade, in the light of this, he wrote: "And of the Negroes, how many hundreds every year are sold and bought like beasts in the market, and are conveyed from one quarter of the world to do the work of beasts in another?"¹⁸⁷ The remaining part of this work sets out to prove the fulfilment of the blessings contained in this prophecy of Noah in the lives of the children of Shem and Japhet. Bishop Newton pointed out here that God did not fail to bring into fulfilment the promise of blessings pronounced by Noah upon his other two sons especially by enlarging Japhet the progenitor of the Europeans with the entire continent of Europe and with many other colonies in Asia, Africa and the whole of America. And with this proof, Newton satisfactorily concluded his inquiry with the following words: "What think you now? Is not this a most extraordinary prophecy? A prophecy that was delivered near four thousand years ago, and yet hath been fulfilling through the several periods of time to this day! It is both instructive. It is the history of the world as it were in epitome."¹⁸⁸

The concern given to this myth of a cursed race among Catholics in the modern times was not a prerogative of intellectual and academic minds alone, but also was given a considerable attention in the visionary and mystical lives of some people held as holy men and women in the Catholic Church. In the class of such holy Saints of the Church was the German Catholic Augustinian nun, mystic, visionary and stigmatic, the Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824) who got herself enmeshed in this anti-Blacks sentiment read into this myth of a cursed race of Ham. In one of her supposed visions, she claimed that she saw this curse of Noah moving towards Ham and identified Ham with the Black Africans. For her, the Black African race is a stupid and ignorant race, whose black skin-color resulted from the curse of Noah. Exposing this anti-Blacks sentiment that was prevalent among the Western Christians of her time, Anne Catherine said:

I saw the curse pronounced by Noah upon Ham moving toward the latter like a black cloud and obscuring him. His skin lost its whiteness, he grew darker. His sin was the sin of sacrilege, the sin of one, who would forcibly enter the Ark of the Covenant. I saw a most corrupt race descends from Ham and sink deeper and deeper in darkness. I see that

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

the Black, idolatrous stupid nations are the descendants of Ham. Their color is due, not to the rays of the sun, but to the dark source whence those degraded races sprang.¹⁸⁹

In the light of the above position, the nineteenth century American author and Jesuit clergyman Brother Joseph Mobberly, who was one of the main brains behind the Jesuits slave-holding plantations in Maryland, believed that Ham was the progenitor of Black Africans. In his work "Slavery or Cham," he adopted the Augustinian origin of slavery as a punishment for sin and believed that Black Africans must have a special type of original sin, which in his view, applied only to them by reason of their being the progeny of a wicked ancestor - Ham. In his conviction, he asserted that this curse of Ham "brought all Africans not only under an everlasting curse of slavery but also under a perpetual curse of black skin color."¹⁹⁰ He interpreted the sin of Ham to be something so grievous that God had to punish him and his descendants with the darkening of their skin-color. This view was expressed when he wrote: "Ham's sin was so heinous and led to the Lord's decision to color the descendants of Cham black, the darkest possible color, as a perpetual sign of their need to repent of what their ancestor had done to social hierarchy."¹⁹¹ Continuing, he believed that the skin-color of Black Africans as a mark of their accursed nature, will never be changed either by climate or any period of time, only God knows when this skin color will ever be changed. This point is made vividly when he remarked that: "God responded to the sin of Cham with a mark, which no length of ages, no change of climate, no change of food or treatment, and no alteration of circumstances can ever efface. Nothing but their intercourse with Whites can change the colour of their skin...God alone can tell when this mark of reprobation is to cease."¹⁹²

And his fellow Jesuits and other European religious Orders, who were working on the African Continent as missionaries were convinced as he was that Black Africans were labouring under a serious divine curse and as such were in a dire need of a special kind of redemption, which permeated their whole being and impaired their development at any given period in time. This conviction became an established ecclesiastical tradition among Western Christians such that it exerted much influence upon the European missionaries sent to Africa and dominated their thoughts and views about Black Africans up to the period of the convocation of the first Vatican Council by pope Pius IX (born 1792, papacy 1846-1878) on June 29, 1868. This conviction that Black Africans

¹⁸⁹ Anne Catherine Emmerich, *Revelations of Anne Catherine Emmerich*, in: <http://cathinfo.com>, visited on November 21, 2012.

¹⁹⁰ Mobberly S.J, "Slavery or Cham," p. 1, (BJMSJP), Special Collections Division.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 42-45, (BJMSJP). Cf. Murphy, *Jesuit Slaveholding in Maryland*, p. 150.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, pp. 41-42 & 44. Cf. Murphy, *Jesuit Slaveholding in Maryland 1717-1838*, p. 153.

needed an urgent and a special kind of redemption became very pronounced at this Council and received full acclamation of the entire Council fathers seated at the Vatican Basilica. This special attention given to this curse was raised when some of the European missionary bishops working in the different parts of Black Africa worried by this myth of a cursed race were prompted to ask the pope and the Council fathers gathered at the plenary section of this Council in 1870 to pray for the wretched Ethiopians so that they might be released from the divine curse placed upon them by the patriarch Noah.

This belief in the need for a special redemption of Black Africans from the curse of Noah was not only felt by the European missionary bishops working in Black Africa but also it was a phenomenon that was well known among the European Christians. It spread throughout the Western Christendom such that in 1895, a Galician born Brazilian painter Modesto Broccos (1852-1936) had to make a representation of this need to uplift Black Africans from the curse of Noah in this work of art seen herein. In this Painting titled “A Redenção de Cã” (The Redemption of Ham)¹⁹³ which won him the first Gold medal at the Brazilian fine arts exposition that took place in 1895, Broccos presented an aged Negro grandmother, who had intercourse with a white Portuguese man. Their affairs brought forth a mulatta daughter. In turn, her mulatta daughter had an affair with another young Portuguese man and they bore a young son with white complexion. The Negro Grandmother, upon seeing this young white grandson lifted up her hands in praise of God for removing the black skin-color from her generation which was stained by the curse placed on her Negro race by Noah. This painting is a depiction of the mentality prevalent in the Western Christendom of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, which conceived the white color as a sign of superiority over the black color. It fulfilled the wish of the Jesuit Brother Joseph Mobberly, who as we saw above held the view that the blackness of the Black Africans remains immutable and could only be changed by having sexual intercourse with people from the white race.

However, this need for an extraordinary redemption of the Black African race depicted above and in the request made to pope Pius IX by the white missionary bishops working in Black Africa found its fulfilment in 1873, when the pope himself, caught in the web of this myth of Black Africans as an accursed race of Ham agreed to release the Black Africans from the supposed divine curse placed on them by Noah. And to do this, pope Pius IX issued a decree through the Office of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on October 2, 1873 with which he appealed to the Christian Europe and America to pray for

¹⁹³ This Painting of Modesto Broccos is preserved at the Museum de Belas Artes in Rio Janeiro in Brazil. See the source of this Painting at: <http://www.itaucultural.org.br/apli>, visited on December 3, 2012.

the removal of this curse on Black Africans. This decree was in form of a prayer formulated by the aforesaid Office and approved by the pope himself for the release of the supposed “curse” placed on Black Africans. And to allure 'Prayer warriors' to this prayer, the pope attached an indulgence for three hundred days to this prayer as a reward for those who will say this prayer so as to attract the same Western Christians who placed this supposed curse on Black Africans to pray for the wretched Ethiopians in the interiors of Africa so that God might release them at length from the curse of Ham. The invitational antiphon to this prayer of indulgence reads as follows: “Let us pray for the most wretched Ethiopians in Central Africa, that Almighty God may at length remove the curse of Cham from their hearts, and grant them the blessing to be found only in Jesus Christ, our God and Lord.”¹⁹⁴ In the main body of this prayer, pope Pius IX referred to the Black Africans unequivocally as “*misserrimis Africae interioris animabus*” (the most wretched of souls living in the interiors of Africa) and asked his Christian faithful to pray for their integration into the fold of the Church as a sign of their special redemption from this curse in the following manner:

Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of the entire human race, who already rules from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, open propitiously thy most sacred heart also to the most wretched of souls living in the interiors of Africa, who are still dwelling in the darkness and the shadow of death, so that, through the intercession of the most pious Virgin Mary, thy immaculate mother, and of her most glorious spouse, St. Joseph, the Ethiopians, having abandoned their idols, may prostrate themselves before thee, and be joined to thy Holy Church. Who lives and reigns... etc.¹⁹⁵

What all this shows is that if the pope as the head of the Catholic Church could throw his heavy weight behind this myth of a cursed race, it then implies that all the views and utterances made above concerning this subject by the various Christian writers and sources are but mere re-statement of the formidable and accepted teaching of the Catholic Church that believed in the fact that Black

¹⁹⁴ Pope Pius IX, “Prayer for the Conversion of Africa,” Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, Oct. 2, 1873, in: *The Raccolta*, pp. 413-415. The Latin version of this invitational antiphon reads as follows: “*Oremus et pro miserimis Africae Centralis populis Aethiopum, ut Deus omnipotens tandem aliquando auferat maledictionem Chami a cordibus eorum, detque illis benedictionem, unice in Jesu Christo, Deo et Domino nostro consequendam.*” See also, Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 20.

¹⁹⁵ Pope Pius IX, *Prayer for the Conversion of Africa*, *Ibid.* This reads in Latin thus: “*Domine Jesu Christi, unicus salvator universi generis humani, qui jam dominaris a mari usque ad mare, et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrarum: aperi propitius sacratissimum cor tuum etiam misserrimis Africae interioris animabus, quae adhuc in tenebris et umbra mortis sedent; ut intercedente piissima virgine Maria matre tua immaculata, ejusque sponso gloriosissimo beato Joseph, relictis idolis, coram te procidant Aethiopes, et Ecclesiae tuae sanctae aggregentur. Qui vivit et regnat... etc.*”

Africans based on their skin-color are an accursed race of Ham. This approval coming from the highest teaching Office of the Catholic Church points to the deep rootedness and the popularity of this theory in the Christianity of this period of the Church in the society. This implies that what began as a myth among the early Jewish rabbinic apocryphal writers which was devoid of any attachment to, or connection with Black Africans has now been given a reality-status by the Catholic Church and formed part of her core teachings and conception of the Black African race. With this observation made, let us at this juncture consider how the enslavement suffered by Black Africans during the Transatlantic slavery was considered as a just punishment for Black Africans as the presumed progeny of the accursed Ham.

4.5 The Curse of Ham as Justification for Enslaving Black Africans

The consideration made above dwelt mainly on the interpretation of the dark skin-color of Black Africans as a mark of the fulfilment of the curse of Ham placed over them. This was only but an aspect of the effect of this curse on Black Africans. The second effect of this curse in the writings of medieval and modern proslavery authors is the enslavement of Black Africans. We recall that one of the most difficult issues in the human society with which the early Christian theologians and fathers of the Church had to grapple with and for which they endeavoured to proffer an answer for its ravaging existence in the society of men was the issue of the whereabouts of class distinction and slavery among men. To solve this difficult problem, the theory of the curse of Ham was considered as a point of focus and as the very pipe-line through which the waters of slavery and the origin of class-distinction was transported into the world of the human mind. The works of many early Church fathers and other medieval Christian sources interpreted this curse of Ham in connection with race and slavery. The early Church fathers, who were greatly influenced by the works of the Alexandrian Jewish exegete Philo as discussed above, followed the tradition laid down by him while discussing the subject of Ham and his curse. Influenced by this tradition therefore, Origen (185-254 AD) was quick enough to locate the cause of slavery in the curse of Ham and connected the Egyptians with the curse of Ham as Ham's descendants. For him, the enslavement of the Egyptian people was legislated by the Divine Laws as a bondage for life in comparison with that of the Hebrew people whose enslavement in accordance with the Divine Laws shall not exceed a period of seven years. This position was clearly made when he commented as follows: "But for the Egyptians,

nothing like this is proposed concerning the Egyptians. They should be kept in a perpetual bondage.”¹⁹⁶

St. Ambrose of Milan (*330, bishopric 374-397) taught that it was through the curse of Noah that actual slavery was introduced into the human society. In his *Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul*, he maintained that: “Slavery is temporary for those who believe and trust in Christ. But sin brings to pass servitude, just as Noah's son Ham's sinfulness and imprudent behaviour was the cause of servitude.”¹⁹⁷ For him still, Ham deserved the punishment meted out to him by his father. Commenting on this, he said:

Ham was the paradigmatic representatives of people who mock those whom they rightfully owe reverence. As Noah's son, Ham owed his father reverence. Instead he mocked his father, he laughed at him and exposed his father to his brothers. Such irreverence and the dishonourable behaviour merits severe punishment: “servitude moreover comes from such sin.” Thus, Noah's son Ham was the first to merit receiving the title slave.¹⁹⁸

For St. Basil of Caesarea (330-379), actual slavery came into the world as a result of the sin of Ham. For him, it was due to lack of wisdom in Ham that punishment with slavery was pronounced over him and his progeny. He maintained that the effect of this pronouncement was that Ham became very unteachable and was condemned to slavery together with his descendants.¹⁹⁹ In the same vein, St. John Chrysostom (347-407) connected this curse of Ham with his enslavement. His position on this curse of Ham is contained in his 28th Homily on the Book of Genesis where he maintained that: “Ham indulged himself in incontinence at a time, when the world was in the grip of such awful distress and disaster and gave himself up to intercourse. Because of his incontinence, his son Canaan received the curse.”²⁰⁰ In his own view, St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), who taught that slavery has its origin in sin maintained that it was a follow-up of the drunkenness of Noah and the

¹⁹⁶ Origen, *Homilia in Genesim XVI*,1 (PG 12, 247). Cf. *The Fathers of the Church*, Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ St. Ambrose of Milan, *Epist. VII*, (CSEL 82,1; 45-46). See also (PL 17, 221).

¹⁹⁸ St. Ambrose of Milan, *Commentarii in Pauli Epistolas*, 11, 248 (PL 17, 409). English version in: Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era*, p. 32. This identification of sin with slavery made by St Ambrose here will be a dominant feature in the position of other theologians and Church fathers that followed after him on the issue of the cause of servitude in the human society.

¹⁹⁹ St. Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. De Ieiunio 16* (PG 31, 172). Other relevant citations on the position of St. Basil on the Curse of Ham have been made in chapter one of this Section II.

²⁰⁰ John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Genesim*, 28 (PG 53, 251-259). English version in: Hill, 3 Vols, p. 191. Cf. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in Early Modern Era*, p. 26.

misconduct of his son Ham.²⁰¹ And in this sin of Ham, St. Augustine sees actual slavery as a penalty for a corrupted human nature (*natura vitata*).²⁰²

For the patriarch Eutychius (877-940), who was the Greek orthodox patriarch of Alexandria, Ham's curse came into fulfilment in his being reduced to the servant status alongside with his descendants. He identified both Egyptians and Ethiopians as descendants of Ham and became the first Church leader to have included the Negroes as descendants of Ham upon whom the punishment with enslavement fell on their progenitor. These descendants of Ham in his opinion are the so-called barbarians. While interpreting this curse he said: "Cursed be Ham, and may he be servant of his brothers...He himself and his descendants, who are the Egyptians, the Negroes, the Ethiopians, and it is said the Barbari."²⁰³ This manner of interpretation of the curse of Ham and using it to link slavery and blackness of skin with those living in the regions of Africa became an established position in the thoughts and writings of Western Christian writers throughout the first millennium of the existence of the Christian Church.

In 1100, this kind of interpretation surfaced again in the writings of a very popular twelfth century theologian and monk Honorius Augustodunensis (+1151). Influenced by the theological writings of St. Ambrose of Milan and St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), he developed the idea of a world divided into three races of men namely: the freemen, the knights or soldiers and the slaves. For him, the freemen are the children of Shem, knights or the nobles are the children of Japhet, and the slaves are the children of Ham. This classification of humanity into three is contained in his famous work "Imago Mundi." In this theory, he identified the three sons of Noah as the forefathers of all men and allotted to each of them a status in history in accordance with the blessings and the curse contained in Genesis (9:25-26). In this treatise, Honorius wrote in Latin as follows: "Huius tempore divisum est genus humanum in tria: in Liberos, in Milites et in Servos. Liberi de Sem, Milites de Japhet, Servi de Cham (Ham)."²⁰⁴ To illustrate the popularity of this division of

²⁰¹ St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, 15 (CSEL 40, 2; 399-400). English version in: Dods, *The City of God*, Book XIX, 15, p. 693. All necessary citations to back up St. Augustine's position on actual slavery as a consequence of sin have been given in the consideration of his view on slavery in general in chapter one, Section II above.

²⁰² St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, 15 (CSEL 40, 2; 400).

²⁰³ Patriarch Eutychius of Alexandria, in: Pococke's translation of the *Annales*, Vol. III, 917B, sec. 41-43, (1658-59).

²⁰⁴ Augustodunensis, *Imago Mundi*, (PL 172, 166). This Latin citation reads in English as follows: "This time is divided into three kinds of humans: in the freeborn, the knights and in the slaves. The freeborn are from Shem, the knights are from Japhet, and the slaves are from Ham." For further readings on this work, see the following works: Cratander, ed. *Imago Mundi*, in: D. Honorii Augustodunensis *Presbyteri Libri Septem*, p. 118; Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era*, p. 32; Haynes, *Noah's Curse*, p. 30.

humanity into races among the Western Christians of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, this tripartite division of races was even given a place of importance in some of the magnificent Cathedrals in Europe. For instance, the historian and author Werner Solors pointed out that this tripartite division of races was cast on the stained window-glass of the magnificent edifice of Chartres Cathedral of Notre-Dame (built about 1145) in Paris. In this work of arts, the descendants of Shem were designated as those who pray (priesthood), those who fight (kighthood) as the sons of Japhet, and those who work and serve others (serfs or slaves) as descendants of Ham.²⁰⁵

This same depiction of the descendants of Ham in this classification of races found expression once again in the work of an undisclosed author written in 1160 in Germany with the authorisation of the Duke of Saxon and Bavaria Heinrich der Löwe (*1129, Duke 1142-1180, +1195). This work, which was known with the title of "Lucidarius" (Lumination) was written in form of a question and answer, whereby the teacher asked his pupils such questions like: Who was the first king after the flood? The teacher gave as reply: "Melchizedek" and gave the reason for this, which reads: "That the people were divided into three groups: from Sem came the freemen, from Japheth came the knights, from Cham the serfs."²⁰⁶

From the time of the publication of these two works *Imago Mundi* and *Lucidarius* onwards, the theory of a tripartite classification of mankind spread throughout the Christian Europe in the late Middle Ages portraying Ham and his descendants as those under the curse of slavery as punishment for the sins of their forefather Ham. This fact is corroborated with the employment of this classification by Presbyter Petrus who lived in the thirteenth century France and reconstructed this tripartite division of mankind in Latin in the following manner: "Ex hiis tribus hominum tres status fuerunt. Ex Cham, servi, libri de Sem exierunt. Et ex Iaphet milites primi prodierunt. Ex tunc plures homines regnare ceperunt."²⁰⁷ Following from this, the German born medieval writer Hugo von Trimberg (1230-1313) read the Genesis account of the curse of Noah with the same lens and considered the ignoble position of the descendants of Ham as an after effect of the curse of Noah on Ham.

²⁰⁵ Solors, *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both*, p. 85. Cf. Haynes, *Noah's Curse*, p. 30.

²⁰⁶ It reads in the old German language thus: "Die leut geteilet in dry teil, von Sem kament fryen, von Japhet kament die ritter, von Cham die eygent leut." *Ein Liepliche Hystory von de Hochgelernten Meister Lucidario*, Strasburg 1514, A5v-A6r, in: Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in Early Modern Era*, p. 35.

²⁰⁷ Petrus the Presbyter, in: Rener, ed. *Petro Presbyteri Carmina: Text und Kommentar*, Bd. 13, 123, Fl. 48v. See also, Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in Early Modern Era*, p. 37. This citation reads in English thus: "From these three men came the three status. From Ham, the slaves, from Shem came the freemen. And from Japhet came forth the first knights. From that time, they captured many men to govern."

According to him: "The nobility typically ascribed to Shem's progeny stemmed from neither wealth nor descent, but from their ancestor's virtuous action. Conversely, if Ham had remained uncorrupted, his descendants would not have been condemned to servitude."²⁰⁸

From all these Christian sources, there is a clear-cut connection made with the curse of Ham and the enslavement of his descendants. Ham and his descendants were punished with slavery and dispersed throughout the whole world. The import of these sources in connection with the Transatlantic slavery is that these Christian sources provided a fertile ground for the pro-slavery Christian authors in the modern era upon which they laid their arguments for the justification of the enslavement of Black Africans. And this happened at the very beginning of the European discovery and conquest of the West African Atlantic Coast which went hand in hand with the capturing and enslavement of the natives of this region and using them as slaves in the works at the plantations in Europe. This fact has been approved by many historians and scholars in the modern period. For instance, the historian Edith Sanders maintained in her work titled "The Hamitic Hypothesis" that the identification of Black Africans as descendants of Ham "gained currency in the sixteenth century."²⁰⁹ According to her, from this point onward: "It persisted throughout the eighteenth century and served as a rational for slavery, using biblical interpretations in support of its tenets. The image of the Negro deteriorated in direct proportion to the growth of the importance of slavery."²¹⁰

At the beginning of the Portuguese contact with the Black Africans, the physiognomic traits such as the blackness of skin-color, curly hairs, thick lips, protruding male sexual organ, contours of the face etc. which were read into this curse of Noah and associated with the descendants of the accursed Ham by the Jewish rabbinic as well as the early and late medieval Christian writers were fully accepted and adopted beyond every reasonable doubts as proofs of the fact that these Black African natives were the accursed race of Ham, who were designated by God to be used as slaves by the white race. It is no coincidence therefore, when a nineteenth century American born pro-slavery author J. J. Flournoy once commented in relation to the myth of a cursed race that: "The Blacks were originally designed to vassalage by the patriarch Noah."²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Hugo von Trimberg, in: Haynes, *Noah's Curse*, p. 31. Cf. Benson, *The Larned and the Lewed*, p. 228.

²⁰⁹ Edith R. Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis, Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective," in: *Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1969), pp. 521-532.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ John J. Flournoy, *A Reply to a Pamphlet*, Athens 1838, p. 16. This Pamphlet has been reprinted in: Philips B. Ulrich, *A Documentary History of American Industrial Society: Plantation and Frontier*, Vol. 2, Cleveland 1910, pp. 360-361.

It was based on the full acceptance of this myth of an accursed race of Ham as a historical truth among Western Christians of the 15th century that the famous Portuguese chronicler Gomes Eannes de Azurara (1410-1474) considered the first set of Black Africans, who were forcefully brought into Portugal as slaves in 1441, to have been descended from the accursed race of Ham. While recording the chronicle of their capture and arrival in Portugal in 1441, Azurara justified their capture and enslavement by making reference to the curse of enslavement placed on them by Noah. In making this justification, he strongly relied on the knowledge he got from the works of a Spanish clergyman, historian and archbishop of Toledo, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (1170-1247) and the work of the first century Jewish historian Josephus Flavius and other authors cited by him as his authoritative sources. Strengthened by these authorities and sources, he wrote in his chronicles as follows:

The servitude of non-Muslim Moors (West Africans) resulted from the curse, which, after the Deluge, Noah laid upon his son Ham, cursing him in this way: “that his race should be subject to all the other races of the world. And from his race these Blacks are descended,” as wrote the Archbishop Don Roderick of Toledo and Josephus in his Book on the Antiquities of the Jews, and Walter, with other authors who have spoken of the generations of Noah from the time of his going out of the Ark.²¹²

And for him still, Black Africans being an accursed descendants of Ham are “sinful and bestial and as such are a servile race.”²¹³ With this explanation given by Azurara to his master Prince Henry the Navigator and all his conquistadors, Azurara justified the enslavement of Black Africans based on this curse and thereby quietened the conscience of his countrymen concerning the evil of enslaving their fellow humans on the altar of the curse placed on Ham and his descendants by the patriarch Noah. And by so doing, he provided the theological basis for the Portuguese early capturing and enslavement of the Black Africans in the fifteenth century. This justification made by Azurara herein not only provided the green light for all the future European and American pro-slavery authors, travellers, sailors and entrepreneurs that engaged themselves in the slave-driving and capturing of defenceless Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade, but also positioned for them this enslavement at the centre-stage of an institution believed to have been approved and sanctioned by God.

²¹² Azurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, Vol. 1, chpt. XVI, P. 77, trans. Beazley, p. 54. Cf. Sollors, *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both*, p. 93; Haynes, *Noah's Curse*, p. 34; Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, pp. 38-39.

²¹³ Azurara, *Cronica de Guine*, Cap. XXVI, in: Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 39.

The historian and author Thomas Virgil Peterson was therefore right, when he said that the argument for the Black African enslavement by the Western world rested heavily on this theory of the curse of Ham. According to him: “No story was more symbolically persuasive in resolving certain tensions between white Southerner's racial values and their most fundamental religious beliefs than was the myth of Ham.”²¹⁴ In his judgement, the proponents of slavery made the myth of the curse of Ham as an escape route for their inhuman participation in the evil of the slave trade. They did not only “identify Ham as Black, but official Church reports promoting white missionary activity among Blacks referred to the Negro²¹⁵ as descended from Ham.”²¹⁶ Going a step further, Peterson maintained that: “Southern versions of the Ham myth placed the institution of slavery squarely within the context of divine purpose.”²¹⁷

This placement of the enslavement of Black Africans within the context of divine purpose was reflected in all the writings of the pro-slavery authors of the medieval and modern Christianity especially in the preaching and writings of the clergymen in both Catholic and Protestant Churches. For instance, a clergyman from Mississippi and a strong pro-slavery proponent, James A. Sloan (1761-1839) maintained that just like the entire humanity was punished by the sin of Adam so also was the Black African race condemned to enslavement as a result of the sin of Ham. In his view: “All mankind suffers by God's decree, submitting to a life of toil, misery, hardship, disease and death on account of the sin of Adam, the father of humanity, women must suffer in childbirth and be ruled by their husbands because of Eve's sin, So too, the Black African race was doomed to servitude by the sin of their progenitor Ham.”²¹⁸ Continuing, Sloan outlined certain words which pinpointed the condition and place of the Negroes in the world and used them as a proof of the fact that Black Africans are justly enslaved in America. This is made clearer when he stated: “Black,

²¹⁴ Peterson, *Ham and Japhet*, p. 5.

²¹⁵ The term “Negro” is both Spanish and Portuguese word for black and comes from Latin “niger.” In its Greek usage, it comes from the word “necro”-meaning “dead.” It was from this word that the noun Necromancy- worship of the dead originated. When the Greeks used the word “necro” to refer to Africans, it means a race of dead people with a dead history. Historically, the word “Negro” has been associated with the Atlantic Slave Trade which began around 1441. It was a descriptive term assigned by Prince Henry the Navigator in 1442 which was used to refer to slaves from West African Atlantic Coast. Between 1800 and the first half of the 20th century, it became a proper term used for slaves. In this period of time, the 18th century Anthropologists discovered a related term to Negro, the so called “Negroid,” which they used to refer to a race of people from Africa. See, www.raceandhistory.com/negro.htm, visited on November 11, 2013. See also www.answers.com/topic/negro.htm, visited on November 12, 2012.

²¹⁶ Peterson, *Ham and Japhet*, p. 45.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ Sloan, *The Great Question Answered*, p. 68. See also, Peterson, *Ham and Japhet*, p. 42.

restrained, despised, bowed down, are the words used to express the condition and place of Ham's children. Bearing the mark of degradation on their skin.”²¹⁹

And using this curse and its effect on Black Africans as a popular truth among Catholics of his days, the first Roman Catholic bishop of Charleston in the United States of America, bishop John England (1786-1842) was distinct enough to explain in one of his letters to the American Secretary of State Hon. John Forsyth (1780-1841) that the Black Africans are lawfully slaves in America as a result of the sin committed by their forefather Ham. In his explanation, John England stated without mincing words as follows: “Since every Catholic must accept Adam's fall as an essential ingredient in the human condition, he should likewise believe that it certainly was not then against the divine law for Shem and Japheth to use the services of the Black race, since their progenitor had been cursed by God for his sinful conduct.”²²⁰ Maintaining this as a generally accepted Christian Tradition, a Virginian born clergyman, theologian and president of Mercer University of Georgia, John Leadley Dagg (1794-1884) argued in the following manner: “Just as the sons of Adam are bound to submit patiently to the curse which requires them to earn their bread in the sweat of their face, so the sons of Ham are bound to submit patiently to the curse which has doomed them to bondage.”²²¹

His fellow American Baptist Church theologian and cleric from Culpepper County in Virginia, Thornton Stringfellow (1788-1869), who was an arch pro-slavery proponent, defended in 1841 the scriptural support of the enslavement of Black Africans in America based on the myth of the accursed race of Ham. In his defence of this enslavement he argued as follows: “The passage of Gen. 9:18-27 is the first recorded language which ever was uttered in relation to slavery to show that the institution was decreed by God. Be this as it may, God decreed slavery and shows in that decree, tokens of goodwill to the master.”²²² By arguing in this manner, he supported the idea that slavery is a divine act sanctioned by God and that Black Africans suffering as slaves in America are justly fulfilling a divine decree for the development of the world. In his own words, he affirmed that: “Ham's enslavement to Japheth in America accorded with God's will for the advancement of civilization.”²²³

²¹⁹ Ibid. For further details on the position of Sloan on this subject, see, pp. 78-80 of his cited work.

²²⁰ Bishop John England, “Letters to the Hon. John Forsyth on the Subject of Domestic Slavery,” *The Works*, ed. Ignatius A. Reynolds, 5 Vols. p. 119.

²²¹ Dagg, *The Elements of Moral Science*, p. 344.

²²² Stringfellow, *Scriptural and Statistical Views in favour of Slavery*, pp. 8-9. Cf. Peterson, *Ham and Japheth*, p. 6.

²²³ Ibid.

On the political scene, the same argument as the above also featured in the position, public debates and speeches of politicians and other men and women of substance in the American society and throughout the Western Christendom. For these men and women, Black Africans were justly enslaved in America in accordance to the will of God as direct descendants of Ham. The type of popularity given to this curse as a justification for the enslavement of Black Africans among American politicians made it to be a household knowledge among the American folk. For instance, in 1818, Senator William Smith (1762-1840) of South Carolina, who was a staunch supporter of slavery held the view that slavery is a positive good and necessary for the maintenance of order in the American society. With this background, he used the myth of the cursed race of Ham to justify the enslavement of Black Africans in America. This justification was made in one of his speeches, whereby he paraded this curse of Ham as an indubitable truth to convince his colleagues at the Senate House to pass a Bill to recover runaway Black African slaves in South Carolina. In his bid to drive his point home, Senator Smith passionately told his fellow Senators that: "Ham sinned against his God and against his father, for which Noah, the inspired patriarch cursed Canaan, the son of Ham... This very African race are the descendants of Canaan, and have been the slaves of various nations and are still expiating in bondage the curse upon themselves and their progenitors."²²⁴

This same argument was employed by the famous Governor of Georgia and vice President of the Confederate States of America during the American Civil war, Alexander Hamilton Stephens (1812-1883) to defend the enslavement of Black Africans in the American South. This defence was contained in a speech he made before a huge crowd of people in Savannah in 1861 popularly known among historians as "The Corner Stone Speech." In this speech, Stephens declared:

The Corner stone of the newly formed Confederacy was the constitution's conformity to both the laws of nature and the will of God revealed in the Bible (Gen. IX: 25-27). Therefore, while all White men "however high or low, rich or poor, are equal in the eye of the Law," the proper status of the Negro among us is subordination to White rule. He, by nature or by the curse against Canaan is fitted for that condition of slavery, which he occupies in our system. It is indeed in conformity with the Ordinance of the Creator that slavery is the natural and normal condition of the Black race.²²⁵

²²⁴ Senator Smith, Speech on the Floors of the American Senate in 1818, in: Clifford E. Holland, *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated Against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institution and Existence of Slavery among them*, Charleston 1822, p. 41.

²²⁵ Stephens, Speech Known as "The Corner Stone Speech," Delivered on March 21, 1861, p. 721.

This declaration made by Stephens in his capacity as the vice President of the Southern Confederacy did not only legally justify the enslavement of Black Africans in the American South but also made it a matter of necessity that Black Africans should never enjoy any equality with the white men in the newly formed Confederacy and ipso facto, must remain perpetually as slaves in America. This position motivated the famous Judge of Georgia, politician and a Confederate official, Justice Thomas R. R. Cobb (1823-1862) who was the most significant pro-slavery legal luminary in the South to use his wealth of knowledge in defence of slavery. For him, slavery in America is not an evil but a positive good and a necessary prerequisite for the preservation of the liberty of the American people. In his bid to defend the enslavement of Black Africans in America, Cobb connected the curse of Ham with the enslavement of Black Africans and wrote in 1858 that: “It was the opinion of many Southerners that the curse of Ham is now being executed upon his descendants in the enslavement of the Negro race.”²²⁶ And lending credence to this, a professor of Church history at Mercerburg Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania Phillip Schaff affirmed that: “The curse has affected nearly the whole posterity of Ham... It is simply a fact which no one can deny that the Negro to this day is a servant of servants in our own midst.”²²⁷

In the same light, the New-York American born pro-slavery 'heavy weight' Josiah Priest (1788-1851), who was famous for his pseudo-historical and racist ideological literature on the subject of the enslavement of Black Africans, defended this enslavement as a just slavery that was founded upon divine decree from which Black Africans could not have any means of escape as long as its effect was concerned. Upholding this view, he said: “In the curse of Noah, which was by the authority of the same God, there was no condition at all, it was a direct curse on Blacks, without remedy, palliation or chance of escape.”²²⁸ Continuing, he justified this enslavement by maintaining that it was not sinful at all to keep Black Africans into servitude as slaves in America. In the light of this, he wrote: “Thus, we believe that sufficient evidence appears from the scriptures of the judicial appointment of that people to servitude. In view of this, the inquiry naturally arises here, whether it is a sin to enslave a Negro. To this we are compelled even against our sympathies and preconceived opinions arising out of our education to answer no: it is no sin to enslave a Negro.”²²⁹

With all these opinions and statements made by both the Churchmen, politicians and pro-slavery writers, one is no more left in doubt to believe that

²²⁶ Cobb, *Slavery and the Civil Law*, pp. 35-36. Cf. Peterson, *Ham and Japhet*, p. 46.

²²⁷ Schaff, *Slavery and the Bible*, p. 6.

²²⁸ Priest, *Bible Defence of Slavery*, p. 101.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

the myth of the accursed race of Ham played an unimaginable role in the enslavement of Black Africans in the entire Western Christendom. This positioning of the enslavement of Black Africans by these Churchmen and politicians as a fulfilment of a divinely willed purpose made it to serve as a “holy creed” and a travelling companion in the hands of the slave holders with which they justified their inhuman actions against the Black African race. Attesting to this fact, one of the leading Vanguard of the American Abolitionist Movement during its formative years in 1830, Theodore Weld (1803-1895) affirmed that as far as the subject of Black African enslavement is concerned: “The prophecy of Noah became the vade mecum of slave holders, and they never venture abroad without it, it is a pocket-piece for sudden occasion, a keepsake to dote over, a charm to spell-bind opposition, and a magnet to draw around their standard whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie.”²³⁰ Thomas Peterson was therefore right, when he upheld that: “There can be no denying the central role this curse played in sustaining the slave system. It was the cornerstone for the justification of Black slavery, the major argument in the pro-slavery arsenal of biblical texts, certainly among the most popular defenses of slavery, if not the most popular.”²³¹ Under the weight of this curse, Black Africans were made the scapegoat and the black sheep for the Western Christianity to expiate the sin of Ham for the entire mankind. But the question that keeps up troubling my mind in the whole discussion made on this myth of a cursed race of Ham in the modern time is: Why did this myth of an accursed race escape the sharp razors of the human reason operative at the period of Enlightenment in both Europe and America? We recall that the period during which this myth of the cursed race of Ham was circulating among the Western Christians included the great period of Enlightenment which could be properly termed “The Golden Age” of reason in both Europe and America. Everyone knows that the Enlightenment period, which began in 1650 and spanned throughout the whole of the seventeenth century and entered into the earliest phase of the eighteenth century was a period of a cultural movement of intellectuals involving powerful philosophers, scholars and scientists from Europe such as Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), John Locke (1632-1704), Isaac Newton (1643-1727), Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), Voltaire (1694-1778), Charles Montesquieu (1689-1755) and a host of others, whose main goal was to use the tool of human reason to question traditionally held beliefs and practices that held people under their irrational grips so as to liberate humanity from such beliefs and practices. Why did this very theory escape the thoughtful spheres of these great thinkers so as to be accepted by the Officials of the Christian religion? Why did they allow it to be carried along

²³⁰ Weld, *The Bible Against Slavery*, p. 46.

²³¹ Peterson, *Ham and Japhet*, p. 47; Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 175.

with the movement of space and time and was neither challenged nor corrected just like some other medieval beliefs and practices of this period in Europe were challenged and corrected? Rather than doing this, it is unfortunate to observe herein that some of these European great minds and thinkers were involved not only in the acceptance of this myth of an accursed race of Ham but also in becoming great champions of this myth that propagated and nurtured it through the channel of their pseudo-scientific knowledge and racist ideology. The dangerous role which such a racist ideology played in the justification of the enslavement of Black Africans is the major concern of the next chapter of this work.

5. Racial Justification for the Enslavement of Black Africans

5.1 Brief Introduction

The failure of the Enlightenment European powerful minds and thinkers to call the myth of Black Africa as an accursed race of Ham into question led to the furtherance of the use of this myth to denigrate the image of Black Africans in the modern times. This time around, the popularity of this myth in the Western Christendom led it to metamorphose into a racist ideology witnessed during the Transatlantic slavery, whose main objective was to promote a further degradation of the image of Black Africans through the tool of pseudo-scientific knowledge. This manner of thought, which is a legacy laid down by medieval Christianity became a rich product that was harvested in the modern times by the racist authors, who capitalized on this foundation and used it as an arsenal for their racial attitude towards the Black African race. The result of all this, is that the image of the Black man was dealt a serious blow which led it to suffer a dwindling setback in history. He was termed a barbarous race, a beast, a sub-human being, who descended from the accursed race of Ham, without history or any record of ingenuity, good for nothing, who can only be useful to the rest of mankind if and only if, he is kept in chains of perpetual slavery to serve as a raw material for the development of the human society.

This last chapter of this section of our work, dedicates itself to the task of exposing the dangerous role which racism played in the hands of pro-slavery Western Christian writers in the enslavement of Black Africans. It is an attempt made to dig out the remarks and hypotheses developed by the opinion makers and shapers of the Western Christian society, whose utterances and position on the subject of the Black African enslavement served as the powerhouse that provided the energy that sustained the Transatlantic slave trade throughout its long duration.

5.2 Denial of the Humanity of the Black Man

Among all the identifiable characteristic factors that contributed to the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans, racism is the most important and the most dangerous trait that distinguished this slave trade from other slave trades recorded in the history of man. The distinctive character of this slave trade is the fact that among all the races of the world, the Black African race was the only race that was singled out by the enslaving Christian nations of Europe and America to serve as victims of this obnoxious trade on human beings. The first dangerous goal of the evil of racism was to dig a bottomless pit for the Black man, where he was buried for a long time and from which it has proved an uphill task for him to rise up. This goal was achieved through a racial denial of the humanity of the Black man by some Western naturalists, anthropologists, ethnologists, philosophers, theologians etc. Such denial of the humanity of the Black man which was based on his black skin-color, was an attempt made by the Western pseudo-scientists to deny the Black race of any equality with the White race which the two races have in the common parenthood shared by all men and women in Adam and Eve irrespective of color, race and religion. In their effort to delineate the Black man from the human family, they fabricated an ideological concept popularly known among scholars as “Polygenesis” in contradistinction to Monogenesis. This theory teaches that the entire humanity did not originate from a common parenthood in Adam and Eve, but that humanity sprang up from several lines of descent. In contradistinction to the creation account of Genesis chapter two, which deals on the creation of Adam and Eve as the first man and woman that ever lived on earth, Polygenesis purported to say that there were other humans that pre-existed Adam. This is why it is sometimes called the theory of “Pre-Adamism.” The racist protagonists of this theory used it to portray that certain races of human beings especially the Black African race did not originate from Adam and Eve and maintained that only the White race (Caucasian race) originated from Adam and Eve. For the protagonists of this theory, the Negro race and other races of the world originated from another parenthood.

This theory first came into existence in the tenth century AD but became very popular in the seventeenth century at the height of the enslavement of the Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. It was used at this time as a justification for the enslavement of the victims of this traffic on human beings, who were portrayed in a very bad purview as beasts in human forms.

One of the major protagonists of this dangerous anti-Black ideology was the French born scholar Isaac de la Peyrère, who in 1655 published a work in Latin titled “Prae-adamitae” and used this Pre-Adamitic myth to answer the question of the identity of the wife of Cain with whom he spent his accursed life in the

land of Nod. With the evidence of the existence of the wife of Cain and the city of Nod, he concluded that there were other human beings in existence other than the family of Adam and Eve.

In the period of Enlightenment, this theory served as a tool to challenge the creation account of Genesis 2-4. In the nineteenth century, the advocates of White superiority over Black Africans took it up and used it as a proof of the inferiority of the other races of men to the White race especially the Black African race, whereby it was used to demonstrate that Black Africans are inferior humans or beasts of the field. The dangerous result of this theory is that it was used to justify the enslavement of Black Africans and served as one of the ploys that were used to foster and sustain this evil traffic on human beings.

The Western protagonists of this theory such as professor Alexander Winchell, Thurman, Georges Cuvier, Jeffries Wyman, Charles Carroll, Ellen Bristowe, Buchner Harrison Payne, Josiah Priest et al., began their bid for the denial of the humanity of the Black Africans by employing the tools of comparative anatomy to analyse the skull and other physiological features of the Black Africans with those of the Whites. The result of this inquiry in their opinion was that the skull of the White race (Caucasian) is short and broad, while that of the Black African race is long and narrow. This finding was seen as a mark of the inferiority of the Black African race to the White Caucasian race. This manner of demeaning the dignity of the Black African race found its concrete expressions in the thoughts and writings of the French born zoologist, comparative anatomist, natural scientist and paleontologist, Georges Cuvier (1769-1832). In his work "The Animal Kingdom," which was published in 1817, Cuvier made a physiological comparison between the Black race and the White race. According to his findings:

The Caucasian, to which we ourselves belong is chiefly distinguished by the beautiful form of the head, which approximates to a perfect oval. It is also remarkable for variations in the complexion and colour of the hair. From this variety have sprung the most civilised nations and as such have most generally exercised dominion over the rest of mankind...The Negro race is confined to the south of mount Atlas. Its characters are: black complexion of the lower part of the face and the thickness of the lips. It manifestly approaches to the monkey tribe. The hordes of which this variety is composed have always remained in a state of barbarism.²³²

In the same manner, an American born scientist, anthropologist and comparative anatomist, Professor Jeffries Wyman (1814-1874) denied the common parenthood of both the Black Africans and the White Caucasians

²³² Cuvier, *The Animal Kingdom*, Vol. 1, p. 97.

which the two races of men shared in Adam and Eve. This denial led him to trace the lineage of the Black African race to those of the brute animals. And in his bid to do this, he concluded his investigation in a racial manner by claiming that he has discovered in the Negro race the missing link between human beings (White race) and animals. According to him: "It cannot be denied however wide the separation, that the Negro and Ourang do afford the points where man and brute, when the totality of their organizations is considered most nearly approach each other."²³³

On his own, Buchner Harrison Payne, who was one of the champions and propounders of this dangerous thesis that claims that the Black Africans are not human beings, published a pamphlet in 1867 titled "The Negro, A Descendant of Ham?" which is also known as "Ariel." In this work, Payne sets out to prove that the Negroes do not belong to the human family of Adam and Eve like the other races of men. According to him: "The Negroes are neither descendants of Ham nor human beings. They were pre-Adamic and as such descended from the beast family."²³⁴

And this fact was accepted by the New York born American professor, theistic evolutionist and geologist, Alexander Winchell (1824-1891) who published a tract in 1878 titled "Adamites and Preadamites." In this work, he affirmed that the Black African race is so inferior to the White Caucasian race as to have descended from the same parents. In his aforesaid work, Winchell proved with the help of the skull of the Black man that the Black African possesses a skull that is akin to those of animals especially rams, whose skulls are used for butting. For him still, the skull of the Black man is naturally shaped for carrying burden, an indication of his servile nature. According to him: "The Negro skull is very thick and solid, and is often used for butting, as is the custom of rams. It is flattened on the top, and well adapted for carrying burdens."²³⁵ Going a step further in stating his findings, Winchell affirmed that: "The retreating contour of the chin of the Negro as compared with the European, approximates the Negro to the Chimpanzee and lower mammals."²³⁶ And at the end of his presumed scientific inquiry, he firmly concluded that the inferiority of the Negro race compared with the White Caucasian race is an established fact. According to him: "The inferiority of the Negro is fundamentally structural. I have enumerated the points in his anatomy in which he diverges from the White race, and have indicated that in all these particulars, he approximates the

²³³ Cf. Carroll, *The Negro A Beast*, pp. 90-91.

²³⁴ Payne, *The Negro, What is his Ethnological Status?* p. 9. Cf. Johnson, *The Myth of Ham*, p. 33.

²³⁵ Winchell, *Adamites and Preadamites*, p. 171, in: Carroll, *The Negro A Beast*, pp. 46-47.

²³⁶ Winchell, *Preadamites*, p. 251. Cf. Carroll, *Ibid*, p. 51.

organisms below.”²³⁷ Continuing, Winchell asserted that: “It follows that what the Negro is structurally at the present time, is the best he has ever been. It follows that he has not descended from Adam.”²³⁸

Following this result, Charles Carroll who was a famous American naturalist with an anti-Blacks sentiment, and a great supporter of the myth of Preadamism denied factually that the Black African race ever descended from the human family of Adam and Eve. For him, Black Africans are not human beings but merely beasts of the field. In 1900, he published his pseudo-scientific work titled “The Negro, A Beast Or In the Image of God,” wherein he located the line of descent of the Negro in the land animals especially in the ape family and identified him as a beast. According to him: “The Negro who has not descended from Adam, and is consequently not of the flesh of men, belongs to one of the other three “kinds of flesh,” and that being a land animal, an ape. He belongs to the flesh of beasts.”²³⁹ In his conviction, Carroll emphatically denied that the Negro descended from the human family and crowned him the head of the family of apes. This position is clearly seen when he conclusively stated: “All scientific investigation of the subject matter proves the Negro to be an ape, and that he simply stands at the head of the ape family, just as the lion stands at the head of the cat family.”²⁴⁰

Another medical scientist Thurman compared the chin of the Negro with that of the White and used it to prove that the Negro race descended from the animals. According to him: “The prominent chin of the White finds its strongest contrast in the retreating chin of the Negro. This is another character of the ape, which the Negro presents.”²⁴¹ Every other member of the physiological features of the Negro examined by these geologists and anatomists was assumed by them as characters of the ape and other animals which the Negro presents and tended to ally him with the animal world and by so doing completely delineated him from the human family.²⁴² This position led an American poet Dozier to accept the theory of Polygenesis as propounded by his countrymen. In line with this position, he argued that his acceptance of the veracity of the Negro descent from the human family of Adam will be tantamount to accepting the apes and baboons as his brothers. Thus in his formulation of this conviction, he stated: “When I am told the human race, are all from Adam seed. That kinky-headed coons (Black Africans) and I, are from one common breed; I think that apes and darned baboons must be my brothers

²³⁷ Winchell, Preadamites, in: Carroll, *The Negro A Beast*, p. 91.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ Carroll, *The Negro A Beast*, p. 91.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁴¹ Thurman, in: Carroll, *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁴² Cf. Carroll, *The Negro A Beast*, pp. 47, 58, & 59.

too. But then, I do not believe the tale, I can't! Oh, can you?"²⁴³ In a similar tune, an English traveler, who lived in West Africa for a good length of time denied the humanity of the Negro race in a racial manner and affirmed as follows: "I consider the Negro as a lower species of man, and cannot make up my mind to look upon him as a man and as a brother, for the Gorilla would then also have to be admitted into the human family."²⁴⁴

This dangerous attempt made by these Western scientists to remove the Black African race from the human family of Adam and Eve did not stop at the level of their anatomical comparison made between the two races of Black and White but went beyond it and entered into the ontological spheres of the human life. On the ontological level of existence, they denied completely any existence of a human soul in the body of the Negro and if at all he is in possession of any soul, his soul lacks the quality of immortality like those of the White race and as such is an inferior human soul. In his view on this subject matter, Buchner Payne argued as follows: "Unlike the Whites, the Negro has no soul. The Negro in-fact was an animal, the noblest beast of creation, but a beast nevertheless."²⁴⁵ Going a step further, Payne maintained that: "The Negro descended from the Animals. Unlike the White, who has a soul as a sign of his immortality, the Negro has no soul and therefore is mortal, and cannot achieve things showing signs of immortality. It is the White whose souls were given by God that are inspired with the sense of immortality."²⁴⁶

Charles Carroll also deepened this denial of the existence of the human soul in the body of the Black man by arguing that the Black man is a product of matter and mind alone. According to him: "The Negro has no soul. He is only a combination of matter and mind. Only the Caucasian possesses the combination of matter, mind and soul."²⁴⁷ By reason of the lack of human soul in the body of the Black man, Carroll argued that he is not an immortal being and as such, he is not in need of salvation. For him still, salvation is only meant for men (Caucasians). Viewing the Negro with the lens of a racist ideologist, Carroll refused to recognize him as a man but referred to him as a beast belonging to the rest of the animals. That being the case, he closed the gate of redemption behind the Negro. This fact is made vividly clear when he asserted: "They (Blacks) were not in existence at the time of Adam's fall, and are not included in the plan of salvation."²⁴⁸ Continuing, he further said: "Man alone (Caucasian race) fell from his original state, and he alone is the subject of

²⁴³ Dozier, in: Carroll, *Ibid*, p. 92.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Carroll, *Ibid*, p. 91.

²⁴⁵ Payne, *The Negro*, pp. 14-15; Johnson, *The Myth of Ham*, p. 35.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

²⁴⁷ Carroll, *The Negro A Beast*, p. 166.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

redemption.”²⁴⁹ Quoting the Gospel of Matthew 7:6 which reads: “Do not give what is holy to dogs, they will only turn and attack you. Do not throw your pearls in front of pigs, they will only trample them underfoot,” Carroll falsely interpreted this citation and misappropriated its meaning in order to arrive at his racist goal of proving the inefficacy and uselessness of redemption for the Negro race. For him: “The existence of this prohibitory statute demonstrates the existence of an animal (Negro race) which man, in his criminal ignorance of God's plan of creation, might mistake for a man (Caucasians), and thus be misled into giving him (Negro race) the Bible with the view of conferring upon him (Negro race) the Blessings of Christianity, which were intended for man (Caucasians) alone.”²⁵⁰

Furthermore, Carroll maintained that the Negro belongs to the beast world, and that being the case, he should not be given the Bible which is holy and only meant for human beings which in his conviction, means only the Caucasians. This fact is made clearer when he said: “We are led to decide that “that which is holy,” and which man is forbidden to “give unto dogs,” is the Bible. And that the pearls which man is forbidden to cast before swine is the kingdom of heaven. This statute was evidently designed to confine the use of the Bible and religious worship to man, and exclude the lower kinds of flesh, which embrace the Negro.”²⁵¹ Finally, Carroll considers it a criminal act and a serious violation of the scriptures to include the Negro in the salvation plan of God for humanity through the instrument of christianization. This consideration of the criminality of evangelizing the Negro race is aptly based on his radical insistence and conviction that the Negro is not in possession of any human soul. It was on this ground that Carroll conclusively said in unmistakable terms: “Hence, if it is criminal to give the Bible to dogs, it is criminal to give it to the Negro; if it is criminal to undertake to Christianize swine, it is criminal to undertake to Christianize the Negro.”²⁵²

Such denial of the existence of the human soul in the bodies of the Black Africans also made its way into the philosophical thoughts of the great French philosopher Charles Montesquieu (1689-1755), who as we saw above was among the Enlightenment philosophers, whose main goal was to use reason and authentic scientific proofs to challenge erroneous beliefs such as the myth of a cursed race, Polygenesis etc. grounded in Western society and Christianity with the view of correcting them. Rather than doing this, Montesquieu abandoned this major goal of Enlightenment and joined issues with the pseudo-scientists with anti-Blacks sentiments of his days. Thus, in his

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Carroll, Ibid, p. 167.

²⁵² Ibid.

eighteenth century work, “De L’ Esprit des Lois,” he presented the Black African race in a very bad light and refused to recognize the Black man as his fellow human being based on his black skin-color. For him, this skin-color of the Black man is a factor that renders him unqualified to be in possession of a human soul. Displeased with the existence of the human soul in a black body, he commented with utter dissatisfaction as follows:

If I were to try and justify our right to make slaves of the Blacks, this is what I would say: The Europeans, having exterminated the peoples of the Americas, have had to enslave those of Africa, in order to ensure the clearance of a great deal of land. Sugar would be too expensive if one could not get slaves to produce it. The slaves I am talking about are black from head to toe, and they have such ruined noses that one can’t begin to complain of them...One cannot put oneself into the frame of mind in which God, who is a very wise Being, took it upon Himself to put a soul, and a very good soul at that, into such an entirely black body.²⁵³

Continuing, he confessed his difficulty to accept the fact that Black Africans, by reason of their God-given skin-color are human beings. Accepting them to be humans will be in his opinion tantamount to not being a Christian. In the light of this difficulty, he asserted that: “The Blacks prefer a glass necklace to one of gold, to which properly civilized nations give such consequence. So it is impossible for us to suppose that these creatures are men because, if one were to allow them to be so, a suspicion would arise that we are not ourselves Christians.”²⁵⁴

A careful consideration of this derogatory comment reveals that Montesquieu brings here the wisdom of God for putting a human soul in a black body into question and blamed Him for having done so. He did not only express his mind in this sarcastic statement, but also represented the mind of some of his fellow European Christians of the 18th and 19th centuries, who would rather prefer to doubt that the Black man is also a human being made by the same Christian God that created the White man. In the opinion of David Brion Davis, these satirical assertions of Montesquieu “were later used to support the doctrine of Negro inferiority.”²⁵⁵ And even up to 1900, the editor of the English translation of the L’ Esprit des Lois Thomas Nugent, could officially comment that: “The above arguments of Montesquieu form a striking instance of the prejudice under which even a liberal mind can labour.”²⁵⁶ And this poses a fundamental problem for the Black African in the sense that from the

²⁵³ Montesquieu, *De L’Esprit des Lois*, p. 374. Cf. Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 465.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 403.

²⁵⁶ Thomas Nugent, ed. & transl. *Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws*, New York 1900, p. 286. Cf. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 403.

moment of his birth and until he dies, he has most of the times the uphill task of proving to his white “eternal master” that he is also a human being. And this is a basic but a sad fact, which every Black African has to grapple with throughout his life time. Commenting on the sad truth contained in this inescapable yoke hanged upon the neck of every Black African man and woman, Emeka Ekwuru articulates it so: “One of the basic but sad truths that an African child of this millennium faces is that the modern history of the continent started in, infused with and is characterized by negation. Africa is therefore the continent of negation.”²⁵⁷

With such opinions like that of Montesquieu and those of others quoted above, scholars of African origin are therefore, forced to believe that the general view of the white man about the Black man is that he is not a full human being. This conviction was aptly expressed by the renowned historian and Biafran warlord Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu in his famous revolutionary speech of 1969 popularly known as “Ahiara Declaration.” In this speech which had a tremendous effect on its Nigeria-Biafran audience, Ojukwu said: “It became a topic for serious debate in learned circles in Europe (University of Salamanca) whether the Negro was in fact a man, whether he had a soul, and if he had a soul, whether conversion to Christianity could make any difference to his spiritual condition and destination.”²⁵⁸ This doubt and negation of the humanity of an African began even long ago in the time of the Roman Empire, at a time, when Latin was the language of the people of this world. Black Africa was seen at this point in time as a land of animals. This stereotype was clearly and undoubtedly expressed in the Latin phrase such as “Hic sunt Leones” (Here live lions). This phrase later influenced the basic idea of Black Africa and Africans in the minds of many white men and women such that whenever Africa is mentioned, their mind more often than not runs to a land of animals.

However, Ojukwu maintained that this attitude of doubt and negation of the humanity of the Black man continued until the nineteenth century. It was only at this period that it was reluctantly conceded that the Black man is a human being but a special type of human, whose humanity is to be accepted with some reservations. That is to say, he is not fully human, he is an inferior being, an infra human being, with low intelligent quotient. All these were expressed when he recorded that:

By the 19th century, it had been reluctantly conceded that the Negro is in fact human, but a different kind of man, certainly not the same kind of man as the white. Pseudo-intellectuals went to work to prove that the Negro was a different kind of man from the white. They uncovered the abundant so called anthropological evidence from

²⁵⁷ Ekwuru, *Africa and the Myth of The Sleeping Giant*, p. 8.

²⁵⁸ Ojukwu, “The Myth About The Negro,” *Ahiara Declaration*, p. 7.

archaeology which “proved” to them conclusively that the Negro was no more the same kind of man as the European than a rat was a rabbit.²⁵⁹

Such racially based anthropological findings on the humanity of the Black Africans located their place among other human beings of the world in nature. And they purported to assign to Black Africans a status less than that of a man and as such, Black Africans were considered not only as the “missing link” between human beings and the animal world, but also as inferior human beings in comparison with the White superior race.

5.3 The Black African Race as an Inferior Race

All the negative aspersions and denigrating comments made by the Western scientists and men and women of honour in the history of the contact between the White race and the Black African race were made from the background of the anti-Blacks sentiments contained in the writings and beliefs of the medieval Christian literature as well as the writings of the Greco-Roman classical authors on the subject of the Black African race as an accursed race of Ham. Once this foundation was solidly laid in this period of time in the history of man, studies so far made on this subject matter have always proved that it is extremely difficult for the modern authors and scholars in different fields of knowledge to part company with the negative influence which this tradition has impacted on them.

One of such anti-Blacks sentiments with its origin from the aforesaid tradition is the fact of the blackness of the skin color of Black Africans, which as this work has already established above in this section, originated from the curse of Noah on his son Ham. This color, which marked the Black African race out, and distinguished her from among other races of the world as an accursed race has been a great evil in the hands of some Western Christian authors and researchers on the topic of the Black African race that accounts for the denigrated and degraded image of the Black African race in history. Right up to the modern times, the negative impact of this skin-color and the anti-Blacks sentiments which it evokes in the mind of these authors had continued to affect negatively the life of the Black African. As a matter of fact, it has remained a catalyst in the chemistry laboratory of the aforesaid authors that had continued to influence as well as guard the results of their researches and positions with regard to the Black African race.

This black color, together with all that it symbolised has been identified as the cause of the inferiority which the Western authors and scholars have attributed

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 8.

to the Black African race when compared with the White Caucasian race. This fact has been testified by Jordan Winthrop, who maintained that the Caucasians were prejudiced against the Negro's blackness. According to him: "The Englishmen idealised beauty as "white." White and black symbolised pure and impure, good and evil, clean and dirty."²⁶⁰ This idealisation of the white color and all that it symbolised led to the demonization and degradation of all that is black and paved the way for the identification of the Black African race as an inferior race, as a race devoid of honour and grace but full of obnoxious and unimaginable omens, whose dignity lies only in degradation and enslavement.

This color prejudice has been also testified by an American born merchant, journalist and an abolitionist Crusader in the camp of the Quakers, John Woolman (1720-1772) as a mark of inferiority of the Black African race. In one of his Essays in 1764, Woolman identified this black skin-color as the reason for enslavement of Black Africans in America. According to him: "Whites, who would never consider enslaving people of their own race, were willing to enslave Black Africans because of the prejudice against their skin color."²⁶¹

This doctrine of the inferiority of the Negro received a place of importance in the philosophical thoughts of some European philosophers of the modern times. For instance, in his Essays and Treatise published in 1768, an English philosopher and historian David Hume (1711-1776), who was among the leading members of the Enlightenment movement in Europe joined the band wagon in the clamour for the inferiority of the Black African race. In all his philosophical wisdom, Hume did not hide his anti-Blacks sentiments in affirming that the Black African race is an inferior race in comparison with the White race. He denied the existence of any record of arts, scientific and philosophical ingenuity at all times among Black Africans. Thus in his conviction, he noted as follows: "I am apt to suspect the Negroes and in general all other species of men... to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There never was a civilised nation of any other complexion than the White, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation - no ingenious manufacturers amongst them, no arts, and no science."²⁶²

The great founding father and member of the American Enlightenment movement as well as the third President of American nation, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) who reneged on the fundamental principle of Enlightenment movement, was unfortunately one of the promoters of this theory of inferiority of the Black African race in history. Rather than promoting the principle laid

²⁶⁰ Winthrop, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812*, p. 4.

²⁶¹ Woolman, "Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes," p. 366.

²⁶² Hume, *Essays & Treatise On Several Subjects*, Vol. 1, 125n, London 1758, in: Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment*, p. 30. See also, Ekwuru, *Africa and the Myth of a Sleeping Giant*, pp. 118-119.

down by the Enlightenment movement among which was to use the human reason to correct traditionally based erroneous thoughts about non-Western peoples of his days, he queued up with those who purported to prove that the Black African race is an inferior race based on skin-color. According to him: "The first difference preventing the two races of Black and White from living together on terms of equality is that of color."²⁶³ For him still, there is a basic lapse in the intellectual faculty of reflection in the Black Africans based on their skin-color. In the comparison he made between the White man and the Black man after centuries of intensive slaving, subordination and oppression of the Black African slaves in America, he upheld that none of the Black Africans has the wherewithal to understand Euclid's mathematical formula. In his conviction, Jefferson said as follows:

In general, their (Black Africans) existence appears to participate more of sensation than of reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labour. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect must be disposed to sleep of course. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason and imagination, it appears to me that in memory, they are equal to the whites, in reason much more inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found amongst them capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid, and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous.²⁶⁴

The German born philosopher George W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) was also drawn into this prejudice of the inferiority of the Black Africans such that he was reluctant to accept the full humanity of the Black Africans. Not too long ago, Hegel concluded that Black Africans are not in possession of the kind of soul which the White man possesses, and that being the case, they cannot conceive of God who is an abstract concept. And even when he reluctantly accepted the humanity of Black Africans, he still doubted their intellectual capability. This negative attitude was clearly noted when he described the African world as a universe without morality and without law. This is made clearer when he wrote in his philosophy of History that:

The particularly African character is difficult to comprehend for the very reason that in reference to it, we must quite give up the principle which naturally accompanies all our ideas - the category of universality. In Negro life, the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realisation of any substantial objective existence, as for example God or Law - in which the interest of man's volition is involved and in which he realises his own being."²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, p. 133; Peterson, Ham and Japhet, p. 71.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 134ff. Cf. Eze, Race and Enlightenment, p. 98ff; Davidson, Black Mother, p. 25.

²⁶⁵ Hegel, The Philosophy of History, trans. by J. Siebree, p. 93. See also, Ekwuru, Africa and the Myth of a Sleeping Giant, p. 55.

Going a step further in his philosophical dialectics of historical evolution, Hegel refused to acknowledge Africa as a historical entity. Instead, he held the view that Africa is a continent without history, still wrapped in a dark mantle of night. In his understanding: “Africa has no historical interest of its own, for we find its inhabitants living in barbarism and savagery in a land which has not furnished them with any integral ingredient of culture... It is the land of childhood, removed from the light of self-conscious history and wrapped in the dark mantle of night.”²⁶⁶

Joining in this flow of thoughts on the inferiority of Black Africans, the famous American physician from the Southern States of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi and a pro-slavery protagonist Samuel A. Cartwright (1793-1863) supported ardently the claim of the inferiority of the Black African race made by his contemporaries above. In his wealth of knowledge in the medical field of science, he claimed to have found the cause of the inferiority of Black Africans in their defective physiological constitution. In his opinion:

Blacks' constitution comprised of defective hematosis or atmospherization of the blood, conjoined with a deficiency of cerebral matter in the cranium, and an excess of nervous matter distributed to the organs of sensation and assimilation. These are the true causes of that debasement of the mind which has rendered the people of Africa unable to take care of themselves and the basis for their indolence and apathy, and their preference for idleness, misery, and barbarism, industry and frugality.²⁶⁷

In the logic of the above position, an American author Charles Morris in his work “The Aryan Race” published in 1892 supported the idea of the inferiority of the Black African race and held the view that the said defect in the bodily constitution of the Black Africans is the cause of their lack of notable feats in the history of their race. His proof of this fact is that the Negro race can only boast of producing savage tribes to the world, but has nothing to offer to humanity in terms of civilizations and achievements. This position was clearly made when he noted: “It may be remarked that all the savage tribes of the earth belong to the Negro or the Mongolian races. No Negro civilization has ever appeared. On the other hand, the Caucasian is pre-eminently the man of civilization.”²⁶⁸ Continuing, Morris argued that this characteristic inferiority intrinsic in the Negro race is accountable for her lack of proper development of the faculties of reflection. For him, education of the Negro can only produce in him a perceptive ability and not a reflective ability. That is to say that the Negro

²⁶⁶ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, p. 174.

²⁶⁷ Samuel Cartwright, *Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race*, Part 1, “De Bow's Review” XI (July 1851), p. 66.

²⁶⁸ Morris, *The Aryan Race: Its Origin and Its Achievements*, in: Carroll, *The Negro a Beast*, p. 101.

race lacks the ability of making reflective thinking, which is a sign of defect in her intellectual faculty. And by reason of this fact, he asserted that the rightful place for the Negro in nature is that of a servant. This position was unambiguously made, when he remarked that: "The Negro is normally peaceful and submissive. His lack of enterprise must keep him so. Education with him soon reaches its limit. It is capable of increasing the perceptive, but not of strongly awakening the reflective faculties. The Negro will remain the worker of the workers and thinkers. The Negro belongs by nature to the former class."²⁶⁹ In the same manner, Richard Burton who also doubted the intellectual capability of the Black Africans asserted in a denigrating manner that: "Once a Black African grew beyond childhood, his mental development is arrested, and thenceforth he grows backwards instead of forwards."²⁷⁰

This emphasis made above by these Western writers and thinkers on the defective intellectual ability of the Black Africans did not just represent their private opinion on the intellectual dullness of the Black Africans but also those of their fellow compatriots of their days. It was an established fact among the Americans and Europeans of their days that the Negro was unteachable and lacked the intellectual faculty of reasoning. This fact is corroborated by the racist cum negative reaction found on the pages of the highly rated and internationally acclaimed American Times Newspaper in 1874, when the British University of Durham granted the right of affiliation to Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone. Rather than making commendatory remarks on this issue, the Editor of the aforesaid Newspaper sarcastically commented that Durham University should likewise grant affiliation to brute animals. The historian Walter Rodney captured vividly this reaction when he wrote: "In 1874, when Fourah Bay sought and obtained affiliation with Durham University, the Times Newspaper declared that: "Durham should next affiliate with the London Zoo."²⁷¹ That means that the Black African students studying in this college did not worth more than the animals in London zoo in the eyes of the publishers of this Times Newspaper. And in the same line of interpretation, the Fourah Bay College was housing "Black African animals" in the same way that the London zoo harboured white animals. The import of this event is that there is no need for educating young Black Africans judging the position considered above. Their proper place in nature should be that of a humble slave status and as a tool of human labour in the world of the white Caucasian race. And it was exactly this logic that the Scottish philosopher, satirical writer and historian Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was propounding for the Black Africans in an

²⁶⁹ Morris, *The Aryan Race*, in: Carroll, *Ibid*, pp. 101-102.

²⁷⁰ Burton, in: Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 26.

²⁷¹ Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, p. 141. Cf. Ekwuru, *Africa and the Myth of a Sleeping Giant*, p. 106.

Essay he wrote in 1849 titled “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question.” In this Essay, which depicted the Black African race as an inferior race, Carlyle described Black Africans as wild men and denied them of any right and claim to an independent living. In his conviction therefore, among all races of the world, only the Black Africans were created as servants and as such are the most suitable for the slave works on the mines and sugar plantations in the New World. These erroneous insinuations were made when he stated that: “The Negro has an indisputable and perpetual right to be compelled to do competent work for his living. The Black African alone of all wild men, could live among civilized men, but he could be useful in God’s creation only as a perpetual servant.”²⁷²

In the same manner of thought, an American born historian, poet, novelist and a pro-slavery proponent from South Carolina, Williams Gilmore Simms (1806-1870) considered the Black Africans in 1852 as good for nothing, and as mere instruments for the civilization of the New World. In his opinion, Black Africans are incapable of self-dominion and as such were only created by God to be subordinated and be used as slaves to serve others. This position was made when he remarked: “Blacks, however had no capacity for an individual independent existence but... were always designed for a subordinate one... God had created the Black race to be an implement in the hands of civilisation always, and Blacks were morally and intellectually unsuited for liberty and social equality.”²⁷³

This racial position against the Black African race continued to be maintained and propagated among the best minds in the Western world even up to the twentieth century. For instance, it was in the said century that a German born philosopher and psychiatrist Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) queued up in the line of philosophers that cast doubts over the humanity of the Black Africans. By reason of the alleged inferiority of the Black African race, Jaspers who lived up to the second half of the twentieth century did not only refuse to accept Black Africans as humans but also called for their total disappearance from the face of the earth. For him, Black Africans are irrational and primitive beings, who at best, could be transformed into materials for the development of the Western World. In his own words which portrayed derogation, Jaspers asserted that: “All the criteria of civilization are absolutely absent from Black Africa occupied by primitive people whose only future perspective is their total disappearance pure and simple, or in the best of possibilities, their being transformed into

²⁷² Carlyle, “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question,” 1849, in: Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 196. The historian and Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Eric Williams described this Essay of Thomas Carlyle as: “The most offensive document in the entire world on slavery and West Indies.”

²⁷³ Simms, “The Morals of Slavery,” p. 270ff. See also, Peterson, Ham and Japhet, p. 114.

materials for Western civilization.”²⁷⁴ This position of Karl Jaspers is very akin to the views of Buchner Harrison Payne who earlier on asserted that the future of the Negro race is a blank future, a future which has nothing in its content that is different from those of the animal brutes. Throwing more light on this position, Payne affirmed in an unmistakable terms that: “God had long before determined that the Japhetic race (Caucasians) should govern the world. As for the Negro, on the other hand, his history is as blank as that of the horse or the beaver.”²⁷⁵

This kind of conviction led Senator John C. Calhoun who was the leading American politician from South Carolina and the seventh President of the United States of America to consider the enslavement of Black Africans as a positive good and therefore argued against their emancipation and equality with the white race on grounds of their black skin color and the alleged inferiority. In his conviction, emancipation of the Black Africans in America cannot overcome the fact of their inferiority, which he believed, is naturally intrinsic in them. According to him: “Slavery was a positive good, because it controlled an inferior people of different origin and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual. As long as Whites and Blacks lived in the same land, Blacks would have to be enslaved. Emancipation would not overcome the Blacks inferiority, because the causes lie too deep in the principles of our nature to be surmounted.”²⁷⁶ It was this way of viewing the Black Africans with the racist lens of inferiority complex that kept them too long in the bondage of the plantation slavery witnessed at the time of the Transatlantic slave trade.

5.4 The Black African Race as a Race without Morality

The doubts raised on the humanity of Black Africans did not stop at their being identified and described as an inferior race and pseudo-human beings but also was extended to their being stripped of every good moral behaviours by the protagonists of Transatlantic slave trade. Propagators and defenders of this evil traffic on human beings of Black African origin also justified their condemnation of Black Africans to the evils of this slave trade on the grounds that the Black African race is a race that is untamed, barbarous, morally debased and sexually lascivious. This conclusion, as we noted above, is the

²⁷⁴ Jaspers, in: Neckebroutck, *L' Afrique Noire*, p. 102. Cf. Karl Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, Frankfurt am Main 1955.

²⁷⁵ Payne, *The Negro*, p. 14.

²⁷⁶ Calhoun, Speech made on the Floors of the American Senate on Feb. 6, 1837, *The Works of John C. Calhoun*, ed. Richard K. Cralle, Vol II, New York 1870, pp. 630-631. See also, Peterson, *Ham and Japhet*, p. 65.

continuation and enlivening of the medieval Christian tradition on the interpretation of the curse of Ham and his descendants. This tradition interpreted the sin of Ham against his father Noah mostly as a sexual sin. And having linked Black African race to the accursed race of Ham, it was believed that the Black Africans were hyper-sexual and morally debased human beings. The historian and author David Whitford was therefore correct, when he observed that the story of the curse of Ham did not only link Ham with Africa and black skin color, but also formed the nexus of the idea of a lascivious Black man. According to Whitford the basic idea that the Black African is hyper-sexual “is the manifestation of the second characteristic of the curse matrix.”²⁷⁷ In this curse matrix, as already established in the preceding chapter, the protagonists of this sexual lasciviousness of the Black man located it in his sexual organ, which they portrayed to be similar in length and size with that of the Devil. One of the protagonists of this propaganda in the modern times, who gained popularity in Europe with this propaganda was the English physician and surgeon Charles White (1728-1813), who in 1799 concluded that the Black African is very hyper-sexual based on his long penis. Convinced of his clinical observations, he stated that: “The penis of an African is larger than that of an European. This, I believe, has been shown in every anatomical school in London...Haller, in his *Primae Liniae* speaking of Africans says, “in hominibus etiam penis est longior et multo laxior,” but I say, multo firmior et durior.”²⁷⁸ This so called evidence of a larger men's genital allegedly possessed by the Black man really served as a speed-lane, through which the medieval and modern pseudo anthropologists and ethnographers arrived at their conclusion of linking the Black African morally to the beast world and as such identified him with brute animals. This identification of the Black African's lasciviousness also found expression in the period of the classical antiquity. For instance, as far back as the fifth century BC, a record of these findings were found in Photius *Bibliotheca*, wherein a physician called Ctesias documented that the black-skinned Pygmies of India “are saddle-nosed and deformed, have a *Veretrum* so great and long, that it hangs down even unto their ankles.”²⁷⁹

This manner of portraying the Black man as a sexually lascivious person did also find its way into the Christian tradition especially in the patristic and medieval Christian literatures. In this tradition, the Black African was not only depicted in the Christian works of art and theological works as a demon with

²⁷⁷ Whitford, *Curse of Ham in Early Modern Era*, p. 122.

²⁷⁸ Charles White, *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man*, London 1799, p. 61. This reference made to Haller here reads in English thus: “That among African men, the penis is longer and more loosely, but I say, harder and stronger.” Cf. Whitford, *Curse of Ham in Early Modern Era*, p. 122.

²⁷⁹ Ctesias, in: Whitford, *Curse of Ham in Early Modern Era*, p. 123.

elongated and huge sexual genitals so as to raise the impression of his Devil-like-sexual nature, but also was represented as a symbol of sexual sin, who kept on tempting and seducing Christian monks in both dreams and in reality to fall away from their life of austerity. This tradition of viewing the Black man both as a demon and as a symbol for sexual sins was well documented in the works of David Brakke “Ethiopian Demons, Male Sexuality, The Black-Skinned Other, and the Monastic Self,” whose contents have been extensively observed in the preceding chapter of this work.²⁸⁰

It was from this tradition that the modern authors borrowed their racial comments on the hyper-sexual nature of the Black African with a view to liken him with the demon so as to make him to appear despised among men, and a threat to the sexual security of the White women. Writing from this tradition, the American born geologist Alexander Winchell, observed that the Black man lacks self-control by reason of his lasciviousness. According to him: “The coarse nature of the Negroes is easily aroused, and they have never heard tell of such a thing as self-control.”²⁸¹

In a similar manner, John Lok, who was the captain of the first British voyage made along the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa in the sixteenth century described the Negroes as a people of “beastly living, very libidinous, without God, laws, religion or common wealth.”²⁸² This belief in the sexual lasciviousness of the Black man was deep rooted in the minds of the captains of the slave ships and their slave merchants. And this was the reason why no one either cared to respect the deep feelings of the loss of the slaves' family members and fatherland, or hearkened to their cries and pleas not to separate them from the members of their families during disembarkation on reaching the plantations in the New World. Instead, their feelings and cries were falsely interpreted to mean a sign of their regret for the denial of the chance of gratifying their sexual orgies. And this was exactly the mind of the owners of the English slave companies and merchants of Liverpool when they published in one of their brochures in 1792, that the Black Africans are the most voluptuous of all created human beings. Citing this pamphlet, the historian and author Basil Davidson recorded as follows: “Africans being the most lascivious of all human beings, may it not be imagined that the cries they let forth at being torn from their wives, proceed from the dread that they will never have the

²⁸⁰ For further readings on this theme, see, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10 (2001), pp. 503ff.; Whitford, *Curse of Ham in Early Modern Era*, p. 123ff.

²⁸¹ Winchell, *Adamites and Preadamites*, p. 183.

²⁸² John Lok, “The Second Voyage to the Coast Of Guinea in the Year 1554,” in: Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, Vol. IV, p. 57. Cf. Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice*, p. 69.

opportunity of indulging their passions in the country to which they are embarking.”²⁸³

Apart from the emphasis on the sexual lasciviousness of the Black man, effort was also made by the defenders of the Black African enslavement to denigrate them on moral grounds. It was a common knowledge among the circles of the Western proponents of the inferiority of the Black African race that the Black race is a race that is morally debased. Among these, was the German born philosopher George Hegel, whose position on the inferiority of the Black African race to the White Caucasian race has been noted above. Hegel could not comprehend the Negro as a normal human being and as such, he categorized him as a primitive man in his wildest and untamed nature, totally lacking in good moral behaviours, compassion as well as in all that could doubtlessly qualify him a moral being. This aspersion of moral debasement cast on the image of the Black African race is seen when he unambiguously stated that: “The Negro represents the natural man in his completely wild and untamed nature: in terms of reverence and morality, and on the meaning of human feelings, one must think deeply, if one would rightly understand him, there is nothing to find in harmony with humanity in his character.”²⁸⁴ In the same light, the French born Gerard Mellier, who was the Mayor of Nantes ridiculed Black Africans, when he said: “At bottom, the Blacks are naturally inclined to theft, robbery, idleness and treason. In general, they are only suited to live in servitude and for the works and the agriculture of our colonies.”²⁸⁵ In a similar context, the English merchant and chronicler of the West Indian Colonies, Sir Dalby Thomas (1650-1711), who was the commander of Cape Coast Castle (Ghana) in 1709 stripped the Black man of any capability for good behaviours. In his essay titled “A true and Impartial Account of what we believe for the well carrying on of this Trade,” he stated emphatically that: “The Natives here had neither religion nor law binding them to humanity, good behaviour or honesty. They frequently, for their grandeur sacrifice an innocent man. They are naturally such rogues and bred up with such roguish principles that what they can, they get by force or deceit.”²⁸⁶

At the end of his examination of the image of the Black African among the German folk, Peter Martins established that this same notion was prevalent among the German folk. He was able to note that the Germans conceived of the Black African as devilish, unreasonable, culture-less and a beastly people.

²⁸³ Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 14. Cf. Davidson, *Vom Sklavenhandel zur Kolonialisierung*, p. 13.

²⁸⁴ Hegel, *Vorlesung Über die Philosophie der Geschichte mit einer Einführung von Theodore Litt*, p. 155. Cf. Martin, *Schwarze Teufel, Edle Mohren*, p. 9.

²⁸⁵ Gerard Mellier, in: Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 302.

²⁸⁶ Dalby, in: Colin A. Palmer, *Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America 1700-11739*, Illinois 1981, p. 21.

This observation was made when he recorded: “Up to the year 1830, the Black Africans continued to be regarded as immutable, alien and demonic, as instinctive and vicious men, uncivilized, unreasonable and faceless people, as humans with animalistic physicality and childish behaviours.”²⁸⁷ Continuing, Martins further said: “Like the Roman god Janus, the African appears to the people of Central Europe in the first phase of their meeting as a person with two opposing faces: as a devil and a saint, as an illusion and an exemplary, as a pagan and a Christian, as an enemy and a follower, as a tempter and as a servant - the Black man could be both.”²⁸⁸

Concluding his remarks on the image of the Black man in the consciousness of the European folk, Martins rightly observed that when it comes to the use of the services of the Black man as an instrument to serve their own interest, he is highly welcomed and well accepted among many Europeans. But as soon as it comes to establishing his personality as an equal partner with the Europeans, he is being demonized with every available means.²⁸⁹ This kind of racial attitude did form the basis of all that happened to the Black man during the Transatlantic slave trade when he was really turned into raw materials (slaves) for the development of Europe and America. The Black Africans therefore, seen from the prism of the white man are simply: modern primitives, people without culture and history, morally debased, sexually insatiable, savages, barbarians, lazy, largely backward, inferior and good for nothing. Thus in the words of Marian Musgrave: “Such negative portrayals, full of contempt and rejection helped to create the climate in which incredibly sadistic treatment of Black men, women, and children was ignored, denied, minimized and justified for four and a half centuries.”²⁹⁰ It was indeed on such negative grounds that the grave of the Black man was dug, where he is still lying deeply buried in our present time, though in a changed form and style.

Be that as it may, it has been scientifically proved that all these so called scientific findings about the Black man are not only wrongly presented but also racially founded. They are but figments of imaginations of some white racists and products of pseudo-science. The Black-American born William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963), who was a renowned sociologist, historian and philosopher was therefore right when he described all these ethnologists and scientists with such racial mind-set as “those who decided to switch from science to propaganda.”²⁹¹ This fact is true in the sense that unbiased modern scientists and researchers have shown that Black Africans are neither animals

²⁸⁷ Martins, *Schwarzer Teufel, Edle Mohren*, p. 13.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 15.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁹⁰ Musgrave, “Literary Justification of Slavery” in: *Grimm, Blacks and German Culture*, pp. 4-5.

²⁹¹ Du Bois, William Edward, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Greenwich 1956, p. Xxiii.

nor inferior human beings when compared with other humans living on our globe. In one such modern findings made in America by a German-American ethnologist and physicist Franz Boas (1858-1942), it was scientifically established that race has not much to do with intellectual capability of people. According to him:

We have found that, no proof of any inferiority of the Negro should be given, except that it seemed barely possible that perhaps the race would not produce quite so many men of highest genius as other races, while there was nothing at all that could be interpreted as suggesting any material difference in the mental capacity of the bulk of Negro population as compared with the bulk of the white population.²⁹²

Concluding, Boas debunked all such bulk of negative utterances made about the Negroes above and maintained that there is no such evidence in a true scientific research conducted in an atmosphere of academic honesty: In his conviction, he asserted that:

There is however, no evidence whatever that would stigmatise the Negro as of weaker build, or as subject to inclinations and powers that are opposed to our social organisation. An unbiased estimate of the anthropological evidence so far brought forward does not permit us to countenance the belief in a racial inferiority which would unfit an individual of Negro race to take his part in Modern civilisation. We do not know of any demand made on the human body or mind in Modern life that anatomical or ethnological evidence would prove to be beyond his powers.²⁹³

Following Boas, the human geneticist Francisco Cavalli-Sforza was able to prove such pseudo-scientific findings recorded above as a mere farce which had no sound scientific texture. According to Sforza: “Any attempt to categorise the people of the world by reason of the colors of their skin, hairs, eyes, stature and the form of their noses, is scientifically untenable.”²⁹⁴ One had expected this kind of position and correction of erroneous and anti-Blacks ideological statements to have been made by the Enlightenment movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe and America. It is very unfortunate to note that this expectation was dashed to the mud.

In general therefore, this chapter has been able to establish that the Transatlantic slave trade was well planned and executed to serve the economic

²⁹² Boas, *The Primitive Mind*, p. 238.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ Cavalli-Sforza, *Verschiedene und doch Gleich: Ein Genetiker entzieht dem Rassismus die Grundlage*, Berlin 1994, in: Birgit Tautz, ed. *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik*, Band 56-2004, *Colors, 1800/1900/2000: Signs of Ethnic Difference*, Amsterdam, New York p. 47.

and political interests of the participating European and American nations. This being the case, it is no longer surprising that they fabricated all sorts of reasons including the misinterpretation of the Bible as we saw above, in order to perfectly arrive at their goal - which is nothing other than to enrich themselves on the platter of the “golden cup” of suffering and humiliation of Black Africans. The Catholic Church herself together with her leadership has been accused of having a strong hand in preparing the fertile ground for this humiliation of Black Africans as well as of directly handing such a bitter cup of sufferings to the Black Africans, whose effects are still felt much in the present day Africa and in the lives of many Black African men and women. How true is this accusation of involvement of the Church and her leadership in the Black African enslavement? The veracity and (or) falsity contained in this accusation is the goal of the next section of this academic work.

III. The Catholic Church and Black African Enslavement

1. Early Beginnings of Church's Involvement in the Enslavement of Black Africans

1.1 Brief Introduction

The Catholic Church, together with some of her popes, bishops, missionaries, clergy and the laity in the recent times has been accused of complicity, approval as well as involvement in the baneful Transatlantic slave trade which singled out the Black man for perpetual enslavement and exploitation that covered a total period of four hundred years. This accusation of involvement in the slave trade is found in the April 2000 Edition of the "New African" Magazine.¹ In her April 2000 edition, this magazine alleged inter alia, that the Catholic Church did not only approve of the slave trade but also benefited from it. According to this publication of the New African magazine:

The Church benefited as much from slavery as the monarchs, merchants and governments of Europe. Various papal Bulls from 1447 onwards approved and encouraged slavery. When the Portuguese Prince Henry the Navigator sought the approval for his trade in Africans in the early 1440s, pope Eugene IV declared that whoever should participate in it would completely get his sins forgiven.²

Also such accusation of involvement and complicity is to be seen in the litigations made by Bob Brown, a civil rights activist and co-founder of the Illinois Black Panther Party in the United States of America. In what I might describe as a "frenzy manner," Brown boldly accused the Vatican of enslavement. This accusation is contained in his 200-page Lawsuit filed in the Federal Lawsuit in Chicago which partly reads:

The Vatican knows that slavery was and is illegal and the Vatican will come to the court house and stand before God and the Judge and tell us so. The pope must come and say the truth...He must come and tell us why certain Catholic forces disobeyed Catholic laws,

¹ "New African Magazine" is a monthly publication of "IC Publications" based in the United Kingdom. It is the best-selling Pan-African Magazine founded in 1966 which covers a whole range of issues on race, African history, moral values, politics and religion from an African perspective.

² Malanda, "The Pope Loves You," in: New African Magazine, p. 14.

enslaved us and became unjustly enriched upon us. He must open the Vatican library and disclose the Files.³

In the same token, the historian and author Charles Boxer described the Church as a slave-holding institution, which financially supported some of its bishops and missionaries from the proceeds flowing from the Transatlantic slave trade. This accusation was made when he asserted that: “The Church itself was, and continued to be a slave-holding institution on a massive scale in the Iberian colonial empires. Not only so, but for centuries, the stipends of the bishop and the ecclesiastical establishments of Angola were financed from the proceeds of the slave trade.”⁴

But how could this be said of the Catholic Church, whose vocation consisted in serving as a torch-bearer and as the light that should have enlightened the Middle Ages? Could these accusations of complicity, approval and gains levelled against the Church be possibly true? Did the Catholic Church support in any manner the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans? With regard to her position at the centre stage of ecclesiastical and civil affairs at the time of the Transatlantic slave trade, what effort did she make to defend the defenceless Black African victims of this slave trade?

In the light of this development, this chapter is the first part of the role and the leadership of the Church in the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans. It sets out to examine the role which the Catholic Church played in the enslavement of the Black Africans through the channel of her various traditions upon which the attitude of the medieval Christianity and the papacy towards non-members of the Christian religion was centred, and which conditioned the papacy to give her support to the Portuguese Crown's quest for economic and political expansion of her territories when she began her conquest and discovery of the African Atlantic at the dawn of the fifteenth century. This was a conquest carried out under the cover of religious Crusades against the so-called “enemies of Christendom” - the Saracens, pagans and other unbelievers in the Christian religion located in Africa. The goal of this investigation is to establish how the papacy with the help of these traditions prepared a favourable ground that called the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans into existence in the fifteenth century.

³ Bob Brown, Unpublished class action Lawsuit filed against Vatican on the issue of the Atlantic slave trade, Dec. 24, 2002. In this Lawsuit, Bob Brown did not only name the Vatican and pope John Paul II as Defendants in this Lawsuit but also the presidents and kings of the Western Nations whose countrymen and governments were involved in the Atlantic slave trade which included: The kings of Spain and Portugal, the Queen of England, President Bush, and Jaques Chirac of France; the governors of Illinois, Virginia, Louisiana and Texas; nine ports; several major sugar, gun, tobacco, and railroad companies, many banks and even Barcardi Rum.

⁴ Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 32.

1.2 Strategical Background of the Church in the Enslavement of Black Africans

Apart from the teachings and the attitudes of the Church regarding the Black African race and her justification of the institution of slavery as established in the preceding section of this work, there are also other traditions of the Church upon which she stood while relating to the Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. Among such various traditions or teachings of the Church, four most basic teachings made themselves very outstanding since the medieval period. They are very outstanding in determining the very role which the Church played in the enslavement of Black Africans in the sense that they provided the solid ground upon which the leadership of the late medieval Catholic Church was operating in her policies regarding non-Europeans and especially Black Africans. These four basic traditions are: (a) The Church's attitude towards non-Catholics, (b) Her concept of a worldwide ecclesiastical authority, (c) The Crusades as mission carried out to regain lost ecclesiastical territories and (d) The Church's position on the right of infidels or pagans to property. A critical examination of these medieval Church traditions will help us a great deal to see the very background from which the leadership of the Church of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries operated and as a result could not but see herself taking a stand that turned out to be very detrimental to Black Africans leading to the gross involvement of the Church in their enslavement during the Transatlantic slave trade.

1.3 The Church and Non Catholics in Medieval Times

A very basic question with which the Church really concerned herself in the medieval period was the question of the fate of non-Christians at the end of times. It is a question that really touches on the very goal of the Church namely - salvation. The question of salvation was one, which preoccupied every true and genuine medieval Christian. Membership of the Church was seen as a "conditio sine qua non" for salvation. The Church's hierarchy spoke plainly in her teaching about those who will be saved at the end of the time. She had always held, taught and maintained the famous maxim that says: "Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus (outside of the Church, there is no salvation)."⁵ This maxim was coined by St. Cyprian of Carthage (+14.9.258) and is contained in his letter titled "Ad Jubajanum de haereticis baptizandis." In this letter, he used

⁵ Pope Innocent III, in: Denzinger-Hünemann, eds. *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, No. 792.

this maxim to argue that baptism carried out by heretics is invalid. It reads in Latin thus: “Quia salus extra Ecclesiam non est.”⁶

This maxim was reinstated by one of the most powerful medieval popes of the Church - pope Innocent III (*1161, pontificate 1198-1216) in the thirteenth century in the profession of faith which he prescribed for the Waldesians on December 8, 1208. In this article of faith, the pope wrote: “With our hearts we believe and with our lips we confess but one Church, not that of the heretics, but the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, outside which we believe that no one can be saved.”⁷ It was further reinstated at the Fourth Lateran Council summoned by pope Innocent III in 1215 and attained its heights in application in the papal Bull “Unam Sanctam” of pope Boniface VIII (*1235, pontificate 1294-1303) of November 18, 1302 written at the heat of the face-off between pope Boniface VIII and the French king Philip IV (*1268, king 1285-1314). In this Bull, pope Boniface VIII as the visible head of the Catholic Church partly declared as follows: “Urged by faith, we are obliged to believe and to maintain that the Church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. We firmly believe in her and we simply confess that outside of her, there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins.”⁸

The Venetian pope Eugene IV (*1383, pontificate 1431-1447), who gave his nod to the establishment of the Transatlantic slave trade also clinched so dogmatic to this teaching of the Catholic Church such that during his papacy, especially in his fight to suppress the threat of Conciliarism to the authority and Office of the pope at the Council of Florence (1438-1445), he unequivocally remarked that pagans and Jews, who are not Christians will end up in eternal hell fire. This position is contained in his Bull “Cantate Domino” of 1441 wherein he defined this teaching as an article of faith valid for all times throughout the whole Christendom. In this Bull, Eugene IV wrote that:

The most Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and teaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only Pagans but also Jews, Heretics and Schismatic, can have a share in eternal life, but that they will go into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless before death they are joined with her, and that so important is the unity of this ecclesiastical body that only those remaining within this unity can profit by the sacraments of the Church unto salvation,

⁶ St. Cyprian of Carthage, Epistle Lxxii, Ad Jubajanum de Haereticis Baptizandis, chpt. 21; Cf. Denzinger- Hünermann, Enchiridion Symbolorum, No. 802.

⁷ Innocent III, Article of Faith, in: Denzinger-Hünermann, No. 792. It reads in Latin as follows: “Corde credimus et ore confitemur unam Ecclesiam non haereticorum, sed Sanctam Romanam Catholicam Apostolicam et immaculatam, extra quam neminem salvari credimus.”

⁸ Boniface VIII, Bulle, “Unam Sanctam,” in: Denzinger-Hünermann, No. 870. In its original Latin language, this document reads: “Unam sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam et ipsam apostolicam urgente fide credere cogimur et tenere, nosque hanc firmiter credimus et simpliciter confitemur, extra quam nec salus est nec remissio peccatorum...”

and they alone can receive an eternal recompense for their fasts, their Almsgivings, their other works of Christian piety and the duties of a Christian soldier. No one, let his Almsgiving be as great as it may, no one, even if he pours out his blood for the Name of Christ, can be saved, unless he remains within the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church.⁹

This kind of teaching ran through the whole life and breath of the medieval Catholic Church like a red thread as one can read from the writings of the popes and the professions of faith by the various Councils of the Church until the period of the Vatican Council II. It formed the backbone of the very mentality with which the medieval Catholic Church understood non-Christians and served as the prism through which she viewed and treated non-European people especially the Black Africans. In other words, all peoples and Nations, who at this time were not Christians, were classified as enemies of the Church destined for damnation in hell fire. And to save them from such damnation, they have to be brought into the fold of the Catholic Church. To achieve this goal, the Church most often encouraged the use of brute force and subjection. Most of the popes of the late medieval period used this method against the so-called "pagan" nations of the world. This was a decisive factor that informed the writings of the various papal Bulls that are connected with the beginnings of the internationally acclaimed racial slavery in history. The only wrongdoing committed by these so-called "pagans" found in the West African Atlantic Coasts of Africa was that they were not Christians and therefore it was justified to make wars against them and subject them to enslavement as pronounced by the renaissance popes as we shall later see in the next chapter of this work. Joel

⁹ Eugene IV, The Bull "Cantate Domino" of 4th Feb. 1441 in: Denzinger-Hünemann, No. 1351. Its Latin text reads: "Firmiter credit, profitetur et praedicat, nullos extra catholicam Ecclesiam existentes, non solum paganos, sed nec Iudaeos aut haereticos atque schismaticos, aeternae vitae fieri posse participes, sed in ignem aeternum ituros, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis eius, nisi ante finem vitae eidem fuerint aggregati, tantumque valere ecclesiastici corporis unitatem, ut solum in ea manentibus ad salutem ecclesiastica sacramenta proficiant, et ieiunia, eleemosynae ac cetera pietatis officia et exercitia militiae christianae praemia aeterna parturiant. Neminemque, quantascumque eleemosynas fecerit, etsi pro Christi nomine sanguinem effuderit, posse salvari, nisi in catholicae Ecclesiae gremio et unitate permanserit." This Papal Document is indeed a Bull of reunion with the Coptic Church of Egypt. On 4th February 1442, this Bull of reunion was solemnly promulgated in the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. It was signed by Eugene IV, twenty cardinals, and fifty-one Prelates, and by Andreas who was the Abbot of the Monastery of Saint Anthony appointed by the Coptic pope John XI to represent the Coptic Church of Alexandria at this Council sitting in Florence. This Bull explained the Latin doctrine of the Trinity, enumerated the Books of the Old and New Testament, anathematized heretics, and warned against the errors of the Copts and Ethiopians. This included among others: They did not know about the Sacraments of confirmation and "extreme unction"; they omitted the FILIOQUE dogma; they venerated Dioscorus as a saint; they allowed divorce in case of serious crime or leprosy; and they permitted child marriage. These were actually legitimate cultural, liturgical, canonical, and theological differences, incomprehensible at the time to the Roman Catholic Church of the Latin Rites.

Panzer acknowledged this fact, when he asserted that: “Since it quickly became the practice to force into servitude many of the peoples who were found to be living in these lands. Indeed it was common practice for such atrocities to be committed under the guise of the Gospel, as the argument was often made that the only way to bring the Christian faith to them was by brute force and human subjection.”¹⁰

In the light of this fact, the Church’s role in the enslavement of Black Africans rested primarily on this attitude and teachings against people of other religion. Her negative attitude towards Black African enslavement as elucidated in the preceding section of this work is to be seen from this point of view. And it was this fact that made the various popes of the renaissance papacy to give their authority to the various kings of Portugal at different points in time, to carry out war against Black Africans in the form of fighting a religious Crusade even in the regions of West Africa, where such was not needed as a method of conversion and spreading the light of the Christian faith to those they considered were still living in darkness. And as a matter of fact, any means and method of achieving this goal including the use of force and enslavement was justified and approved by the Church's hierarchy.

1.4 The Theory of Medieval Papal Universal Authority

Closely related to the Church's attitude towards non-believers in the medieval Christianity was her concept of papal universal authority. Historians have always considered medieval Europe as one that was strongly dominated by the power struggle between the two acknowledged medieval authorities - Sacerdotium and Imperium, emperor and pope. Both powers traced their origin from the same source - God. And the struggle among them consisted chiefly in the question, which office among the two powers has the supreme authority to make rules that should guide the lives of the Christians of the medieval “*societas Christiana*” (Christian world)? Put in another way, the question was asked: Who is the supreme judge and universal law-giver of the then known Christian world, the pope or the emperor? Like one will expect, the medieval canonists, popes and papalists gave as answer to this question, that the sacerdotal (*auctoritas sacra Pontificum*) authority is superior to the temporal power (*regalis potestas*) just in the same manner that the soul is superior to the body, spirit to matter. And as such the Supreme Pontiff has the supreme juridical authority to rule the Christian world including the emperor and kings. This answer was reflected in the teachings of pope Gelasius I (date of birth unknown, pontificate 492-496) in 494 to settle a conflict that erupted between

¹⁰ Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. 4.

him and the Byzantine emperor Anastasios I (*430, ruled 491-518). In a letter addressed to this emperor, the pope made in a very articulate manner the difference between the two powers in the following words:

There are two, namely, eminent emperor, who occupy the top position through which this world is being ruled: the sacred authority (*auctoritas*) of the bishops and the imperial power (*potestas*). Of these two, the burden of the priest is the more difficult, as they bear the burden of rendering account for the lives and sins of even the kings of men before God's judgment. Even though as you know, most gracious son, that you are indeed paramount in dignity among the entire human race, but at the same time you have to recognize the fact that you do humbly bow yourself before the official trustees of divine things, and expect from them the means to your own very salvation. By so doing, you recognize that by the reception of the heavenly sacraments (...) that you are simply a humble recipient rather than being the one, who commands. In these things therefore, you are dependent on the judgment of the priests, and as such, you dare not subjugate them to your own personal will. If however, the bishops recognize in constitutional matters, namely that the imperial power is transmitted to you by divine arrangement, and on this basis they therefore contribute to the observations and obedience to your laws, it is on the weight of this realization that one has to show more willingly obedience to those who are appointed for the dispensation of the venerable mysteries (...) And if all the believers should subject themselves internally to the priests, how much more then is the bishop of that Chair should be obeyed, whom the most high God Himself had placed above all the priests and whom ever since then, the entire Church has ever revered with filial devotion.¹¹

And in an effort to drive this point home, the medieval papacy and canonists developed the idea that maintained that the pope as “*Romanus Pontifex*” (Roman Pontiff) is the Vicar of God (*Vicarius Dei*) on earth. And being a *Vicarius Dei*, means in the opinion of an Italian dominican preacher and canonist Tancred of Bologna (1185-1230) that the pope is a true Vicar of God. This is contained in his writings on “*De Translatione Episcopi*,” where he wrote as follows: “Whatever is done by the authority of the Lord pope is done by the authority of God.”¹² In the same light, one of the famous medieval canonist and archbishop Niccolo Panoramitanus (1386-1445) maintained that: “The pope can do whatever God can do.”¹³ And led by this principle, medieval papacy moved to create an environment within the “*corpus Christianum*” that will bring the universal authority of the pope into being.

¹¹ Letter of Pope Gelasius I to the Byzantine Emperor Anastasios I in 494, in: Herbers, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, pp. 43-44.

¹² Tancred, *Apparatus on the Compilatio Tertia*, Tit. *De Translatione Episcopi*, C. 2, Fl. 102v. This citation reads in Latin thus: “*Quod fit auctoritate papae dicitur fieri auctoritate Dei.*” See also, Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, pp. 50-51, 55.

¹³ Panoramitanus, *Commentary on Decretales*, 1, Vi, 34, Fl. 115v, No. 18. It reads in Latin thus: “*Papa potest facere, quicquid Deus potest.*” Cf. Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 50.

The aim of this medieval papal universal authority consisted in the establishment of a universal monarchy with the pope as a world emperor. And this is to be established within the ambient of a universally ecclesiastical vision, where juridical authority and power rested in the hand of one and only man - the pope. At the basis of this concept is the Pauline theology of the Church as a body of Christ with many parts, where the pope is considered to be its very visible head. The Church conceived in this light therefore, means that her members are directly under the authority and care of the pope, who in his fullness of power has the authority to integrate them to this body or to cut them off from it. In such a "hierocratic system," the pope possessed a direct political and spiritual authority over all men and their affairs irrespective of religion, place and time. Michael Wilks traces this hierocratic conception of papal supreme universal authority as an idea, whose origin is to be traced back to the word "Ecclesia." According to this author, the term Ecclesia:

stands for the corporate union of the whole Christian people into one body, the 'unum corpus' of the Pauline Epistles. It is a society resting upon and oriented by the tenets of the Christian Faith. But it is not merely a spiritual unity; it is just as much a civil society, a universal body politics. For this reason, it is commonly described as a city or kingdom. In short, it is a Christianized version of the universal empire of the Romans.¹⁴

The establishment of this universal ecclesiastical empire dominated the pontificates of the major powerful and very influential medieval popes such as Gregory VII (*1028, pontificate 1073-1085), Urban II (*1035, pontificate 1088-1099), Alexander III (*1105, pontificate 1159-1181), Innocent III (*1161, pontificate 1198-1216), Gregory IX (*1170, pontificate 1227-1241), Innocent IV (*1195, pontificate 1243-1254) and Boniface VIII (*1235, pontificate 1294-1303). That means, from the early eleventh century and up to the early beginnings of the fourteenth century, this hierocratic concept of jurisdiction preoccupied the papacy and through the pursuit of this aim, the office of the pope attained the heights of its glorious and worldwide influence. All these popes were famous intellectuals, canonists and lawyers and were united with this single papal universally authoritative view of the Church.

Using as their "instrumentum laboris" (working tool) a work of the twelfth century Italian monk Gratian (+1160) titled "Decretum Gratiani"¹⁵ written in the year 1140, these great Roman Pontiffs worked assiduously to secure firmly

¹⁴ Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty*, p. 19.

¹⁵ "Decretum" is a compendium of selected canonical materials that accumulated over the past one thousand years from the decrees of popes, canons of Church Councils, decisions of great Church fathers, those of three great Pontiffs and canon lawyers etc. assembled together in a Book form by an Italian monk Gratian and the father of medieval canonists, popularly known among canonists as Magister Gratianus.

their positions as popes like a worldly political monarch, whose ruling authority reached to the ends of the earth. And with the authority of this 'Decretum Gratiani', the pope was seen as the supreme judge and legislator in ecclesiastical and temporal matters. And as a supreme judge, a fourteenth century canonist and arch-papalist Giles of Rome taught that: "The pope is subject to the judgement of no man and can be bound by no law, civil or canon. He is a creature without halter and bridle. He is the rightful judge and ruler of the whole world even in temporal matters."¹⁶ On the same note, another renowned medieval canonist Egidius Spiritualis wrote: "The Supreme Pontiff possesses the plenitude of juridical powers not only in spiritual but also in temporal aspects of human affairs throughout the whole world."¹⁷ He is not an equal to any mortals including emperors and other temporal princes. Instead, "he is superior to the kings in all temporal aspects of life. Everyone is subject to his jurisdiction, nor has he any equal on earth."¹⁸ His office was seen as one which confers authority to the Holy Roman emperors and other temporal princes throughout the entire Christian world by an act of coronation and consecration.¹⁹

In comparison with the temporal powers, it was taught that the papal power is superior to the temporal powers even in worldly matters. In the light of this belief therefore, "emperors and kings are no more than sword-bearers of the Church under the power of the pope."²⁰ The truth contained in this assertion has its origin in the two-sword symbolism proffered in 1153 by the saintly

¹⁶ Giles of Rome, *De Ecclesiastica Potestate*, Pt. III, Chpt. VIII, p. 361, in: Dyson, *Giles of Rome's On Ecclesiastical Power*, p. Xxvi.

¹⁷ Egidius Spiritualis de Perusio, *Libellus Contra Infideles et Inobedientes et Rebelles Sanctae Romane Ecclesiae ac Summo Pontifici* in: Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 107; Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty*, p. 260. This citation reads in latin as follows: "Summus Pontifex in toto orbe terrarum non solum in spiritualibus, sed etiam in temporalibus obtinet jurisdictionum plenariam."

¹⁸ Cf. Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 77; Hebers, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, p. 43. It reads in Latin as follows: "Omnes subsunt ei jure divino, parem non habet super terram."

¹⁹ This tradition of imperial coronation and consecration by an ecclesiastical authority began as early as 800 A.D, when Charlemagne, the son of king Pepin was crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire by pope Leo III at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome on the Christmas day of 800 AD. With the help of this act, medieval popes saw it as their prerogative to give the Holy Roman Empire to the kings of their time as a gift by an act of consecration and coronation of the Holy Roman emperors. Referring to this practice conducted by pope Leo III in 800 A.D, Brian Tierney asserted that: "There was no historical justification for any participation by the pope in the creation of a new emperor; acclamation by the people was the constitutive act. But by one brilliant gesture, pope Leo established the precedent adhered to throughout the Middle Ages, that papal coronation was essential to the making of an emperor, and thereby implanted the germ of the later idea that the empire itself was a gift to be bestowed by the papacy." Cf. Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State 1050-1300*, p. 18; Hebers, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, pp. 74-75.

²⁰ Giles of Rome, *De Ecclesiastica Potestate*, Pt. I, Chpt. III, p. 15, in: Dyson, *Giles of Rome's On Ecclesiastical Power*, p. Xxiii.

French Cistercian monk, abbot and Crusade preacher Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) with which he explained the two powers namely: sacerdotal and imperial, and recognized both swords to reside in the hands of one man - the pope. However, he recognized the temporal sword to be in the hands of the king. But in reality, this sword has to be drawn out of its sheaths only in the service and at the command of the Supreme Pontiff. This teaching is contained in his treatise "De Consideratione," wherein he wrote as follows:

Nevertheless, he who would deny that the sword belongs to thee (the pope), has not, as I conceive, sufficiently weighed the words of the Lord, where He said, speaking to Peter, "Put up thy sword into the scabbard" (John 18:11). For it is here plainly implied that even the material sword is thine to be drawn at thy bidding, although not by thy hand. Besides, unless this sword also appertained to thee in some sense, when the disciples said to Christ, "Lord, behold here are two swords" (Luke 22:38), He would never have answered as He did, "it is enough, but rather, it is too much." "We can therefore conclude that both swords, namely the spiritual and the material, belong to the Church, and that although only the former is to be wielded by her own hand, the two are to be employed in her service. It is for the priest to use the sword of the word, but to strike with the sword of steel belongs to the soldier by the direct command of the emperor, yet this must be by the authority and will of the priest (the pope).²¹

What St. Bernard proposed in the above citation is nothing but a situation, where the power to direct as well as to command lies solely in the hand of the pope as a feudal lord with the emperor or king as his vassal. He was not alone in making such proposal. Pope Innocent III did the same and even went as far as denigrating imperial powers by comparing the two powers with the relationship between the sun and the moon. In his own words, the pope asserted that:

Just as the founder of the universe established two great lights in the firmament of heaven, a greater one to preside over the day and the lesser one to preside over the night, so too in the firmament of the universal Church, which is signified by the word heaven, He instituted two great dignities, a greater one to preside over souls as if over day, and a lesser one to preside over bodies as if overnight. These are the Pontifical authority and the Royal power. Now, just as the moon derives its light from the sun and is indeed lower than it in quantity and quality, in position and in power, so too the Royal power derives the splendour of its dignity from the Pontifical authority.²²

²¹ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Treatise on De Consideratione*, 4:3, in: Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, pp. 93-94. See also a translated copy of this *Treatise* in: Dyson, *Normative Theories*, Ch. 3; and in the footnote of his Giles of Rome's *On Ecclesiastical Power*, pp. xvii-xviii; Hebers, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, pp. 161-162.

²² Pope Innocent III, *Letter to the Prefect Acerbus and the Nobles of Tuscany in 1198*, (PL 214, 377). See a translated copy of this *Letter* in: Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, p. 132. See also the comparison made by another powerful medieval canonist and decretalist bishop

Furthermore, it was held among medieval canonists that temporal power is restricted to the kingdom of the temporal prince, while papal power is not bound by space and time. This comparison is vividly observed in the medieval canonists' assertions such as this: "His laws (the pope) demand obedience by everyone. They are not territorially restricted in their validity or applicability as imperial laws are. The dominion of the pope extends over the whole world, irrespective of religion. The power of the emperor on the other hand is co-extensive with, and restricted to the Christian world."²³

By reason of this papal superiority over imperial powers therefore, it is not surprising that the medieval papacy claimed to possess the authority to depose emperors and kings by reason of sin (*ratione peccati*). The ecclesiastical historical background that informed this claim was the excommunication and deposition of the last Roman emperor of the united Roman Empire, Flavius Theodosius (*347, ruled 379-395) by bishop Ambrose of Milan (*339, bishop 374-397) in the year 390 A.D; and that of the deposition of the last king of Franks in the Merovingian Dynasty, emperor Childeric III (*717, reigned 743-752) by the last pope of the Byzantine papacy, pope Zacharias (*679, pontificate 741-752) in 752. These incidents turned out in the hands of the popes of the high medieval Christianity as a point of reference to their claim of authority to depose emperors and other temporal princes from their thrones. For example, in the quarrel that ensued towards the end of the thirteenth century between pope Boniface VIII and king Philip IV (*1268, reigned 1285-1314) of France over clerical taxation and clerical immunity from secular jurisdiction, the pope cited such deposition of kings as an example that he was given the power to depose kings including king Philip IV himself. This citation was made by Boniface VII when he asserted:

...we declare that we do not wish to usurp the jurisdiction of the king in any way... But the king cannot deny that like all the faithful, he is subject to us *ratione peccati*... Our predecessors deposed three kings of France. They can read it in their chronicles and we in ours, one case is to be found also in the *Decretum*. And although we are not worthy to walk in the footsteps of our predecessors, if the king committed the same crimes as those kings committed, or greater ones, we should, with grief and great sadness, dismiss him like a servant.²⁴

Hostiensis in this regard, where he described the Royal power "as being lesser and cruder like a club for striking and beating down infidels and rebels." Cf. Hostiensis, *On Decretales* 1.33.6, *Solitae*, No. 74, in: Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, p. 157.

²³ Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 78.

²⁴ Pope Boniface VIII, in: Dyson, *Giles of Rome's On Ecclesiastical Power*, pp. Xv-Xvi. For other references on papal authority to depose kings, see, Pope Gregory VII, *The Bull "Dictatus Papae"* of March 1075; translated in: Ehler, *Church and State Through the Centuries*, pp. 43-44; Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, pp. 49-50; Dyson, *Normative Theories*, App. II(a) and II(b).

This authoritative position of the medieval papal Office was maintained and pursued with vigour and every diplomatic strategy by each of the aforesaid powerful Roman Pontiffs. And any incursion of the temporal princes made to checkmate this papal “status quo ante” was resisted with every available means - either by means of war, through forming of alliances with other loyal temporal princes or with the threat of excommunication.²⁵

Operating from a papal Office adorned with this kind of hierocratic robe, it was not surprising to anyone then that pope Innocent III once described himself as: “Lower than God but higher than men.”²⁶ In the same light, he referred to the papal Office with the following words: “The Roman Pontiff was not the vicar of man but the vicar of God on earth.”²⁷ Continuing, he said: “Christ left to Peter not only the universal Church, but the whole world to govern.”²⁸ “He can do and say whatever he pleases, in all and everything.”²⁹ That would imply that even though, he is a mortal being, he is not in any way answerable to any mortal. This means in the language of the canonist Giles of Rome, that the pope in his Office and power has “plenitudine potestatis” as successor and heir of St. Peter. In his view: “Such papal power is one, untrammelled by any earthly constraint from which all lesser powers are derived like streams from a source.”³⁰ In such plenitude of powers, the pope in the teaching of medieval canonists is therefore, the master of the whole world, Christian and non Christian world put together. Using this position, pope Innocent IV maintained in his “Commentary on Decretales” as follows: “We believe that the pope as the vicar of Christ on earth has power not only over all Christians, but also over

²⁵ A good example of papal defense of this medieval papal hierocracy was seen in the investiture controversy between pope Gregory VII and the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV of Germany which ended in the excommunication of the emperor Henry IV by the pope in 1076. To regain his lost status, Henry IV had to stand barefooted in the snow at the gate of an Italian city of Canossa as a sign of repentance before he was absolved of his incurred excommunication. And to stamp his feet in an unchallengeable authority, Gregory VII issued laws in his papal Bull “Dictatus Papae” of March 1075 where he legislated among other things that: All Princes of the world shall kiss the feet of the pope; that the pope has the right to depose emperors and kings and that he (the pope) is to judge all mortals and is not to be judged by any, etc. For a full text of this set of laws, see, Gregory VII, *Dictatus Papae*, translated in: Ehler, *Church and State Through the Centuries*, pp. 43-44; Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, pp. 49-50; Hebers, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, p. 129.

²⁶ Innocent III, in: Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, p. 128; Hebers, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, pp. 173-175.

²⁷ Innocent III, *Commentary on Decretales Novit* of April 1204, I, VII.3, in: Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 118. This citation reads in Latin thus: “Romanus Pontifex non puri hominis, sed veri Dei vicem gerit in terris.”

²⁸ Innocent III, in: Moore, ed. *Pope Innocent III and his World*, p. 187; Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, p. 128.

²⁹ Innocent III, *Speculum Judiciale*, Lib. I, partit. I, in: Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 50. It reads in Latin thus: “In omnibus et per omnia potest facere et dicere, quicquid placet.”

³⁰ Dyson, *Giles of Rome's On Ecclesiastical Power*, Pt. II, Chpt. IV, p. XXvi.

all unbelievers just as Christ had power over all humans.”³¹ This assertion of the pope has its foundation in the preaching of Christ as contained in the Gospel of St. John, where He said: “There are other sheep which belong to me that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them too, they will listen to my voice and they will become one flock with one shepherd” (John 10:16). Interpreting this saying of Christ, Innocent IV further said: “All men, faithful and infidels alike are through their creation the sheep of Christ.”³² And as such are under the command and authority of the Vicar of Christ.

The force of this claim served in the hands of the fifteenth century popes as justification for sanctioning the use of force by means of a religious war against the Saracens of Northern Africa and the enslavement of non Christians of Black African origin in the period of the Transatlantic slave trade. The attitude and actions of the popes of the aforesaid century towards the Black Africans depended heavily on this tradition of universal authority even in the territories located outside of the ambit of the Western Christendom. But the greatest ecclesiastical event in history where this claim was manifested was in the time of the Crusades which was used to expand this worldwide authority of the popes. Assenting to this fact, Walter Ullmann, a jurist and professor of medieval history at the University of Leeds maintained that: “The idea of Crusades was born by the papal office as a means of demonstrating papal dominion over the entire known universe. The Crusades were considered only as a stepping stone in the direction of the eventual establishment of a full-fledged world government.”³³

But despite the efforts of the medieval popes to maintain this status quo ante through the Crusades in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries respectively, this glorious image was checkmated in the early part of the fourteenth century as a result of the emerging new nation-states in France, England and Germany, who were poised to establish kingdoms that are independent of the papal sovereignty and dominion. The struggle of the medieval papacy of this century to repress this awakening national consciousness of these kingdoms was met with abysmal failures and even led to the fall of the papacy and the humiliation of the powerful pope Boniface VIII by the king of France Philip IV in 1303 at the Italian city of Anagni, where the pope was kidnapped, beaten up and taken into hostage by the troops loyal to the king of France. It was indeed both a humiliation and a defeat that was suffered not only by pope Boniface VIII, but also one, which was to be

³¹ Innocent IV, Commentary on Decretales, III, xxxiv. 8, Fl. 429v, No. 3. It reads in Latin thus: “Credimus, quod papa, qui est Christi vicarius, potestatem habet non tantum super Christianos, sed etiam super omnes Infideles, cum enim Christus habuerit super omnes potestatem.”

³² Innocent IV, Commentary on Decretales, III, xxxiv. 8, Fl. 429v, No. 4.

³³ Ullmann, Medieval Papalism, p. 121.

suffered by the entire papacy for the next 100 years in the ecclesiastical history, when the papacy was thrown into the worst calamities in its history: the so-called “Babylonian captivity” under the watchful and suppressive hands of the French kings in the French city of Avignon for over a period of 70 years (1305-1377) and the consequent great schism of the Western Church of 1378-1417 that nearly tore the entire Church into shreds. It was a defeat of the medieval papacy, from which it never recovered again. Even the clarion call made by the humiliated pope Boniface VIII shortly before this fall that: “It is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff,”³⁴ fell on deaf ears in the face of this omen that befell the medieval papacy. Thus ended on a very sad but regrettable note, the dream of the papacy to establish a worldwide ecclesiastical monarchy with the pope as a feudal overlord and the emperors, kings and other temporal princes and kingdoms as his vassals.

The contribution of this hierocratic concept of papal authority in the involvement of the Church in the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans lies in the fact that it formed the very bedrock as well as the focal point upon which other traditions of the Church which favoured this enslavement were based and centred. For instance, it was based on this concept that salvation was thought to belong only to those who are members of the Church and non-members were considered to be damned forever. And as such the need to bring them into the one fold of the Church under the headship of the pope arose. It was also based on this concept of authority that non-Catholics (pagans) were denied their fundamental human rights to lordship, dominion and to possess private belongings, and since they do not belong to the Church under the command of the pope, it was then justified to declare a religious war against them and consequently to enslave them. On the part of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century papacy on one hand, this universally authoritative concept formed a point of reference that greatly influenced the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' papal Office in its policies, apostolic decisions and Letters issued with regard to Africa and the allotting of her territories to the Portuguese Catholic kings. By issuing papal Bulls authorizing the kings of Portugal to invade the West African Atlantic and to subdue the inhabitants of the said region therefore, the said popes only demonstrated that their power and authority extended to all parts of the world and even to the areas of the globe that have not been discovered by any Christian king. On the part of the Portuguese kings on the other hand, who began this enslavement in the early beginnings of the

³⁴ Pope Boniface VIII, The Bull “Unam Sanctam” of 18th November 1302, in: Denzinger, Hünemann, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Nos. 870-875, p. 360; Hebers, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, pp. 220-221. This citation reads in Latin thus: “Porro subesse Romano Pontifici omni humanae creaturae declaramus, dicimus, deffinimus omnino esse de necessitate salutis.”

fifteenth century, this concept gave them a convincing assurance, that they were backed up by this unchallengeable authority of the popes, upon which they heavily relied in establishing the Transatlantic slave trade.

1.5 Crusade seen as Mission to Re-conquer Former Christian Lands

The Crusade was a practical demonstration of the worldwide authority and dominion of the medieval papacy as articulated above. It was another tradition of the Church, which found much expression in the build-up to the establishment of the Transatlantic slave trade in the fifteenth century. Etymologically, the word Crusade comes from the Medieval Latin word "cruciare" which means, "to mark with a cross."³⁵ By way of definition, Crusade can be defined as any of the series of the religiously military campaigns carried out by the Christian forces of Western Europe from the eleventh to the thirteenth century mainly to re-capture the Holy Land from the hands of the Muslims. For Jonathan Riley-Smith, to crusade means: "to engage in a war that was both holy, because it was believed to be waged on God's behalf, and penitential, because those taking part in it considered themselves to be performing an act of penance."³⁶ This definition reveals two important aspects of the Crusade that will enable us to situate it in its very medieval Christian context. It named Crusade as a "holy war," because it was taken to be waged on God's behalf and secondly, the Crusade was penitential, because the Crusaders believed themselves to be performing an act of penance. In his effort to situate the medieval Crusade in its proper context, a seasoned Tübinger professor and Church historian Andreas Holzelm considered a war to be holy, when it is being fought by a party or both parties as a reverence to a transcendental Power respected as a god, and when this is seen as a war fought in His name. This transcendental Power can be called Yahweh, God, Allah etc.³⁷ But as recent researches carried out on the history of the Crusades have showed, modern scholars do agree with each other that the Crusades should no longer be seen as "holy wars" carried out in a fanatical sense of the word as it is being employed today in the Muslim world. Scholars unanimously agree that the Crusades are better understood as "holy wars" fought under the criteria of the "just war" theory firstly propounded by St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and further

³⁵ The expression "to mark with a cross" was a sign of identification with the cross of Christ attached to the clothes of those who have declared themselves ready to fight in order to redeem the cross of Christ believed to have fallen into the hands of Muslims in the Holy Land.

³⁶ Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity and Islam*, p. 9.

³⁷ Holzelm, *Gott und Gewalt, in: Formen des Krieges*, p. 373.

propagated in the high medieval period by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). St. Augustine's employment of the just war theory was done in the context of the medieval Church's fight against heretics in the doctrinal conflict that arose between the Roman Catholic Church and the Donatists of Northern Africa in the year 311. In this context, St. Augustine gave the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church the right to declare such a war on the condition that it will restore back the disturbed peace and tranquillity of the Church caused by heretics either within or outside of the Catholic Church as well as to win back what has been unjustly taken away from her by the unjust oppressors. But in doing this, he cautioned that the goal of the war must be peace, and that the *recta intentio* (right intention) and the charity of the one calling for the war as well as those of the combatants of war should form the "*conditio sine qua non*" (necessary condition) for adjudging a war to be a just one. This Augustinian justification of the just war theory is made explicit in his writings when he said:

But, say they, the wise man will wage just wars. As if he would not all the rather lament the necessity of just wars, if he remembers that he is a man; for if they were not just, he would not wage them, and would therefore be delivered from all wars. For it is the wrongdoing of the opposing party which compels the wise man to wage just wars; and this wrong-doing, even though it gave rise to no war, would still be a matter of grief to man because, it is man's wrong-doing. Whoever gives even moderate attention to human affairs and to our common nature, will recognize that if there is no man who does not wish to be joyful, neither is there anyone who does not wish to have peace. For even those, who make war desire nothing but victory - desire, that is to say, to attain to peace with glory. For what else is victory than the conquest of those who resist us? And when this is done there is peace. It is therefore, with the desire for peace that wars are waged, even by those who take pleasure in exercising their war-like nature in command and battle. And hence it is obvious that peace is the end sought for by war.³⁸

St. Thomas Aquinas, who lived 900 years after this Augustinian teaching on just war later on undertook this concept and developed it further. Explicating this Augustinian concept of the just war, Aquinas stated vividly the three conditions necessary for declaring a just war namely: (a) The war must arise from a just cause (*iusta causa*) rather than from the purpose of attaining selfish gains. (b) It must be summoned only by a legitimate authority such as the pope or the state. (c) The central motive (right intention) for declaring the war must be, to re-establish peace even in the midst of violence. While fulfilling these criteria, the medieval Christian Crusades could therefore be said to be just wars fought by Christians for the just cause of defending the freedom of the Church and of the Christian faith, declared by the popes as its legitimate authority without any

³⁸ St. Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, Book XIX, 12, transl. Dods, p. 687.

selfish interests, but with the right intention (*recta intentio*) of restoring the disturbed peace of the Catholic Church. Those, who fight a war under these specified conditions in the teachings of the medieval Church therefore, do not commit a sinful act even if they involved themselves in the shedding of blood of their fellow human beings. But before engaging oneself in such a war, one has to be sure that he is not participating in this war for the purpose of enriching himself materially, rather for the goal of attaining spiritual ends. And that was why it was necessary for one to do actual confession of one's sins and be repented of them before engaging oneself in a Crusade.

This brings us at this juncture to the other important aspect of the medieval Crusade as contained in the afore-stated definition of the Crusade namely: the penitential goal of the Crusaders themselves. This penitential aspect of the Crusades which the German born historian Ernst-Dieter Hehl termed “*praeparatio cordis*” (spiritual reward which the Crusaders must acquire)³⁹ was so important for the Crusaders such that it elevated their spirit and gave them the conviction that they were not only fighting for the Church but also doing penance for the sins committed in their lifetime. That was the reason why, (when one reads through all the Crusade Bulls of the medieval period), the promise of perpetual indulgence by the popes featured very prominently throughout the period of the Crusades beginning from the papacy of pope Urban II in the eleventh century up to the period of writing the Crusade Bulls for the Portuguese conquest and discovery of Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Prior to the period of the Crusades, the spiritual practice of Christians to gain indulgence for the penance due to mortal sin committed, was to make a pilgrimage either to Rome or to the Holy Land (Jerusalem). By engaging oneself in such a spiritual journey for reparation of sins, much money and other properties were involved. Therefore, in the period of the Crusades, the popes who called the Christian faithful to engage in a Crusade under the criteria of the Augustinian cum thomistic just war theory, saw this spiritually, as another manner of doing reparation for the eternal punishment due to one's sins. The attachment of perpetual indulgence for participation in such a just war was therefore seen as an act of spiritual compensation for the Crusaders, who now risk their very lives in a war rather than spending much money and properties in undertaking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In this regard, the Church historian Andreas Holzem rightly pointed out that by employing this perpetual indulgence in the Crusade Bulls of the medieval Christianity, it was clearly hinted by the popes that the grant of this perpetual indulgence in the Bulls was not an instrument for the forgiveness of sins rather as a way of making

³⁹ Hehl, *Kirche und Krieg*, Bd. 19, pp. 1-4.

reparations for the eternal punishment due to sin.⁴⁰ And this was to be acquired in “*recta intentio*,” when the participant in the Crusades primarily hopes to attain it “*pro sola devotione, non pro honoris vel pecunie adeptione, non terreni commodi cupiditate, sed pro sola suae animae salute*.”⁴¹ And secondly, when the participant engages himself in it on “the collective thought of protecting justice and the “*vim vi repelle*” (repelling violence with violence).⁴² This practise of attaching perpetual indulgence in these Crusade Bulls of the popes therefore served as a replacement for the old practice of sponsoring a pilgrimage to the Holy Land for the attainment of indulgence for sins committed in one's lifetime.

With this deep background on the meaning of Crusade as religious war and its penitential import under the criteria of the just war, the onus of summoning it as a judgement of God therefore became an exclusive reserve of the Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.⁴³ The question that arises here is, why then the pope and not the Catholic emperor or the king? The quick answer to this question does not only come from the thomistic idea that the Crusade as a religious war has to be declared by the pope as the legitimate authority of the Church, but also from the medieval canonists' conception of the office which the pope occupied in the entire Christendom as a *Vicarius Dei*, whose authority as we saw above is not limited to either place, space or time. In other words, he has the power of direct interference in all territories formerly belonging to the Christendom but now under the hands of infidels – Muslims, Jews and pagans. For some medieval canonists with extreme views such as Cardinal Francesco Zabarella (1360-1417), such papal power of direct interference is extended even “to all places irrespective of whether they were once under Christian dominion or not.”⁴⁴ This right of papal power of direct interference in all places, formed the basis for the canonist support for the Crusade to the Holy Land once under Christian dominion but lost to the Muslims during the rapid Islamic invasions of the seventh century. The Crusade to the Holy Land is therefore understood as a Reconquista of a holy place that was very essential to the Christians, a place made holy by the birth of their Founder Jesus Christ, where He carried out his prophetic missions, crucified, died and was buried. Allowing such a place held in sanctity by Christians to continue to remain in Muslim hands was considered an abomination, and as such the need to redeem it and to purge it of such

⁴⁰ Holzem, *Gott und Gewalt*, Ibid, p. 376.

⁴¹ Ibid. The English translation of this Latin citation reads as follows: “that the participant has to engage himself in a Crusade “simply for the sake of devotion, not for the sake of money or of honor, not by desire of an earthly advantage, but only for the salvation of his own soul.”

⁴² Holzem, *Gott und Gewalt*, p. 380.

⁴³ Holzem, *Gott und Gewalt*, p. 376.

⁴⁴ Francesco Zaberella, *Commentary on Decretales*, III.xxxiv.8, No. 18, Fl. 201v.

sacrilege and desecration as well as to restore it back for the purpose for which it was meant (unhindered access to the Christians as centre for worship and pilgrimage) was not only religiously justified but also was the “*iusta causa*” (just cause) for the Crusade to the Holy Land.⁴⁵ Expressing this need, a thirteenth century Crusade preacher John of Abbeville wrote in 1217 as follows: “Our inheritance has turned over to strangers, our homes to aliens, the land of promise is our inheritance and the place where Christ was buried and suffered is our home. And this inheritance is seized, the Holy places are profaned, the holy cross is made a captive.”⁴⁶

The Crusade to the Holy Land has not only a religious character, but also a political undertone. Politically, Jerusalem was formerly under the ancient Holy Roman Empire and to regain it would mean to restore it back to its original political owner - the Roman emperor. But due to the fact that this old Roman Empire is now extinct, it was assumed by medieval Christian canonists and decretalists in their logic and thinking, that Jerusalem and other lands formerly belonging to this old empire of the Romans, automatically now belong to the Christendom under the leadership of the Roman Pontiff, whose Office as propagated by them, was considered as having a universal authority, and as such the pope could now assume the role of an emperor to regain these lands. Pope Innocent IV as a renowned medieval canonist championed the course of this justification. In his commentary on the Decretales, he said: “This argument is sufficient in all other lands where the Roman emperors had the power of jurisdiction.”⁴⁷ This teaching formed the political justification that informed the Crusade to the Holy Land and other territories including North African countries which were once Christian territories before they were overrun by the Muslim conquest of the seventh century. The Crusade against them was understood as a just war of reconquest of the lands formerly belonging to the Christian king and indirectly under the papal autonomy and power. This political undertone given to the Crusade is an idea, which marched with a political conception realised in Christendom only from the eleventh to the fourteenth century with the goal of union of all peoples and sovereigns under the command and leadership of one man - the pope. And there is no other event in history that saw the pope fulfilling such a double role of his spiritual and temporal jurisdictions except in the time of the Crusades. The Crusade

⁴⁵ Holzem, *Gott und Gewalt*, p. 377; See also the Crusade to the Holy Land as a religious war fought to regain the Holy Land, in: Hebers, *Die Geschichte des Papsttums*, p. 138.

⁴⁶ John of Abbeville, “*Sermo ad Crucesignatos*,” in: Cole, J. Penny, ed. *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land 1095-1270*, Cambridge 1991, p. 22. Cf. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity and Islam*, p. 16.

⁴⁷ Pope Innocent IV, *Commentary on Decretales*, III, Xxxiv.8, No.7, Fl. 430. See also, Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 128. This citation reads in Latin thus: “*Haec ratio sufficit in omnibus aliis terris, in quibus imperatores Romani jurisdictionem habuerunt.*”

became therefore an event that called into existence the vision of the medieval papal Office to establish a world-wide juridical theory, where the papal Office showed in concrete terms that it really possessed the two swords symbolism of authority to control and to command the temporal sword in the service of the Church. With this in mind, it is little wonder then, that the most influential ecclesiastic of the medieval Western Church and an ardent supporter of the papal temporal power St. Bernard of Clairvaux used this two-sword symbolism to summon the Blessed pope Eugenius III (*1080, pontificate 1145-1153) in 1146 to rise up and employ the two swords in his possession in sending military assistance to the Christians in Palestine so as to save them from the hands of their Muslim oppressors in the Holy Land. This clarion call was made clearly by St. Bernard when he wrote: "Now will Christ endure a second passion where He also endured His first, both swords, the material as well as the spiritual must be unsheathed. And by whom but by thee? For the two swords are Peter's, to be drawn whenever necessary, the one by his own hand, the other by his authority."⁴⁸

And it was on the basis of the recognition of this universal authority of the pope over temporal and spiritual affairs of all men that the emperor Alexios I Komnenos (*1056, reigned 1081-1118) of the Byzantine empire turned to the Christians of the Western Church under the headship of pope Urban II for a military assistance in the wake of the incessant incursions of the Seljuk Turks, who since the seventh century were posing dangerous threats to the territories within his empire beginning from the Holy Land, Syria, Antioch to Egypt and others. This request was made by the Byzantine emperor through his ambassadors sent to the Council fathers and lay faithful sitting at the Italian state of Piacenza.⁴⁹ The request he made, did fall on the ready ears of pope Urban II, who saw it at first, as a victory to the papacy's claim of the primacy of the Church of Rome and its pope over the patriarchs of Constantinople which formerly led to the great schism of 1054 that caused separation of the Eastern Church from the West. Secondly, this call for help raised in him the hope of reuniting the separated Churches and by so doing bringing the entire Christendom under one umbrella, the so-called "ovile ecclesiae" (one fold of

⁴⁸ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Letter to pope Eugenius III in 1146, in: Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, p. 94.

⁴⁹ The Council of Piacenza was a gathering of both Prelates of the Church, temporal Princes and lay faithful for the purpose of discussing Church issues especially to end the investiture controversy which began in the pontificate of pope Gregory VII. This Council lasted briefly from the 1st of March to the 5th of March 1095. Its attendance was magnificent in number. It was attended by some 200 bishops, 4,000 other Church Officials and 30,000 lay faithful. This number of participants is an indication of the influence and position which the papacy commanded in the medieval society after the glorious papacy of pope Gregory VII which excommunicated emperor Henry IV during the investiture conflict that arose among the two powerful medieval powers.

the Church). Over and above all these, it was a great opportunity for the pope to concretely realise the goal of the medieval papacy of establishing a worldwide juridical right, whose authority would stretch not only to the then known Christian world but also to the non Christian worlds of Muslims, pagans and other unbelievers yet unknown to the Western Christian world. The result of this was an immediate response of the pope to send a Crusade to the Holy Land. This was seen in his summoning of another Council held in his home country - the French city of Clermont⁵⁰ where the need to liberate the Holy Land from the hands of the Muslims was given utmost attention by the Council fathers and the French temporal princes and nobles. In the preaching which he delivered to a huge congregation of Catholics that gathered at the close of this Council on November 27, 1095, pope Urban II called on the French kings and nobles together with all other Christians to rise up and take up the cross in defence of God and of their fellow Christians in the East, who have been suffering from the hands of the Seljuk Muslims. The original speech of the pope made at this Council was unfortunately not preserved. Part of this speech cited here is made extant by Fulcher of Chartres, who was present at this Council. In the said speech, Urban II preached as follows:

..."Although, O sons of God, you have promised more firmly than ever to keep the peace among yourselves and to preserve the rights of the Church, there remains still an important work for you to do. Freshly quickened by the divine correction, you must apply the strength of your righteousness to another matter which concerns you as well as God. For your brethren who live in the East are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them. For, as the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Greek empire] as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont, which is called the Arm of St. George. They have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the Churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for a while with impurity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them. On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. I say this to those

⁵⁰ The Council of Clermont was a Synod of both clerics, kings, nobles and lay faithful mainly of French origin who gathered at the French city of Clermont in 1095. In attendance were about 300 Prelates of the Church and many other lay-faithful. This Council sat from 18th to 28th November 1095. The major issue discussed at this Council was the need for the liberation of the Holy Land under the occupation of Muslims and to relieve the Christians of Palestine from their sufferings in the hands of the Seljuk Muslims as requested by the Byzantine's emperor. The Preaching delivered at the close of this Council marked an official declaration of war against Islam and its adherents as enemies of the Christian faith.

who are present, it is meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it.⁵¹

Continuing, the pope employing the penitential aspect of the Crusades, promised spiritual reward in the form of perpetual indulgence as an instrument of making reparations for the eternal punishment due to sins of all Crusaders especially those among them, who might lose their lives in the course of going to this Crusade and fighting for the cause of God. This promise is made vividly clear when the pope asserted: "All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested."⁵² Having invoked his authority to grant this spiritual reward to the Crusaders, the pope now summoned all the Christian faithful to take up the "cross" and to employ all that they needed to engage the Muslims in a fierce religious war of defence of the Christian Holy Land and place of worship. Declaring this religious war under the criteria of a just war, the pope appealed to the Christians in the following manner:

O what a disgrace if such a despised and base race, which worships demons, should conquer a people which has the faith of omnipotent God and is made glorious with the name of Christ! With what reproaches will the Lord overwhelm us if you do not aid those who, with us, profess the Christian religion! Let those who have been accustomed unjustly to wage private warfare against the faithful now go against the infidels and end with victory this war which should have been begun long ago. Let those who for a long time have been robbers, now become knights. Let those who have been fighting against their brothers and relatives now fight in a proper way against the barbarians. Let those who have been serving as mercenaries for small pay now obtain the eternal reward. Let those who have been wearing themselves out in both body and soul now work for a double honour. Behold! On this side will be the sorrowful and poor, on that, the rich; on this side, the enemies of the Lord, on that, his friends. Let those who go not put off the journey, but rent their lands and collect money for their expenses; and as soon as winter is over and spring comes, let them eagerly set out on the way with God as their guide.⁵³

The fire which the pope ignited in the hearts of his hearers with this inflammatory speech was a tremendous one. This was made manifest in the first place, in the shouts of acclamation by his listeners, who repeatedly shouted "Deus vult, Deus vult" (God wills it, it is the will of God) and secondly, in the unprecedented number of those who declared themselves ready to fight for

⁵¹ Pope Urban II, in: Bongars, *Gesta Dei Per Francos*, 1, p. 382ff, translated in Oliver J. Thatcher, *A Source Book for Medieval History*, pp. 513-417. Cf. Hebers, *Die Geschichte des Papsttums*, pp. 138-139.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

God and for the cross of Christ. With such shouts, which later-on turned out to be the battle-cry of the Christian Crusaders, they were convinced that it was God's own war that they were summoned to fight, and therefore a just war ordered by God and sanctioned by his vicar on earth - the pope.

With the effect of this speech, Urban II has formerly declared and sanctioned a Crusade to the Holy Land and by so doing drew officially a clear line of battle between Christians and Muslims for the first time in the history of both religious groups. In the drawn battle line, he sowed seeds of hatred and negative feelings of resentment that will long exist among the adherents of the two religions. This can be fished out from some of the expressions and utterances he made in this speech. On the battle line of Christians on the one hand, Crusaders were meant to understand that they are: sons of God, righteous people, fighting a just war that was commanded by Christ and as such are the army of God's own war waged in defence of God against pagans, and with the promise of eternal reward in form of perpetual indulgence for the punishment due to sin if they die in battle, and backed up with the assurance of victory based on the fact that their God, who is omnipotent is on their side. On the side of Muslims on the other hand, the Christian Crusaders were also reminded by the pope that: their opponents are sons and the army of the Devil fighting against Christians, they are infidels and pagans who worship demons, they are barbarians and come from a despised and vile race, they are enemies of the Lord, who kill Christians, desecrate and destroy their Churches, occupy lands that do not belong to them and devastate the Christian empire of the Byzantine.

What the pope officially articulated above was a revelation of the view of the medieval Christianity which considered those who did not accept the waters of Baptism as infidels and as such enemies of Christ. In describing the infidels - Muslims, medieval Christianity employed the word 'Saracens' to refer to them. According to the historian and author Norman Housely: "Saracens were depicted as being brutal, sadistic, greedy and lascivious people who captured, enslaved and tortured Christians."⁵⁴ Continuing, Housely recorded that: "Saracens are men dedicated to spreading evil and fighting to destroy Christ's faith by annihilating its most sacred shrines."⁵⁵ This depiction of Saracens in this manner did not only exist in the Western Catholic Church but also was found among the Christians of the Eastern-Byzantine Church. In a letter presumed to have been written by the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos and cited in the account of the first Crusade by a famous Benedictine historian, preacher and Crusader to the Holy Land Guibert of Nogent (1055-1125), the

⁵⁴ Housely, *Fighting for the Cross*, p. 210.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 211-212. Cf. Stevenson, ed. 'De Expugnatione' Terrae Sanctae Libellus, pp. 231-232.

Saracens were depicted as those who have no sense of the sacred in the things and places held sacrosanct by Christians. Concerning such matters, the letter reads: "Sacrilige (the conversion of Churches into stables and Brothels) was combined with sexual violence (the gang-rape of mothers in front of their daughters and vice versa) and unnatural vice (sodomising of captured men, including a bishop)."⁵⁶ And in a work edited by Joseph Stevenson, the Saracens were even denied the right of being viewed as humans and as such were considered as those who have no human souls in need of redemption. In this work, it was asserted that the Muslim Turks: "Were not fellow humans whose souls might be saved, but irredeemable agents of the Devil. It was at best to despatch them as soon as possible to the burning and sulphurous lake of hell and perpetual damnation."⁵⁷ In such a negative portrayal of peoples of non-Christian religions, even Mohammed, the founder of Islamic religion was not spared by these Christian stereotypes. He was depicted as being "a seducer who fashioned his great heresy around the embrace of life's easy options - carnality instead of spirituality, licentiousness instead of abstinence."⁵⁸

Unfortunately, these negative portrayals of the Saracens in the preaching of the first Crusade as we shall later see, were unmistakably transferred over to the pagan natives of West Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the Portuguese began their conquest of Africa and the discovery of the Western Atlantic Coasts of Africa. In the Bulls of Crusades given to the Portuguese kings by the popes of the aforesaid centuries, the papacy and the Portuguese Christian kings and their Conquistadors did not make any difference between the pagans of West Africa who were non-Muslims and the actual Muslims of North Africa. Instead, the papacy and the Portuguese Crown classified them as one and the same enemy of the Christian Name to be handled in the same manner, and against whom it was justified not only to make wars with but also to be driven into perpetual enslavement as well as to be dispossessed of their lands and other possessions.

Be that as it may, all these depictions of the Saracens and later on of the Black African natives of West Africa as articulated in section two above, were geared towards making them appear to be demons in the eyes of the Christian Crusaders so that they would be held and treated as arch-enemies of the Christian religion, who must be resisted with every military force in order to prevent them from unleashing their evil acts on Christians. Put in other words, they were meant to inculcate in the minds of the Crusaders that fighting the

⁵⁶ Guibert of Nogent, "Gesta Dei per Francos," Bk. 1, pp. 36-37. Cf. Housely, *Fighting for the Cross*, p. 210.

⁵⁷ Stevenson, ed. "De Expugnatione," p. 212. See also, Housely, *Fighting for the Cross*, p. 213.

⁵⁸ Tolan, "Saracens," *Islam in the Medieval European Imagination*, in: Housely, *Fighting for the Cross*, p. 212.

Saracens was not only a just war fought in God's Name, but also a defensive and restorative war.

With this convincing indoctrination, the crusading army of the first Crusade left the European soil and headed to the East. It was made up of thousands of men and women, rich and poor peasants, knights and ordinary men who did not know the art of war but were ready to die defending the cause of God in a just war declared by the pope. Thus began the first Crusade to the Holy Land in the year 1095. And as the historian Ernst-Dieter Hehl puts it: "It was the conviction of the Crusaders that the Crusade was in theory under the direct command of God, but it was the pope who actually proclaimed these warlike expeditions. The Crusade was the Church's war."⁵⁹ With this conviction, it was not surprising that the leaders of the first Crusade wrote to pope Urban II from their battle front in 1098 in the following words: "You who originated this journey and by your speeches made us all leave our lands and whatever was in them and ordered us to follow Christ carrying our Crosses, fulfil what you have encouraged us to do and complete the journey of Jesus Christ begun by us and preached by you, and the war which is your own."⁶⁰

Pope Urban II undoubtedly was convinced that the reconquest of places formerly belonging to the Western Christendom via the Crusades was the will of God. Other popes that followed after him who continued the Crusade tradition to the Holy Land and other places in the Levant, Europe (Albigensian Crusade, Iberian Crusades etc.) and North Africa were likewise convinced as Urban II was. That was why pope Innocent III, who in his pontificate launched no less than three major Crusades had to threaten all those who refused to join in one of his Crusades (fourth Crusade to the Holy Land) with severe punishment on the day of judgement before God. Such threat is found in his Crusade Bull "Quia Maior" with which he appealed to Christians to go for another Crusade to the Holy Land. In this Bull, Innocent III commanded among other things as follows:

...we cry on behalf of Him who when dying cried with a loud voice on the cross, crying out so that He might snatch us from the crucifixion of eternal death... He has granted men an opportunity to win salvation, so that those who fight faithfully for Him will be crowned in happiness by Him, but those who refuse to pay Him the servant's service they owe Him in a crisis of such great urgency, will justly deserve to suffer a sentence of damnation on the Last Day of severe judgement.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Hehl, in: Luscombe, ed. *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol, 1, p. 222.

⁶⁰ Hagenmeyer, ed. *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088-1100*, p. 164. See also, Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity and Islam*, p. 17.

⁶¹ Innocent III, "Quia Maior," in: Tangl, ed. *Studien zum Register Innocenz III.*, pp. 88-89. Cf. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity and Islam*, p. 18.

Those who gave positive ears to this Crusade-summon of Innocent III were promised perpetual indulgence as well, like the one summoned by Urban II above, as a reparation for the eternal punishment due to sins if they lose their lives fighting “God’s own war.” Other Crusade Bulls issued afterwards especially with regard to the conquest of Africa in the fifteenth century will receive the same formula and the same promise of perpetual indulgence like the one of the first Crusade as we shall come to see in the treatment of such Crusade Bulls in the next chapter of this work. In that sense, the preaching of the first Crusade has successfully led to the introduction of the medieval Christian Crusade tradition in the eleventh century, a tradition that laid a dangerous foundation of enmity between the Followers of Christian religion and those of the Muslim religion. It is indeed a type that is loaded with explosive materials that will continue to cause hatred among the followers of both religions not only in the medieval times but also in the centuries that followed afterwards. In the opinion of the German historian and author Klaus Hebers the Crusades became a tradition that transported the authority of the Latin Church’s hierarchy to the Christians living in the East and subjected them to the primacy of the Roman Pontiff.⁶² This same advantage, which the Crusades to the Holy Land brought to the medieval papacy, will be repeated in the Crusades launched in the Iberian Peninsula and in West Africa in the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries respectively. It went into the annals of history as a tradition, whose effect did not only adversely affect the followers of Islamic religion but also dangerously affected the lives and dignity of the then pagan peoples of the non-Muslim territories of West Africa, a tradition that declared them infidels, enemies of the Christian faith, children of the Devil that should be hated, resented, fought against and be enslaved in perpetuity, thus leading to their subjection and enslavement during the Transatlantic slave trade.

1.6 The Position of the Church on the Right of Infidels or Pagans to Possess Private Property

Our consideration of the Crusades as one of the traditions of the medieval Christianity concept of papal power and authority revealed that this tradition was justified on religious and political grounds. Religiously, it was justified on the ground that Jerusalem was the place of birth of the Christian religion and its Founder. Politically, the Crusade to the Holy Land and other territories in the Levant and North Africa was justified on the ground that it was a reconquest of such territories which were formerly Christian territories once under the ancient Roman Empire. To declare a military campaign with religious motives against

⁶² Hebers, *Die Geschichte des Papsttums*, p. 140.

them was therefore considered in the views of the medieval canonists and the papacy as something legitimate and just. But the question now is: Has the Catholic Church under the leadership of the medieval papacy any right at all to extend such claims in other territories outside of the ambient of Christianity? Put in another way, has the papacy authority to declare a religiously motivated military campaign in a manner that we saw above against pagans and other unbelievers in their own territories and orders that they be dispossessed of their properties both landed and none landed properties?⁶³ These questions are relevant for our discussion here in the sense that providing answers to them will help us to understand more the concept of papal universal authority and how this authority was conceived and carried out by the renaissance popes. The consideration about to be made herein will put this work in a better footing to determine the brain behind the papacy's declaration of Crusades against the natives of West Africa in the wake of the Portuguese quest for economic aggrandizement and territorial expansion of their kingdom in the fifteenth century, a quest that led to the establishment of the Transatlantic slave trade and the consequent enslavement of Black Africans in the manner as we saw in section one of this work.

The question of whether the pope has any right to declare a military campaign in non-Christian territories and over their rights to properties or not, really caused a hair-splitting problem to the papacy of the most influential medieval pope Innocent III, who in his pontificate declared not less than three Crusades aimed at regaining territories that formerly belonged to the Western Christian world. Medieval canonists on their own part were not left out in the hair-splitting nature of this question. The discussion which this question raised among them was a type that left them divided into two opposing camps. This made the famous pope Innocent III (though a canonist and lawyer himself) to turn to the renowned medieval canonist and lawyer Sinibaldo Fieschi - the later pope Innocent IV for consultations on how best to go with such a problem. Both the two camps of canonists accepted a common scriptural view that says: "The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord, the earth and all who live on it are His" (Psalm 24:1). From this common ground both camps agreed that the pope being the vicarius Christi on earth has the power of interference not only over all Christians but also over all infidels even in non-Christian territories⁶⁴ and as such can use military force to invade them and dispossess them of their

⁶³ Innocent IV, *De Decretales*, III, Xxxiv.8, Fl. 429v, No. 1. The formulation of this question in Latin by canonists in the *Decretales* reads as follows: "Sed numquid est licitum invadere terram, quam infidelis possident vel quae est sua?"

⁶⁴ Innocent IV, *De Decretales*, Ibid. Cf. Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 130. "Sed bene tantum credimus, quod papa, qui est vicarius Christi, potestatem habet, non tantum super Christianos, sed etiam super omnes infideles, cum enim Christus habuerit super omnes potestatem."

properties. But the manner of exercising this power of the Roman Pontiff was differently interpreted by both camps.

On the part of the camp represented by the later pope Innocent IV, it was maintained that even though Christ has power and authority over all mankind, the pope as His vicar on earth possesses this power with regard to non-Christians only in principle (*de jure*) but not in practice (*de facto*). For him still, from the argument of natural law, pagans and unbelievers in the Christian God possess the natural right to live in their own territories, own private properties, elect or select their rulers just as Saul was chosen by his fellow Israelites and be governed by themselves. Employing the scriptural contents of the Book of Deuteronomy which reads: “Every place upon which the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours” (Deut. 11:24), Innocent IV and his school-men argued that this biblical reference does not give anyone the right to invade and to occupy things and places already in possession of other individuals or group of persons. Arguing further, he maintained that the teaching of Christ in the Gospel of St. Matthew which holds that God allows His sun and rain to be enjoyed by both saints and sinners, the righteous and the wicked alike (Mtt. 5:45) does not permit either the pope or Christians to dispossess pagans and other unbelievers of their lands and belongings. All these are contained in his commentary on “Decretales.” In this commentary, he wrote among other things:

I maintain therefore that Lordship, possession and jurisdiction can belong to pagans and infidels licitly and without sin, for these things were made not only for the faithful but also for every rational creature as has been said: for He makes His sun to rise on the just and the wicked and He feeds the birds of the air (Mtt. 5:6). Accordingly, we say that it is not licit for the pope or the faithful to take away from pagans or infidels their belongings or their Lordship or jurisdiction because they possess them without sin.⁶⁵

The other camp of canonists represented by another medieval “heavy weight” canonist, jurist and the cardinal archbishop of Ostia Henry of Segusio popularly known among Church historians as Hostiensis (1200-1271) interpreted the power of the Vicar of Christ over non-Christians as a right which he possesses not only in principle (*de jure*) but also in fact (*de facto*). That means, that the pope in carrying out his authority as the Vicar of Christ on earth is not in any way restricted by place or time. In other words, the pope has the authority to declare war on infidels and pagan territories and can order their inhabitants to be dispossessed of their lands and personal belongings. Hostiensis and other

⁶⁵ Innocent IV, *De Decretales*, III, Xxxiv.8, Fl. 429v-30. It partly reads in Latin thus: “Propter hoc decimus, quod non licet infidelibus auferre dominia sua vel jurisdictiones infidelibus, quia sine peccato ea possident.” Cf. Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 162.

canonists in his camp argued that the coming of Christ into the world has deprived infidels and pagans of their rights to possessions, dominion and rulership over themselves, and that these rights have been handed over to the faithful in Christ.⁶⁶ Put in another way, it is the onus of the faithful in Christ to rule over infidels and pagans even in their own very lands. This transfer of the rights of infidels and pagans to the Christian faithful was based on the dignity of Christ, who was not only a priest but also a king, and that these same sacerdotal and kingly powers of Christ were handed over to the pope as Vicar of Christ on earth.⁶⁷ And based on this reason therefore, Hostiensis maintained that: "All pagans should be subjected to the faithful."⁶⁸ Even his fellow Church-man cardinal Godffredus de Trano (1200-1245)⁶⁹ went as far as stating that: "It seems so that the Church had given general authority to Catholics to exterminate heretics and unbelievers and to deprive them of their dominion."⁷⁰ This position here was an answer that he gave to the question asked among thirteenth century canonists which read: "Have Catholics proper authority to deprive heretics and unbelievers of their dominion (Nunquid Catholici possunt haereticos propria auctoritate spoliare)?" Despite this extreme position maintained by the camp of canonists led by Hostiensis, some concessions were however made to the pagans and other unbelievers and their rulers. For instance, if the pagan rulers acknowledge the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff over them, then the pope should allow them their dominion and the right to possess private properties.⁷¹ But if the reverse is the case, then it is justified that they lose their rights to lordship and to own private belongings.

However, this debate on the rights of pagans and infidels as enemies of the Christian religion to live in their own territories, rule themselves and retain the

⁶⁶ Cardinal Hostiensis, *Summa, De Saracenis*, IV. xvii, Col. 1231. Cf. Zenzelimus de Cassanis, *Extravagantes*, V. Cap. 1, in: Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, pp. 130-131; Alain Milhou, *El Mundo infiel y el Cristiano*, in: *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 7, p. 563; Hostiensis, Rubr. 5, *De Iudaeis et Saracenis, et eorum Servis*, chpt. 13, in: Fisch, *Die europaische Expansion und das Völkerrecht*, p. 189.

⁶⁷ Hostiensis, *Summa de Saracenis*, Ibid. "Et fuit facta translatio in personam Christi filii, Dei vivi, qui non solum sacerdos fuit, sed etiam rex."

⁶⁸ Ibid. "Infideles debent subjeci fidelibus."

⁶⁹ Godffredus de Trano was an Italian priest and jurist. He belonged to the class of 13th century canonists whose influence in the Medieval Christianity was much felt on the then burning issue of papal universal authority. He studied jurisprudence at the university of Bologna and worked in Neaple and Bologna as a professor of Law. In the year 1240 he was appointed a Judge in Roman Curia. Pope Innocent IV created him a cardinal on May 28, 1244. His major work was his *Summa Rubricis Decretalium* which was finished in the year 1241. He died in Lyon on April 11, 1245.

⁷⁰ Godffredus de Trano, "De Haereticis," Fl. 200, No. 4, in: Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 136. This reads in Latin thus: "Videtur quod sic, ecclesia enim generalem auctoritatem eis praestitit, ut eos exterminent."

⁷¹ Hostiensis, Ibid. "Si dominum Ecclesiae recognoscunt."

right to possess private belongings also attracted the attention of a contemporary of cardinal Hostiensis and a great medieval theologian, philosopher and an Italian Dominican monk Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). St. Thomas Aquinas, whose ideas immensely influenced the theological and philosophical discussions of medieval Christianity answered this question with the distinction he made between Muslims and non-believers in Christ (pagans and Jews). According to him, the Muslims are unbelievers and should be treated as enemies of Christ based on the fact that they have heard the laws and teachings of Christ but refused to accept them. They are therefore responsible for their ignorance of the teachings of Christ. Consequent upon this fact, it was justified to make wars against them and to dispossess them of their land and properties as enemies of Christ. Expressing this view, Aquinas wrote: "The refusal of the Saracens to believe in Christ is a blameable fault, since they have already heard of the laws and teachings of Christ, and are therefore the declared enemies of the Christian religion."⁷²

On the part of pagans, Aquinas followed in the footsteps of pope Innocent IV on this matter in the sense that he argued that other unbelievers in Christ such as pagans should not be regarded as enemies of Christ because, their lack of knowledge of the teachings and laws of Christ is not of their own making. Consequently, the pope does not have the power to deprive them of their right to dominion and to private possessions. In the light of this, Aquinas ruled out the right of the popes to declare wars against them. This position was stated in an unmistakable term when he asserted as follows:

Among unbelievers there are some who have never received the faith, such as the heathens and the Jews: and these are by no means to be compelled to the faith, in order that they may believe, because to believe depends on the will. The lack of faith is nevertheless not sinful provided that it is a product of a lack of knowledge, and in this case, it is not justified to make wars against them.⁷³

Following Aquinas, cardinal Thomas de vico Cajetan (1469-1534)⁷⁴ defended the just war theory against unbelievers and identified three groups of unbelievers

⁷² Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II, iiæ, q. xii, art. 2, and q. x, art. 8. Cf. Milhou, "Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen," *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 7, p. 563; Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 37; Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, pp. 38-39.

⁷³ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II, iiæ, q. x. Art. 8. Cf. Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, p. 38.

⁷⁴ Cardinal Thomas de Vico Cajetan was born in Gaet in the modern Naples on February 20, 1469. He entered into the Dominican Orders and studied both philosophy and theology in Padua, where he later became a professor and taught Metaphysics. From 1508 to 1518, he held the post of the Master of Order of Preachers in his congregation. In 1517, he was created a cardinal of the Church. He wrote many documents for the Roman Pontiffs and was appointed papal Legate by pope Leo X who represented the papacy in the affairs of the rebellion of the Reformer Martin Luther against papal authority at the Diet of Augsburg in 1518. He wrote a

and used this classification to justify those of them against whom Christians are allowed to apply the just war theory. The first group of unbelievers are the Jews, Muslims and Heretics living in Christian territories. For cardinal Cajetan, these are subjects to the Christian Church as well as the Christian rulers. The second group of unbelievers are those occupying areas formerly belonging to Christians. They are *de jure* (in principle) but not *de facto* subjects of the Christian kings. The third group of unbelievers are the pagans who lived in areas unknown to the Christian kings and who were neither subjects of the Christian kings nor under the Roman Empire, but were only discovered by Christians like in the case of the pagans of West African Atlantic. For cardinal Cajetan, this last group of unbelievers are neither subjects of the Christian kings in principle (*de jure*) nor *de facto*. For him therefore, there is no just ground for making wars against such people in the name of conversion or mission. They could only be converted via peaceful means and not by means of war. In other words, the pope has no authority to legislate the use of war against them.⁷⁵ Toeing the path of Aquinas and cardinal Cajetan, Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546)⁷⁶ questioned the right of Christians to invade pagan territories and to deprive them of their rights to private possessions and to dominion. Arguing in the context of his defence of the inhuman treatment and colonisation of the Indians by his Spanish government and Conquistadors, Vitoria sharply rejected the position of the English philosopher, theologian and reformer John Whyclif (1330-1384), who together with the Waldensians⁷⁷ taught and propagated the tenet that Grace is a necessary condition for a title of dominion and private property. And this being the case, they held the view that pagans and other unbelievers in the Christian religion who are not in possession of the Christian Grace have no rights to dominion and possessions based on the one and only

famous work "Commentary on the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas" published in 1540. He died in Rome on August 10, 1534.

⁷⁵ Cardinal Cajetan, *Commentary on Summa Theologica*, in: Priesching, *Von Menschenfängern und Menschenfischern*, pp. 122-123.

⁷⁶ Francisco de Vitoria was a Spanish philosopher, theologian, Jurist and a Dominican monk. He was born in Spain in 1483 but had his educational career in Paris where he later taught Philosophy in 1515. He later returned to Spain and taught Theology at the Monastery at Valladolid from where he was elected Rector of the University of Salamanca.

⁷⁷ Waldensians were a Christian Movement that began in Paris in 1177 with the preachings of one Peter Waldo. The central tenet of this Reform Movement was the call for Christians and the Church's leaders to return back to the life of poverty preached and lived by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. As a Reform Movement, it accused the leadership of the Church of worldliness and appeared confrontational to the teachings of the Church's hierarchy. It was adjudged heretical by the Council fathers at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, who accused the Waldensians of contempt to ecclesiastical authority. For further readings on the Waldensians and their tenets, See, Peter Allix, *Ancient Church of Piedmont*, Oxford 1821, p. 182; Jones William, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, p. 2, London 1819; James Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, 1860; Euan Cameron, *The Waldenses Rejection of the Holy Church in the Medieval Europe*, Oxford 2001.

reason that they are barbarians and non Christians. Believing firmly in the medieval Christian teaching which held that pagans, who worship idols lived in mortal sins and as such will be condemned to hell fire, Wyclif taught that anyone, who is in possession of a mortal sin has no right to dominion. This teaching is made clear when he wrote: "No one is a civil owner, while he is in mortal sin."⁷⁸ Distancing himself from this tenet of Wyclif, Francisco de Vitoria, who depended heavily on Thomas Aquinas view on dominion, argued on the contrary that the right of dominion was not removed by the fact of the existence of mortal sin. Thus according to him: "I employ the opposing party their own argument: dominion is founded on the image of God, but man is God's image by nature, that is, by his reasoning powers, therefore, dominion is not lost by mortal sin."⁷⁹ Taking Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* as his point of departure, De Vitoria further stretched his argument that the lack of faith in a person or the absence of Grace, does not cancel one's right accruing from both natural and human law. And that being the case, the title of ownership and dominion are man's natural rights irrespective of whether he is a Christian or not. In this regard, he affirmed:

The proposition is also supported by the reasoning of St. Thomas Aquinas, namely: unbelief does not destroy either natural law or human law; but ownership and dominion are based either on natural law or on human law; therefore they are not destroyed by want of faith... Hence it is manifest that it is not justifiable to take anything that belongs to them (pagans and Saracens) from either Saracens or Jews, pagans or other unbelievers; otherwise, the act would be theft or robbery no less than, if it were done to Christians.⁸⁰

Taking a step further, Francisco de Vitoria sharply attacked the argument of the right of colonization which the Spanish Christian Conquistadors claimed as their ownership title over the Indians and their territories. For him, invading a people and colonizing them on the grounds that they are unbelievers or a barbarous folk did not in any way constitute a just ownership title in the sense that it violated the natural rights of the Indians and other unbelievers to have dominion over themselves and over their own territories. His position on this, is made crystal clear when he said: "From all this, the conclusion follows that the barbarians (Indians) in question cannot be barred from being true owners, alike in public and in private law, by reason of the sin of unbelief or any other

⁷⁸ Wyclif, *De Civili Dominio*, in: Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition*, p. 122.

⁷⁹ Vitoria, *Relectio de Indis*, No. II, *On the Indians lately Discovered*, in: Scott, *The Classics of International Law*, p. 9. Cf. Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition*, p. 123.

⁸⁰ Vitoria, in: Scott, *De Indis et De Iure Belli: Reflections by Francisco de Vitoria*, p. ix; Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition*, *Ibid.*

mortal sin, nor does such sin entitle Christians to seize their goods and lands, as Cajethan proves at some length and neatly in *Secunda Secundae*.⁸¹

Another Thomistic scholar of the school of Salamanca, who joined his voice to that of Aquinas and Francisco de Vitoria in arguing that Christians do not have a just ownership title over non believers based on the lack of Grace of the unbelievers, was Domingo de Soto (1494-1560).⁸² For De Soto, Grace does not warrant deprivation of dominion due to unbelief. This position is clearly made when he stated: "Whoever is in the Grace of God does not have more dominion or right to use the things of others more than he, who is in mortal sin. Both, in the case of extreme necessity can make use of the things, which they need and which belong to some other owner."⁸³ Having made it clear that both Christians and unbelievers of the Christian religion have an unalienable right to dominion and to private possessions, and that both in extreme necessity can take from the other what they needed most, de Soto then moves to answer the question of whether the pope or Christians have the right of invasion in the territories which do not belong to the Christendom. In proffering a conclusive answer to this question, he replied as follows:

We can now answer satisfactorily those who ask if Christians, by virtue of the *ius* (right) of natural dominion, can make an armed invasion of those infidel countries which on account of the primitive nature of their customs appear to be natural slaves. There is no reason why we acquire any right over them to dominate them by force, since their inferior condition does not deprive them of their liberty as does the condition of those, who set themselves into slavery, or those who were prisoners of war. Since liberty is the basis of dominion, these infidels preserve a *ius* (right) over their goods.⁸⁴

The wrangling which this problem brought about in the circle of thirteenth century canonists did not however come to an end. Instead, it proceeded unto the sixteenth century as the above testifies. Despite the clear position of the scholars on the camp of Innocent IV and St. Thomas Aquinas on this matter under discussion, there were still evidences of the emergence of hard-liner canonists and papalists, who could not welcome any idea that will lessen the

⁸¹ Vitoria, *Ibid*, p. Xi, in: Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition*, p. 124; Aquinas, S.T., 2a2ae, q. 10, a. 10 & q. 10. a.12.

⁸² Domingo de Soto was a Spanish born Scholastic, a Dominican monk and one of the leading figures and Professors of the school of Salamanca. He was born in 1494 in Segovia, studied Philosophy and Theology at the Universities of Alcalá and Sorbonne respectively. In 1524, he entered into the Dominican Monastery in Burgos where he became a monk. He taught Philosophy at the Dominican College in Segovia and later on obtained a Chair at the University of Salamanca where he taught Theology.

⁸³ De Soto, *De Justitia et Iure*, Book IV, q. 2, a. 1, in: Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition*, p. 165. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q.10, a. 10, & q. 10, a. 12.

⁸⁴ De Soto, *De Justitia et Iure*, Book IV, q. 2, a. 2, in: Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition*, pp. 172-173.

supreme power of the Roman Pontiff over all mankind both in spiritual and temporal matters. Among such papal loyalists and canonists are: Giles of Rome, Guilelmus de Amidanis, Andreas de Perusio, Petrus Bertrandi etc. All these influential canonists of the fourteenth century maintained an extreme position on this subject in the sense that they made a departure from the positions of both pope Innocent IV and St. Thomas Aquinas on this issue and embraced the position of Hostiensis and the men of his school of thought, who gave the Church under the headship of the pope the undeniable and unrestricted right to invade non-Christian territories as well as to dispossess those living in them of all their belongings. The chief protagonist of these hard-liner canonists was Giles of Rome (1243-1316),⁸⁵ who was given the title “Doctor Fundatissimus” (the best-grounded teacher) by pope Benedict XIV (*1675, pontificate 1740-1758). Although Giles of Rome was a contemporary and a long time student of Thomas Aquinas, he however, made a sharp departure from the position of his great master on this issue. His contribution to this theme was made in the early beginnings of the fourteenth century with the emergence of his most popular and important treatise for the fourteenth century papalism titled “De Ecclesiastica Potestate” (on ecclesiastical power) in 1302. In part two of this work, Giles of Rome argued that unless pagans and other unbelievers submit themselves to God, they have no right to private property. He began his argument by comparing the members of the Church and the unbelievers. For him, pagans are servants of the Devil while Christians are servants of Christ. This comparison was seen when he concluded as follows: “We say therefore, that unbelievers are servants of Belial, whereas the faithful, because they are subjects of the Church, are servants of Christ; unbelievers are darkness, whereas the faithful, because they serve the Church, are light in the Lord.”⁸⁶ And as a counter argument to the view of pope Innocent IV who maintained that pagans and infidels received their right to lordship, dominion and private possessions directly from God, Giles of Rome argued that even though unbelievers received their possessions from God, they are unjustly in

⁸⁵ Giles of Rome also named Egidius Romanus was an Augustinian Hermit and later, the Prior General of his Augustinian Order. The exact date of his birth was not known, but it was believed that he was born in Rome in 1243. He was a student of St. Aquinas for a long time and later a professor of canon Law at the University of Paris. He was a known papal loyalist who supported pope Boniface VIII in the conflict he had with king Philip IV of France. It was at the heat of this conflict that he wrote his popular work “De Ecclesiastica Potestate” in 1302, a work whose content formed the major content of the Bull “Unam Sanctam” of pope Boniface VIII in 1303. His other work was “De Regime Principum”- a Guide book for Princes. Giles of Rome died in Avignon as the archbishop of Bourges in 1316.

⁸⁶ Giles of Rome, “Dicamus ergo quod infideles sunt servi Belial, fideles vero, ut sunt subiecti Ecclesiae, sunt servi Christi; infideles vero sunt tenebre, fideles vero, ut serviunt Ecclesiae, sunt lux in Domino.” Cf. De Ecclesiastica Potestate, Cap. XI, pt.II, in: Dyson, Giles of Rome's On Ecclesiastical Powers, p. 180.

possession of all that they possessed because, they have not subjected themselves to God. Citing the Letter to the Hebrews where it was stated that: "It is impossible to please God without faith" (Hebrew 11:6), Giles of Rome asserted that: "Every unbeliever therefore unjustly possesses whatever he holds from God."⁸⁷ For him still, the right to own property belongs exclusively to the Church. All those, who are her members have by reason of this fact the right to own property, and those pagans and other unbelievers, who have no membership in the Church have by reason of the same fact, no right to a just possession. This position was made clearly when he wrote:

Did not St. Augustine specifically state the principle that the only true *republica* is one in which *iustitia* is to be found, and how can this refer to any community other than the Christian Society? Therefore, unless infidels and pagans have been regenerated by conversion to the faith, it is safe to assume that they are not justified in possessing anything and may be deprived of all that they hold, for there cannot be any dominion worthy of the name among infidels.⁸⁸

And with this hard and unmitigated position, Giles of Rome maintained that the pope has the authority to declare a Crusade against pagans and other unbelievers in their own territory and can command them to be deprived of all their rights to dominion and possession. His contemporaries such as bishop Guilelmus de Amidanis (1270-1356)⁸⁹ and Cardinal Petrus Bertrandi (1280-1349)⁹⁰ did not make any departure from this position of Giles of Rome. For instance, bishop Guilelmus did not accept any view that allows non-Christians the right to lawfully possess anything, for no just reason other than the fact that non-Christians are not subjects of the Catholic Church. For him therefore: "No one could possess anything justly and lawfully, unless he submitted himself to the spiritual power."⁹¹ And in the same tone, Cardinal Bertrandi upheld that: "The pope was the rightful and lawful owner of the whole world."⁹² The

⁸⁷ Giles of Rome, "Ideo quilibet infideles iniuste possidet quicquid habet a Deo." Ibid. See also, Dyson, Giles of Rome's *On Ecclesiastical Power*, p. 182.

⁸⁸ Giles of Rome, *De Ecclesiastica Potestate*. Ibid.

⁸⁹ Guilelmus de Amidanis was an Italian monk born in 1270. He was a student of Jurisprudence at the famous university of Bologna. He later became the Prior General of his Order and was later appointed a bishop. His major contribution to canon law was his work "Reprobatio Errorum" which was finished in 1327. He died in 1356.

⁹⁰ Petrus Bertrandi was a French Catholic priest. He was born in the French city of Annonay in 1280. He studied in Paris and later became a professor of Jurisprudence at the university of Orleans and Paris. In 1321, he was appointed a cardinal by Pope John XXII and later in the year 1322 he became the bishop of Autun. He died on June 24, 1349 in Avignon.

⁹¹ Guilelmus de Amidanis, *Reprobatio Errorum*, in: Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 92. This citation reads in Latin thus: "Nullus juste et legitime possidet aliquid, nisi in possessione illius spirituali potestati se subdat."

⁹² Cardinal Bertrandi, in: Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, p. 92.

implication of this statement is that all pagans and unbelievers who live in their own territories and own properties in them are illegal occupants and possessors of such territories and belongings, and as a result of this, they are only at the mercy of the pope, who can order them to be deprived of their possessions. In other words, even the right to live in their own territories was seen as a privilege which could be taken away from them at any given point in time.

It was this very position that dominated the entire fourteenth century medieval Christian attitude towards pagans and other unbelievers in the Christian religion. And this position was adopted by the fifteenth century papacy as an official Catholic Church tradition upon which matters relating to pagans of West Africa were handled in the wake of the Portuguese quest for discovery and expedition in the West African Atlantic. It was this very tradition that gave the Christian kings of Portugal and Spain the impetus to penetrate into Muslim and pagan territories in Africa and in the "New World," made wars on the peoples, dispossessed them of their lands and properties and finally turned to the popes for authority and official recognition of the conquered territories as belonging to them and their kingdoms. According to Milhou Alain, it was as a result of this that: "The privileges which were granted to the Mudejares in Spain or to the vassal kingdom of Granada were only tolerated. And due to the fact that the unbelievers were not accorded any rights, it was then lawful for the Christian kings to invade and conquer their territories and then turned to the pope for confirmation of their conquests."⁹³

In summa, the various traditions of the Church treated in this chapter are the major practices of the medieval Christian Church which characterised the attitude of the medieval Christians and papacy towards non-members of the Catholic Church. They were the products of the medieval papacy's quest for control over all mankind - Christians and non-Christians alike. It was this attitude that made the popes to wrest salvation into their very hands such that only those loyal to them will attain salvation and others will perish. It was this same attitude that sanctioned the shedding of human blood as manifested in the Crusades as a just act. It was this attitude that informed the use of military force to rob pagans and other unbelievers of their right to both landed and non-landed properties as well as their right to self-rule. The historical outcome of this attitude with an international dimension was the establishment of Transatlantic slave trade, which totally changed the normal course of events in the world and drastically affected millions of lives of men, women and children of Black African origin. It was therefore the aforesaid traditions of the Catholic Church that paved the way for this trade on humans. And the Church's very

⁹³ Milhou, "Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen," in: *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 7, p. 563.

role in this slave trade traces its root first and foremost back to her justification of slavery based on the Aristotelian cum thomistic ideas of slavery as well as to these traditions as discussed above. And these medieval traditions of the Church found their concrete implementation in the hands of the renaissance popes in the issuing of the papal Bulls to the Portuguese Crown in support for its quest for economic and territorial expansion in Africa under the cover of religious Crusades in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries which led to the legitimization of the enslavement of Black Africans as human goods needed for the propagation and success of this slave trade. With the papal authority contained in these Bulls, the Church gave away Africa to the king of Portugal and left her at the mercy of the inhuman hearts of the Portuguese Conquistadors and slavers. And by so doing, Africa became a playground, where the slave merchants of Portugal, Spain, Holland, France, Britain and other enslaving nations of Europe displayed their unbridled greed for gold and Black slaves. The proof of this papal legitimization of this slave trade and the justification of the enslavement of Black Africans during the operations of this slave trade will form the major subject of consideration in the next chapter of this work.

2. Foundational Papal Bulls in the Enslavement of Black Africans (1418-1447)

2.1 Brief Introduction

In chapter one of our consideration of the role which the Church played in the enslavement of Black Africans, we discovered that from the eleventh century up till the fifteenth century, the central traditional teaching of the medieval papacy was that the pope as “Vicarius Dei” has a universal authority over all mankind, Christians and non-Christians alike. And this was interpreted by a group of canonists headed by cardinal Hostiensis and Archbishop Giles of Rome to practically mean that the pope has unrestricted authority even in non-Christian territories. This unrestricted papal authority gave the pope the right to declare a Crusade against pagans and infidels even in their own territories and to deprive them of all their possessions irrespective of whether such territories were once under the dominion of the Christendom or not. He can as well command the withdrawal of the right of ownership of such pagan territories from their original possessors and transfers such rights to the Christian kings of his choice.

The actualisation of such universal and unchallengeable papal authority was realised in the early beginnings of the fifteenth century in Africa, when king John I of Portugal and his Royal sons came up with their politically and economically motivated plans of territorial expansion of their kingdom hatched up in form of religious Crusades in Africa, with the view to uproot Islam and allegedly to convert the pagan natives located on the Western Atlantic Coasts of Africa to the Christian faith. When this plan was communicated to the papacy, it was given an urgent positive response and full support by the papacy through the in-flow of well-articulated Apostolic Letters known as “papal Bulls.”⁹⁴ The contents of such papal Bulls through which the popes granted support to the Portuguese territorial expansion and economic quests in Africa will form the subject matter of this chapter. This chapter therefore, sets out to investigate critically and carefully the early beginnings of an influx of Royal Charters issued by the kings of Portugal through which they appealed to the popes for support of their maritime and economic expansion under the cover of discovery and religious Crusades against the so called “enemies of the Christian faith” - the Saracens, pagans and other unbelievers in the Christian religion located in Africa. The goal of this chapter is first and foremost to establish how the popes with the help of the papal Bulls issued in the first half of the fifteenth century responded to those Portuguese Royal requests for support of their interests in Africa. And secondly, to find out if these Apostolic documents corroborated or counteracted the accusations of the Church’s role and involvement in the establishment of the Transatlantic slave trade and the consequent enslavement of Black Africans.

⁹⁴ The term “Papal Bull” is used to refer to an Apostolic Letter or Brief issued by a pope of the Roman Catholic Church. It contains a solemn decree or pronouncement of a privilege, granting a person or group of individuals a legal right, monopoly or authority over a place or an office. Such a papal document bearing such pronouncement is called a Bull as a result of the bulla attached to the end of the sealed lead to ensure its authenticity. In the context of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans, papal Bulls refer to those papal official Decrees issued to the Portuguese Royal Crown granting her the right of ownership over the territories discovered in her name in Africa as well as empowered her to drive the natives of those territories into perpetual slavery.

2.2 A Background Knowledge to these Papal Bulls

2.2.1 Portuguese “Royal Marriage” with the Papacy (Padroado Real)

The relationship which linked the Portuguese Royal Crown with the papacy is one that has a long standing history. King John I (*1358, kingship 1385-1433)⁹⁵ of Portugal and his Royal sons did not just wake up one early morning and went to the popes to request for their protection and support in the political and economic interests which they had already begun in Africa as far back as 1415. The Royal Crown's request from the popes and its granting was as old as the institution of the first Portuguese Royal dynasty itself. It traces its origin back to the time of the first king of Portugal Alfonso Henriques I (*1109, reigned 1128-1185)⁹⁶ who linked the Crown of Portugal with the papacy during his reign precisely in 1143. Having won the great Battle of Ourique against the Muslim army on the feast day of St. James (25th July) 1139, Alfonso Henriques proclaimed himself king “for the first time in the presence of the high clergy and the members of his Cortés (parliament) in the town of Lamego.”⁹⁷ And from this point onwards, he began to attach the title of a king to his name in this manner: “The illustrious king Alfonso, nephew of the most glorious

⁹⁵ King John I was born in Lisbon on April 11, 1358. He was proclaimed the king of Portugal after the great Royal crisis of 1383-1385, and ruled as a great king of Portugal from 1385 to 1433. He was the Grand Master of the Knights of Aviz and the father of king Edward (who succeeded him) and of Princes Pedro, Ferdinand and Henry the Navigator. During his reign as king, he founded the House of Aviz that brought Portugal into the windows of fame and maritime success. It was he, who won independence for Portugal from the Spanish Kingdom after defeating Castile at the battle of Aljubarrota on August 14, 1385. A renowned professor and historian at the Oxford University Raymond Beazley, who is very vast in Portuguese history, once described king John I of Portugal with the following words: “The founder of the House of Aviz, John, the king of good Memory, is the great transition figure in his country's history, for in his reign, the age of merely European kingdom is over, and that of discovery and empire begins.” See, Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 133.

⁹⁶ King Afonso Henriques I was the son of count Henry of Burgundy and countess Teresa of Portugal. As the duke of Burgundy, he engaged himself in the military wars and reconquista against the Muslims who occupied Iberian Peninsula since 711 AD. Through his valliant at war, he made a lot of military success in the fight against Islam. In 1139, he won the great battle at Ourique and proclaimed himself the king of Portugal. During his reign as the first king of Portugal, he won political and ecclesiastical independence of the kingdom of Portugal from the kingdom of Leon-Castile. He was variously called Afonso o Conquistador (the Conqueror) and Afonso o Fundador (the founder) based on his achievements as founder of the kingdom of Portugal. He ruled Portugal as a Count from November 1, 1112 to 1139, and as king from July 25, 1139 to 1185.

⁹⁷ Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal*, p. 80. For a full account of this battle against the Muslim army at the city of Ourique and the consequent proclamation of this kingship, see: Blöcker-Walter, ed. *Annales Dom Alfonsi Portugallensium Regis*, pp. 153-154.

emperor of Spain, son of Count Henry and Queen Teresa, and by the Grace of God ruler of the entire province of Portugal.”⁹⁸

Even though he adorned himself with this kingly title, Alfonso Henriques still lacked authenticity and official recognition both in the eyes of the king of Leon-Castile under whose kingdom he was officially recognized only as a duke of Portugal and not as a king, as well as the approval of the medieval Christendom's “king makers” - the Roman Pontiffs, in whose hands it lies to grant an official and international acknowledgement of such kingly status to the Christian kings. It was in his bid to attain this recognition that Alfonso Henriques sought a way of ratification of this proclamation from the papacy. And to do this, he now followed the example of some Spanish kings such as king Sancho Ramirez of Aragon (*1042, reigned 1063-1094), who in a quest to gain papal protection for his kingship declared himself in the year 1089 a vassal king of the Holy See as a knight of St. Peter and promised to pay to the Roman Pontiffs an annual tribute with silver in honour for the papal recognition of his title of a Catholic king and as a sign of his dependency to the Holy See. And being fully aware of this tradition, Alfonso Henriques actualised his goal by also declaring himself a knight of St. Peter and pledged to make annual tributes of four ounces of gold to the Roman Pontiff.⁹⁹ This declaration of Royal relationship with the papacy was begun officially with the oath of allegiance which king Alfonso Henriques swore to pope Innocent II (1130-1143) with the Royal Charter “*Claves regni*” of December 13, 1143. With this Charter, Alfonso Henriques declared himself a tutelage king and vassal of the Holy See in the following words: “As knight of St. Peter and of the Roman Pontiffs, I hold myself, my lands and all dignities and honours pertaining to them to be for the defence and solace of the Apostolic See, and I will accept the authority of no other Ecclesiastical or secular Lord.”¹⁰⁰ This oath was not only sworn for the purpose of gaining a political independence but also was taken with the view to secure an ecclesiastical independence for the Portuguese Church which before this date was still a suffragan Church under the metropolitan Church of Spain. Referring to this Royal relation, Bernhard Wenzel said:

⁹⁸ The first document bearing this title was issued on April 10, 1140. Cf. Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal*, p. 80; Azevedo de, ed. *Documentos Medievais Portugueses*, Vol. 1, pp. 212-213; Mattoso, ‘A Realeza de Afonso Henriques’, pp. 213-232.

⁹⁹ Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, pp. 216-217; Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁰ Alfonso Henriques, “*Claves regni*,” in: Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal*, p. 89; Erdmann, *Das Papsttum und Portugal*, No. 5, p. 45; Costa de J. da Providência, *O Papado e Portugal no Primeiro Século da Historia Portuguesa*, Coimbra 1935, No. I, p. 7. The signing of this Royal charter took place in the presence of Cardinal Guido de Vico, who at that time was the cardinal papal legate to the Spanish Church. Also witnesses to the signing of this Royal document included the archbishop of the Portuguese Archdiocese of Braga, and the bishops of the dioceses of Porto and Coimbra.

With this feudal oath of allegiance, Alfonso Henriques proposed to the cardinal legate the signing of a contract with the Roman Church. Cardinal Guido received this proposal with a handshake in the name of pope Innocent II as his representative. This solemn proclamation by Alfonso Henriques was the first Portuguese contract with the Apostolic See, which the first king of Portugal officially certified in a legal form with his Letter “Claves regni” of 13th December 1143.¹⁰¹

In this document, the king promised his unalloyed loyalty to the popes of the Roman Catholic Church more than he would to any secular ruler on earth. He also gave his inherited lands to the Church as well as promised to give the lands which he would acquire in future to the papacy. Commenting on this Royal promise to the papacy, Carl Erdmann affirmed: “The king did not stop with his confession of being an obedient son of the pope and an enthusiastic soldier of the Blessed Peter, but also went as far as promising the pope that he will be loyal to the Roman curia more than to any other temporal princes: he not only gave to St. Peter his inherited land but also promised to conquer more extensive lands for the Apostolic patrimony.”¹⁰² This oath of allegiance received official recognition and acknowledgement from the papacy thirty-six years after it was made. The delay in receiving this anticipated recognition from the papal Office was caused by a lot of reasons, among which was the sudden death of pope Innocent II who died before his envoy carrying this message could reach Rome to deliver this document to him. Another reason proffered for this delay borders on the fears entertained by the papacy at that time that such grant of an independent kingdom of Portugal separate from the kingdom of Leon-Castile could endanger the papal strategy in the Iberian Peninsula of relying on the cooperate existence and assistance of the region to forestall peace and defence of the Christian frontiers against the incursions of the Iberian Muslim expansion. That was why, pope Celestine II (date of birth unknown, pontificate 1143-1144), who succeeded pope Innocent II did not give any reply to this request. His successor, pope Lucius II (date of birth unknown, pontificate 1144-1145) did give a response by accepting the tribute of gold but in the final analysis did not grant the expected recognition of the independence of the kingdom of Portugal from Spain. However, he promised Alfonso Henriques the protection of St. Peter but still addressed him as a duke (*dux*) and not as a king (*rex*) as Alfonso would have wished to be recognized.¹⁰³ The pontificates of his successors, beginning from the Blessed pope Eugene III (*1080, pontificate 1145-1153), Anastasius IV (*1073, pontificate 1153-1154), to the

¹⁰¹ Wenzel, Portugal und der Heilige Stuhl, p. 13.

¹⁰² Erdmann, Das Papsttum und Portugal, No. 5, p. 45. See also, Wenzel, Portugal und der Heilige Stuhl, p. 40.

¹⁰³ For more details on this delay in the recognition of the requested independence of the kingdom of Portugal, Cf. Lay, The Reconquest Kings of Portugal, pp. 89-90.

time of pope Adrian IV (*1100, pontificate 1154-1159) maintained this papal policy in the Iberian Peninsula and as a result did not give any satisfactory response to this grant of independence to the Portuguese Royal Crown. As a matter of fact, the anticipated recognition took place only during the pontificate of pope Alexander III (1159-1181) with the Bull “Manifestis comprobatum” of May 23, 1179. This Bull of 1179 granted to king Alfonso Henriques the protection of the Holy See and officially recognized Portugal as an independent kingdom separate from Castile in both political and ecclesiastical affairs.

In the introductory part of this Bull, the pope addressed king Alfonso Henriques in his chosen title of “illustrious king of Portugal” and praised him for his excellent and emulative efforts in fighting against the Iberian Muslims in his province. Thus in the words contained in this papal Bull, the pope said:

Alexander, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, to the dearest son in Christ, Alfonso, illustrious king of Portugal, and to his heirs in perpetuity. It has been clearly demonstrated that through military action and strenuous effort you have been an intrepid destroyer of the enemies of the name of Christ and a diligent supporter of the Christian faith; and as a good son and Catholic Prince you have also shown various benevolent attitudes to your mother the Holy Church, leaving to posterity a praiseworthy name and an example to imitate.¹⁰⁴

Having said this, the pope now moved to justify his action for granting this request as a decision made on the grounds of the emulative characters of the king and adjudged him worthy of being an ideal Christian king to be entrusted with the divine duty of governing the people of God. Based on this point, the pope officially recognised a full independence of Portugal from the kingdom of Leon-Castile both in political and ecclesiastical affairs and placed both the kingdom and its king under the protection of St. Peter and of the Holy See and granted him the right of ownership over all territories he re-conquered from the Iberian Muslims during his numerous wars of reconquest of the lands in the hands of the Muslims. The pope also gave him the right of ownership over territories that he would still re-conquer from the Muslims in future. All these are carefully articulated by the pope when he confirmed:

The Apostolic See must love with sincere affection and strive to efficiently attend in their just requirements to those chosen by the Divine providence for the government and salvation of the people. Therefore, recognising that your character is graced with prudence and justice, and thus suitable to govern, we receive you and the kingdom of

¹⁰⁴ Alexander III, “Manifestis Comprobatum” of May 23, 1179, Document of ANTT- Codices de Bulas, maço, 16, Fl. 20; Monumenta Henricina (MH), Vol. I, pp. 18-21. See the Latin version of this Bull in Appendix A No.1 in this Book. See also English translation of this Bull in: Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal*, pp. 141-142.

Portugal under the protection of St. Peter and ourselves, with all the honours and dignity pertaining to royalty, and by Apostolic authority we confirm you in possession of all the places which, with the help of Divine grace, you can wrest from the hands of the Saracens and where your neighbouring kings have no just claims.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, all the rights and privileges granted to king Alfonso Henriques in this document were not meant to be terminated by his demise, rather it was a grant, whose validity was meant to last in perpetuity. To make this realisable, the pope extended this grant to the future Royal princes who would ascend to the Portuguese Royal throne, thereby giving this throne a hereditary right of succession. This point is made clearer when the pope said: “In order that devotion and obedience to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and to the Holy See should increase more and more, that which we have conceded to you personally, we also grant to your heirs. We take it as a duty of the apostolic office to defend them and with the aid of God, all that we have granted.”¹⁰⁶ And with the effect of this papal Bull, king Alfonso Henriques received a papal recognition and approval of his kingship in its full regalia and with all the rights and privileges accorded to a medieval Christian king as a ruler ordained by God to rule and oversee the spiritual and material wellbeing of all the Christians within his kingdom, defending the Christian faith against the attacks of heretics and infidels. And in return for this official recognition of his autonomy and full title as the king of Portugal in this Bull: “King Alfonso undertook to quadruple the Portuguese papal tributes to a total of two marks of gold per annum, along with a one-off payment of a thousand gold coins.”¹⁰⁷ This amount of gold paid in appreciation for this recognition showed the remarkable impact, which this papal approval made in the life of this first king of Portugal.

The importance of this papal recognition lies in the legitimization of the Royal claim of Alfonso Henriques made since 1143 and established a solid link with the Western Christendom. It was a realisation of the Western Christendom's concept of kingship in the Iberian Peninsula, where recognition by the pope matters most and serves as the first step to translate the status of an Iberian king to that of Western Christendom's idea of monarchy - thereby accorded this Portuguese kingship an international dignity and recognition. This goes to confirm the assertion of an English historian and author Stephen Lay when he maintained that: “The promulgation of the papal Bull “Manifestis Comprobatum” in 1179 was a remarkable triumph for Alfonso's policies of international engagement and yet it was a victory that also irrevocably bound

¹⁰⁵ Alexander III, “Manifestis Comprobatum.” Cf. Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal*, p. 142.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal*, p. 142.

the future of the Portuguese monarchy to the Latin Christian cultural expansion.”¹⁰⁸

What all this means in effect is a revelation of the international character of the papal politics that was in vogue in the medieval period. It was one, whose scope extended not only to the then known Christian worlds but also to the worlds of the Saracens, pagans and other non-believers in the Christian religion as revealed in the preceding chapter of this work. It was a manifestation of the universal authority of the pope, in whose authority wrest both the power to confirm Christian kings as well as to depose them. By placing the king and the kingdom of Portugal under the protection of St. Peter and of the Roman Pontiff, pope Alexander III manifested the superiority of the spiritual authority over temporal powers and the subjugation of the imperial power under papal universal authority. And by his acceptance of this as a natural order of things, the king of Portugal consented to being a tutelage and vassal king of the Holy See, with the pope as his feudal overlord. And by virtue of this acceptance, he has laid a foundation for a tradition that will be binding on all other future Portuguese kings that will ascend the Portuguese throne after him. And this being the case, it is little wonder then that his son king Sancho I (*1154, reigned 1185-1212) who was his immediate successor renewed this oath of allegiance of his father to the Holy See and promised to do exactly the same as his father did. This allegiance was contained in a letter he wrote to pope Urban III (1185-1187). In this letter, king Sancho I said among other things: “Let it be known to Your Holiness, that I aspire to be Your Knight and a devoted son of the Roman Curia, just as my father was to You and to Your predecessors. In the hope of receiving the same blessings as my father, I will render obedience to You in all things.”¹⁰⁹

Being a “knight of the pope” as his father was in the above citation implied, being a defender and warrior in the war of reconquista against the Iberian Muslims. And with regard to the pope, it means, being a military arm of the Roman Pontiffs ready at all times to take up arms against Muslims and unbelievers of the Christian religion and annexing their conquered territories to his kingdom with the approval of the pope as a reward for his loyalty. It was for this reason that the 'Royal Marriage' with the papacy was established in form of a “Padroado Real” (Royal Patronage) which gave the king of Portugal the right to be in-charge of the Church in his kingdom, found new Churches and maintain old ones, appoint candidates for the bishopric positions and collect benefices from the Church's patrimony. And in return, the king was expected

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 262.

¹⁰⁹ Letter of king Sancho I to Pope Urban III in 1186, in: Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal*, p. 172. See also, *Documentos de Dom Sancho I (1174-1211)*, edited by Rui P. de Azevedo, A. de Jesus da Costa, Coimbra 1979, p. 35.

to fulfil the expectations of the popes from a secular ruler - providing defence for the Christendom within and outside of his kingdom. This corresponded with the duty of the king as contained in the coronation order of the tenth century *Pontificale Romano-Germanicum* which stresses the duty of an ideal Christian king to the Church. According to this tenth century Church document, these duties included among others: "To protect the Church, people and kingdom. The king must not stay on the defensive: he must also fight against the heathen peoples outside the kingdom, as well as false Christians and enemies of Christendom. The end was peace, and the king's means to that end should be justice and military action."¹¹⁰ And in a similar manner, the German historian Ernst-Dieter Hehl commenting on the traditional duties of the Christian kings in his essay on "War, Peace and the Christian Order" identified the primary duty of the Christian kings as one of providing defence and security of his kingdom and that of the Christian Church. This is seen in clear terms when he wrote: "It was the duty of kings to guarantee the existence, rights and safety of the Church in their kingdoms. They could not evade the need to help the Christian Church by force of arms. If they refused, they were threatened with excommunication, which meant that their subjects could withdraw their obedience. They would probably be deposed as a result. Protecting the Church, like defending the kingdom was one of the duties of the kingly office."¹¹¹ It was exactly this tradition of an ideal Christian king that both St. Bernard of Clairvaux and cardinal Giles of Rome were referring to, when they compared the two powers - sacerdotal and imperial with the two-sword symbolism as we explained in the preceding chapter, whereby the king is nothing but the sword-bearer of the Roman Pontiff.

The Portuguese kings, who ruled after king Alfonso Henriques continued this tradition, in the sense that from time to time they requested from the papacy a re-promulgation of this establishing Bull "Manifestis Comprobaturum" as was done during the reign of Sancho I who requested pope Clement III (*1130, pontificate 1187-1191) to re-issue this Bull in May 1190. Also the influential medieval papacy under the pontificate of pope Innocent III re-issued this Bull on April 16, 1212 at the request of king Alfonso II (*1185, reigned 1212-1223) of Portugal. And this tradition was kept alive throughout the entire medieval history of Portuguese imperium uptill the fifteenth century, when the Portuguese second Royal dynasty came into being with king John I as its first king, who began the conquest of Africa with the full support of the renaissance popes.

¹¹⁰ *Pontificale Romano-Germanicum*, Ordo No. 72, in: Luscombe, & Riley-Smith, eds. *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. IV, p. 186.

¹¹¹ Hehl, "War, Peace and the Christian Order," in: *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. IV, p. 227.

2.2.2 Re-enactment of this Royal Relation with the Renaissance Papacy in the Conquest of West African Atlantic Coasts

The same tradition of the medieval papacy which adopted Crusade as a just war and justified it as a war of defence and restoration found much expression in the Crusade of Africa carried out by the Portuguese Royal Crown with the authority of the renaissance papacy. The term “renaissance papacy” is used to describe the period of ecclesiastical history between the time of the great Western schism and the beginning of the protestant reformation. Scholars of ecclesiastical history agree that this period began in 1417 with pope Martin V (*1368, pontificate 1417-1431) and lasted up to the period of the pontificate of pope Clement VII (*1478, pontificate 1523-1534) in 1534. It was a very significant period in the history of the papacy marked with nepotism, luxurious lifestyle, political intrigues and manoeuvring, conquest, dominance of the papacy by powerful Catholic monarchies of Europe and influential Italian families such as the house of Borgia, house of della Rovere and house of Medici, each of which gave two popes to the Roman Catholic Church respectively. In this period of time, about fourteen popes ascended the throne of St. Peter as Roman Pontiffs and Heads of the Roman Catholic Church. Most, if not all of these popes had one thing or the other to do either with the establishment or with the promotion of the Atlantic enslavement of Black Africans through their partnership with the Royal Crown in Portugal.

This time around, it was no longer the case of the pope calling for a Crusade to liberate a particular place important for the religious life and practices of Christians like the Holy Land. Crusade of Africa was rather purely politically and economically motivated and carried out with just a tincture of religious motive that was in effect far much removed from the minds and plans of the major Portuguese Conquistadors - king John I and his Royal son Prince Henry the Navigator. The Crusade of Africa was therefore motivated by the major interests of the two major role players in the Transatlantic enslavement of Black African namely: the king of Portugal and the occupants of the Holy Chair of St. Peter in Rome - the renaissance popes.

On the part of the renaissance papacy, the Crusade of Africa which consequently led to the enslavement of Black Africans, presented a new opportunity for the papacy to make a comeback on the international stage of exercising a universal and unlimited papal authority over the whole world, an authority which it enjoyed from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, but which has now been lost after the humiliating onslaught on its glorious image in the early beginnings of the fourteenth century with the capitulation of pope Boniface VIII by king Philip IV of France in 1303. Having barely survived the humiliating “Babylonian exile” in the French city of Avignon (1305-1377) and

the great Western schism of 1378-1417, the renaissance papacy was under increasing struggles and mounting pressures to regain as well as to repair its image torn apart by the crisis of its Babylonian exile in Avignon and the great Western schism. And one of the major concerns of the papacy in the renaissance Europe was the union of all Christians as well as bringing non-Christians into the fold of the Church with the pope as the supreme leader of the whole human race. This politically motivated need to re-position itself at the centre of the entire human affairs with supreme authority received a re-birth in the renaissance period. And this was a major goal which pope Eugene IV set for himself in the convocation of the Council of Basel and which he achieved after much wrangling with the Council fathers at the Council of Basel. In the Union decree of July 6, 1439 issued by the Council fathers, the primacy of the Roman Pontiff over the entire Christendom was re-defined and re-emphasized. According to this Union decree it was agreed that:

the Holy Apostolic See and the Bishop of Rome has the primacy over the whole world, that the Bishop of Rome is the successor of St. Peter the Prince of the Apostles, he is the true vicar of Christ, Head of the universal Church and the teacher of all Christians, that he was given through St. Peter by our Lord Jesus Christ the full authority to feed, lead and direct the entire Church as it was contained in the decrees of the ecumenical Councils and in the holy canons of the Church.¹¹²

With this redefinition of primacy of the Bishop of Rome, the renaissance papacy moved with vigour to pursue the goal of stretching its authority over the entire known universe as it was the case from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, when this papal Office commanded European Christian kings and their armies and sent them as Crusaders to recover all territories including the Holy Land, that once belonged to the then known Christian world. This time around this vision was to be achieved in West Africa using the same method of Crusade with the emerging new twin-factors of discovery and mission to the pagans and infidels as part of this union of the entire Christendom. The historian Alain Milhou referred to this zeal of the popes of the renaissance for union of Christians when he said: "There was no other time when the dream of union of all Christians became so important in the history of the Church than in the period between the end of the great Western schism and the period of

¹¹² The Bull "Laetentur Caeli" of July 6, 1439, in: Denzinger-Hünnermann, eds. *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, No. 1307, pp. 418- 420. This reads in Latin as follows: "Item deffinimus, sanctam Apostolicam Sedem, et Romanum Pontificem, in universum orbem tenere primatum, et ipsum Pontificem Romanum successorem esse beati Petri principis Apostolorum et verum Christi vicarium, totiusque Ecclesiae caput et omnium Christianorum patrem ac doctorem existere; et ipsi in beato Petro pascendi, regendi ac gubernandi universalem Ecclesiam a Domino nostro Jesu Christo plenam potestatem traditam esse, quemadmodum etiam in gestis oecumenicorum Conciliorum et in sacris canonibus continetur." Cf. Schatz, *Allgemeine Konzilien*, pp. 155-156.

Martin Luther's separation from the Church."¹¹³ Motivated by the above given reasons, the renaissance popes such as Martin V (*1368, pontificate 1417-1431), Eugene IV (*1383, pontificate 1431-1447), Nicholas V (*1393, pontificate 1447-1455), Callistus III (*1375, pontificate 1455-1458) and Pius II (*1405, pontificate 1458-1464), who showed great interests in world mission made frantic efforts both in the Orient and in Africa to establish relationship with the separated early Christian communities in Ethiopia and the Church of the Apostle Thomas in Indian, which were once parts of the Church of Rome. Also the search for the legendary powerful Christian king Prester John believed to be in an undisclosed location in Africa so as to form an alliance with him in the Crusade against Islam, was once again begun with renewed vigour.

To all these efforts and the vision of these popes towards Christian union, Islamic expansion in Africa proved a big stumbling block and diminished the hope of realising this goal. By reason of this hindrance posited by the Islamic expansion in Africa, the idea of its removal via military conquest was not only born but also became a matter of expediency. It was therefore, no surprise then to learn that this same goal of union and the need to uproot Islam featured among the major reasons that led to the convocation of the Council of Basel in 1435. In the program drawn by the Benedictine monk Andreas von Escobar in 1435 for the realisation of this union, it was believed by the Council fathers that the Council of Basel:

should make effort to reform the Roman Catholic Church both in its Head and Members...to convert the infidel Moors and pagans to the faith in Christ, to reconquer the Holy Land and all the territories that once belonged to the Christendom, to reduce the number of schismatic Greeks as well as the Armenians as much as possible, and also to integrate the Christians of India, who were converted by the Apostle Thomas into the fold of Christianity under the authority of one Shepherd and pope of the universal Roman Church.¹¹⁴

This ambition of the renaissance papacy as contained in the above citation as well as its quest to secure its realisation linked the popes with the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans living around the regions of the West African Atlantic. On the part of the Royal Crown in Portugal, the Crusade of Africa was a continuation of the reconquista, which was begun by the first king of Portugal. The Crusade was here seen as a channel through which the African wealth based on gold, ivory and spices could be brought under the full control and authority of the king of Portugal and by so being, to serve the Portuguese

¹¹³ Milhou, "Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen," in: *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 7, p. 542.

¹¹⁴ Andreas von Escobar, in: Milhou, "Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen," *Ibid.*

major interests of economic aggrandizement and territorial expansion. Emerging from a tradition which swore an oath of allegiance to the Holy See to remain an ideal Christian king, whose duty was that of a warrior and a sword-bearer of the Roman Pontiff in the war of defence against Islam and knowing the economic and political advantage it will bring to his kingdom, king John I, who was himself a military knight, conceived the idea of launching a Crusade in Africa in his quest to enrich himself and his kingdom politically and economically. While planning this Crusade, he was convinced that based on the Royal relationship with the Holy Office in Rome, his plan will receive papal blessings when presented to this Holy Office. But the only obstacle to this plan of economic and political enrichment in Africa was Islam. And to this Portuguese king therefore, Islamic expansion was also a cog in his wheel of progress and interests in West Africa and the hope of gaining control of the Indian trade, which in the fifteenth century was under the control of the Arab and North African Muslims. It was feared that with such Islamic expansion going on, the route to the Indian wealth which West Africa provided in the said century could be endangered. And the only alternative left, was to remove the dreaded enemy (Islam) through military conquests. Commenting on this fact, Kevin Ward said: “For the Portuguese, Africa was both near at hand and a necessary stage on the way to the distant goal of Eastern wealth.”¹¹⁵

In the light of this, both the Holy Office of the pope and the Royal Crown of Portugal found each other in the same position of having a common enemy and saw the need to fight and to eliminate the enemy (Islam), whose adherents were rated alongside with pagans and other non-believers in the Christian religion in West Africa as the arch-enemies of the Christendom. Thus, when king John I and his son Prince Henry the Navigator came up with the report that the discovery of Africa will lead them to establish contact with the St. Thomas Christians in India and along their way, bring the Gospel of Christ to the regions of the pagans of West Africa and finally lead them to establish relationship with Prester John in East Africa so as to win him and his powerful Christian kingdom as partners in the fight against Islam, and having shown their readiness to launch a whooping military conquest against the Saracens in their own territories in Africa, the renaissance papacy saw in them an important instrument in its hands in the realisation of its own dream of bringing all into the fold of Christendom under the authority of the pope. Corroborating this fact, the German born historian and author of many Books Eugen Weber affirmed: “However, the supreme Head of the Christendom needed above all someone, who could undertake the huge task of missionary activities, which he

¹¹⁵ Ward, “Africa” in: Hastings, *A World History of Christianity*, p. 201.

now suddenly saw through the discoveries, which he mostly wanted as something that would solve this problem.”¹¹⁶

Based on this fact, the renaissance popes did not hesitate to bless the military conquest and politico-economic enterprise of king John I and his Royal son Prince Henry the Navigator in Africa. This approval was articulated in a number of Crusade Bulls, wherein the popes stated in unmistakeable terms their support for the Crusade against Islam and pagans of West Africa. For the renaissance papacy, faced with the thirst for mounting up the international stage of relevance once again, the Crusade of Africa provided a good channel for this task. The Crusade of Africa therefore, is a resurrection of the medieval papacy's vision of reunion of all human race into the “*ovile ecclesiae*” (one fold of the Church) with the pope once again as the Commander in-chief and feudal overlord, whose authority knows no bounds and as someone who was to decide what is to be done in the newly discovered and conquered territories in West Africa. In this re-positioning of its international universal character, the renaissance papacy saw in the king of Portugal an embodiment of an ideal Catholic king ready to serve the papacy as its vassal and sword-bearer in the fight against Islam in North Africa and as an “apostle” in the mission to the pagans of West Africa, who had nothing to do with either Islam or the Saracens. Despite this fact, the renaissance popes did not make any difference between the innocent natives of West Africa and the Saracens of North Africa in their Crusade Bulls issued from 1418 to 1514 which bore the mark of the eleventh century drafting of Crusade Bulls issued for the Crusades to the Holy Land. And in a sheer exercise of papal authority which knows no bounds as expressed by the famous canonists and papalists of the medieval Christendom cardinal Hostiensis and Giles of Rome, the renaissance popes commanded that the whole of West Africa should be invaded by the king of Portugal and the military outfits under the command of Prince Henry the Navigator. And to show that the world and all it contains are really theirs as the above named canonists taught and maintained, and that they can give pagan and infidel territories to the Christian kings of their choice, the Portuguese Crown was given full authority by these popes to dispossess the innocent West African pagan natives of their territories, lands and private belongings and to make them their own as well as to force them into perpetual slavery. By so doing, the popes demonstrated that they are really lords over the known and the unknown worlds yet to be discovered by the Portuguese Conquistadors and that they have the authority to grant ownership of the New Worlds to the Catholic kings of their choice. And the first place in Africa, where this took place was in the

¹¹⁶ Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission im Königreich Kongo*, pp. 5-6. Cf. Wenzel, *Portugal und der Heilige Stuhl*, p. 92.

ancient Moroccan city of Ceuta in 1415, which was used as a base for the Portuguese discovery and military conquest of West Africa. This conquest which brought the Island of Ceuta under the power and control of Portugal was very remarkable in the history of both Portugal and West Africa in the sense that it marked the beginning of the Portuguese African military conquest and opened up for Portugal all other avenues for its future conquest in the African territories in the build up to the Transatlantic enslavement of West Africans.

2.2.3 The Conquest of Ceuta and the Papal Bulls of Crusade in Africa

The business monopoly which Portugal enjoyed in Africa under the support of the renaissance papacy began as far back as 1415. That means, after the attack on the city of Ceuta and its fall to the military powers of king John I of Portugal and his Royal sons. Ceuta was a name known in the ancient times as “Septa,” meaning a city of seven hills formerly located at the North African country in the present day Morocco. But today, this city belongs to Spain since 1580. The city of Ceuta was the chief port of Morocco and according to Raymond Beazley: “It was a centre of commerce for the trade routes of the South and East as well as a centre of piracy for the Barbary corsairs.”¹¹⁷ To demonstrate its strategic position which it occupied in the trade on African gold and other products, John Ure gave information that at the time of its conquest by king John I and his Portuguese army in 1415, “Ceuta contained 24,000 commercial establishments dealing in gold, silver, copper and brass as well as in silks, spices and weapons imported from the Orient and the interiors of Africa.”¹¹⁸ Its strategic importance does not only lie in its being a major commercial centre, but also in its being a famous and strongest fortress in the Mediterranean sea. As a major sea port on the Mediterranean, Ceuta served as a northern terminal of the Trans-Saharan caravan trade. It was from here that the European silver as well as the North African artefacts and horses were carried

¹¹⁷ Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 150. The city of Ceuta was also a very strategic place for the flow of the trade from Africa which was highly demanded by the Europeans. According to John Ure, the city of Ceuta was “a Terminal for the African trading caravans which came both along the Libyan coast from Egypt and Baghdad, and across the Sahara from the fabled Sudan and Timbuktu.” Cf. Ure, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 54. For further readings on the fall of Ceuta in 1415 and its strategic place in the Portuguese quest for dominance and control of the trade on African gold, slaves, spices etc., see the following works: Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, pp. 3-24; Kreppel, *Die Trennung von Staat und Kirche in Portugal*, pp. 4-12; David Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal*, Second Edition, Cambridge 1993, pp. 11-25; Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, pp. 112-119.

¹¹⁸ Ure, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 54.

by caravans across the desert to the powerful Muslim empire of Sahel. In return, these caravans carried back with them gold, slaves, ivory and other luxury goods from West Africa to the North. To gain control of this strategic site of Ceuta therefore, will imply to gain control of the way to this trade which according to Peter Russell was the channel: "Through which the gold that Europe needed so badly reached the Christian world from the distant and mysterious mines of Black Africa."¹¹⁹ That notwithstanding, Ceuta offered also a sea way to discovering a new route of reaching the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa through seafaring. With the help of this discovery, Portugal wanted to overcome the Arab Muslim merchants, who were controlling the land route of this trade on humans, gold and other African products. It was therefore in their bid to gain a monopolist control of this trade on West African products that king John I of Portugal marshalled out a great army of unprecedented chivalry with the sole purpose of attacking this city of Ceuta on July 26, 1415. It was presumed to be an army of Crusaders, whose major purpose was to attack the Moors so as to spread the Gospel of Christ in the North African city of Ceuta. According to a report given to Prince Henry the Navigator by a Castilian attached to the household of Prince Fernando (the fourth son of king John I), the king of Portugal assembled for this Crusade on Ceuta an army of "5400 men-at-arms, 1900 mounted bowmen, 3000 unmounted bowmen, 9000 footmen, a total of some 19000 men."¹²⁰ With this number of men on the military side of the Portuguese king, the Moorish inhabitants of this northern city of Morocco were invaded. This attack took place on one single day, precisely on August 21, 1415, when the Portuguese expansive army overran the unprepared and poorly equipped Moorish army and took over their city of Ceuta by surprise. After this attack and the fall of this city, the treasures of this Moorish city were plundered and looted by the Portuguese crusading knights and Squires, the great central Mosque in Ceuta was confiscated, ritually cleansed, blessed for Christian worship and dedicated to Sancta Maria da Misericordia. It was in this Mosque now-turned Church that king John I of Portugal knighted the young Prince Henry and his other brothers. At the end of this ceremony and the great celebrations that accompanied it, king John I

¹¹⁹ Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator,' A Life, p. 37. See also, the Venetian Chronicle of Antonio Morosini and the Rufus-Chronicle of Lübeck, 1914, 1, pp. 450-451. For further readings on the gold of Black Africa, confer the following works: Bovil, The Golden Trade of the Moors, Richard Jobson, The Golden Trade, London 1623; Roberto Lopez, "I Genovesi in Africa Occidentale," Studi sull Economia Genovese nel Mediterraneo, Turin 1938; Magalhaes-Godinho Vitorino, Historia economica e Social da Expansao Portuguesa, Lisbon 1947.

¹²⁰ Ruy Diaz, Archivo de la Corona de Aragon (ACA), Registro 2406, Fl. 127v. Cf. Cartas Reales Fernando I, caja 1, No. 3; (M.H.), II, Nos. 56, 57 & 58, pp. 132-146; Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator', p. 31. This author gave a detailed account of this attack on the city of Ceuta on pp. 31-38. On the number of Fleets and Troops deployed by king John I and his Royal sons for this attack, See, Beazley, Prince Henry the Navigator, pp. 147-149.

proclaimed “the annexation of the city of Ceuta as a city now formally belonging to the kingdom of Portugal and attached to the titles of his kingdom 'Lord of Ceuta' to the traditional Portuguese Royal titles.”¹²¹ He appointed a distinguished Portuguese soldier Pedro de Meneses as governor of the newly acquired Portuguese territory and commander of the over 3000 soldiers stationed at Ceuta so as to ward off a possible Moorish attack who were bent on regaining their lost Muslim stronghold. King John I also honoured his son Prince Henry with the title of the duke of Viseu and lord of Covilhã and announced to his Cortés (Parliament) that: “He has appointed Prince Henry to be responsible for all matters pertaining to our city of Ceuta and the defence thereof.”¹²²

The motive for carrying out this attack on the city of Ceuta was given by king John I of Portugal to be purely a religious Crusade against the “so-called enemies” of the Christian faith - the Moors and pagans in Africa, who, as alleged by the Portuguese king were preventing the spread of the Gospel in Africa. Such a claim was made so as to capture cheaply the support of the papacy of pope Martin V and his approval of this pretence of the Portuguese king and his army of fighting a just war against the “unbelievers” in Africa. As a matter of fact, one does not expect the pope to refuse whatever reason given by an “ideal Christian king” for attacking a Muslim stronghold, who in actual fact was acting on the conviction that he was a right-hand-man and a sword-bearer of the pope in the fight against Islam. But contrary to this claim of the king, modern historians and research scholars vast in the Portuguese maritime and exploratory history such as Raymond Beazley, John Ure, William D. Phillips, Peter Russell, inter alia, have in the recent times discredited this belief and found it to be a mere façade. Peter Russell for instance, is of the view that even though there were skirmishes of conflicts between the Christian merchants of Europe and the Moors of North Africa in Ceuta, such did not hinder both from having a smooth commercial relationship. In his opinion, there was a well-established relationship among them. As a proof of such good relationship, he maintained that even Christians were employed in the services

¹²¹ Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator', p. 52. For further readings on the ceremonies that accompanied the fall of Ceuta, see: Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*. On the first page of this book, this author, while accounting for the takeover of the city of Ceuta by the military force of the king of Portugal recorded: “Victory was celebrated a few days later in the local Mosque, hastily converted by exorcism - with salt and water into a Christian Church. Following a High Mass, the king knighted his sons, who according to the Royal Chronicler of these events, had distinguished themselves in Battle.” See also: Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 153.

¹²² King John I, in: (M.H.) II, No. 116. Cf. Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator', p. 59. From 1415 onwards, this city of Ceuta remained in possession of the Portuguese kings up to the period of 1580 when it was finally lost to the Spanish kings who held it in their possession up till the present time.

of the Sultans in Morocco as bodyguards. To maintain his ground firmly, Russell recorded that: "Since the thirteenth century, the personal bodyguards of the Marinid Sultans had routinely consisted of Christian troops who were considered, because of their religious and cultural isolations less likely to be seduced from their loyalty than Muslim soldiers."¹²³ Continuing to lay credence to this view, Russell maintained that the European Christian merchants were even allowed to practice their faith in Ceuta and that at the time of this invasion on the city of Ceuta, there were some Franciscan monks who lived in their Hermitage in Morocco. This is made vividly clear when he wrote: "Christian merchants were allowed to practice their religion freely in their trading factories. While it is somewhat doubtful how far the titular Christian bishops of Morocco, routinely nominated by the Roman Curia, actually were permitted to reside there, there is some evidence that the Franciscans were permitted to maintain in Ceuta a hermitage which was turned into a convent after the Portuguese conquest."¹²⁴ While regretting such an attack on Ceuta, Russell concluded that: "It was then, this delicately balanced economic, political and religious structure, highly important to the trade of various Christian states bordering on the Mediterranean that a Portuguese army, preaching a Crusade 'a l' outrance' against the infidel, would shatter in 1415."¹²⁵ Russell is not a lone voice in contesting this claimed motive of the king of Portugal for the invasion of Ceuta. Other renowned historians of Iberian maritime history are also of the view that the motive for this expansive military expedition was not purely borne out of religious and crusading zeal. It was rather an ambitious quest of the Portuguese Royal family to expand their territory as well as to gain economic powers to improve on the poor economic situation of their kingdom

¹²³ Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 38. If the Sultans of Morocco could employ already in the 13th century a good number of Christians from Europe as soldiers in-charge of their personal security, that is a high level of demonstration of confidence and trust reposed on Christians and goes a long way to prove that there was really a good human rapport existing among Christians and Muslims prior to the attack of the Portuguese king on this city of Ceuta in 1415. The historian and author E.W. Bovill, gave a proof of the fact that Christians were in the service of the Sultans as body-guards when he wrote: "In courage and discipline, the Christian militia were greatly superior to the native troops, but they were chiefly valued for their unflinching loyalty to their masters. Like foreign mercenaries in Europe, they were much used as personal body-guards by rulers, whose lives were constantly endangered through political jealousies and tribal disputes... The conduct of the Christian militia was usually in happy contrast to that of the undisciplined mob of Arabs and Berbers, who formed the greater part of the armies, and they could be depended upon to stand fast long after the other ranks had broken." Cf. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, p. 100.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. (M.H.) II, No. 15. In this document, it was mentioned that the Anti-pope John XXIII appointed an English Franciscan Aimary de Aurillac as bishop of Morocco on March 10, 1413 to replace his predecessor and fellow monk Fray Diego de Jerez.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

and for its survival. William D. Phillips for instance summed up this motive as follows:

Their motives were numerous and many of them were long-standing: Expansion into Morocco offered enticing possibilities for solving or at least alleviating a number of significant economic concerns that Europe generally and Portugal particularly faced at the beginning of the 15th century. The nobility from the greatest lords to the simplest Knights were particularly hard-pressed... the Crown in Portugal needed more gold which came from the sub-Saharan gold-fields of Africa via the desert caravan routes...¹²⁶

From the evidence of facts contained in this citation therefore, the crusading attack on Ceuta was more of economic and political Crusade than of a religious one. For the above mentioned scholars, it was an attack aimed at sustaining the Estates of the Portuguese Royal princes, which were so poor that relying alone on the internal revenues of their kingdom, could not survive in the competition among their fellow princes in England and France, who measured their greatness on the amount of wealth their Estates could boast of. Therefore, to attack Ceuta proved to be the only way out for the Portuguese Royal family to solve their economic problem as well as to expand their territorial boundaries.

Be that as it may, the king of Portugal even without getting a prior permission of the pope for this invasion, was convinced in his presumption that he was carrying out a religious Crusade as a just war against the infidels as approved by the Church's canon laws and supported by the popes. Under normal circumstances, the king has no right to carry out a Crusade without papal authority. For a Crusade to be a just war, it has to be declared and summoned by the pope. Going by the logic of this set down rule guiding the Christian Crusades, it goes without saying then, that any invasion conducted by a Christian king for personal reasons without papal authority does not qualify to bear the name of a Christian Crusade. Despite this lack of papal authority in this invasion, king John I was certain that he would get the support of all Christian rulers to assist him on his mission if he turned to the popes for approval of his ambition in Africa. And this turned out to be the case later on. His presumption was based on the fact that he was acting in the name of the pope. And this being the case, it was therefore, not surprising that as soon as he turned to pope Martin V through one of his sons - Prince Henry, with his deceptive and hidden motive for military invasions of Africa, he had no restraints in obtaining a Bull of Crusade from the reigning pope Martin V, who made this invasion to wear the face of a religious Crusade and helped king John

¹²⁶ Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade*, p. 136. For Phillips, the king of Portugal and his Royal sons needed badly this city of Ceuta as a logical starting place for any of their several further initiatives in Africa for the survival of their kingdom. See, pp. 137-138.

I to secure the already conquered city of Ceuta as officially belonging to him and called on all other Christian kings, princes, rulers and administrators to assist him and his army of Crusaders in their other planned attacks and invasion of other regions of Africa. This was done as a proof that the pope has authority in the newly acquired territory of Portugal and has the power to give the right of ownership of this new Portuguese state to the king of Portugal so as to prevent any other European Christian king from intruding into this newly acquired Portuguese colony. It was from this point onward that Portugal began to make claims of ownership over the Atlantic ocean and the whole region of West Africa. This papal authority and approval given to the Portuguese Royal Crown by pope Martin V is contained in the Bull “Sane Charissimus” of April 4, 1418. This Bull served as the first foundational papal Bull that supported such an invasion of Africa. Casting a brief glance at this Bull will help us to evaluate the very papal support given to this political goal of Portugal in Africa.

2.3 The Bull “Sane Charissimus” of Pope Martin V in 1418

Pope Martin V (*1368, pontificate 1417-1431) was born into the family of Agapitus and Caterina Colonna in the town of Genazzano in Rome. He was a Roman to the core and his family belonged to one of the oldest but famous influential families in Rome that dominated the papacy for a long period of time. His original name was Oddone Colonna. The great scholar and historian Hubert Jedin described him as: “Ein Römer im vollen Sinne des Wortes” (a Roman in the full sense of the word).¹²⁷ He made a quick rise to prominence in the Roman Curia. This began with his appointment as Apostolic pronotary by pope Urban VI (*1318, pontificate 1378-1389). In 1405, pope Innocent VII (*1339, pontificate 1404-1406) created him a cardinal. He played an active role during the great schism that nearly destroyed the Western Church such that in 1410, he was appointed a papal delegate of the anti-pope Alexander V (*1339, pontificate 1409-1410) to represent him at the hearing of an appeal made to the papacy by the excommunicated Czech priest, philosopher and reformer Jan Hus (1369-1415). Odone Colonna was elected as pope Martin V on St. Martin's day (November 11, 1417) during the conclave that took place at the Council of Constance (1414-1418) in Germany (which consisted only of 23 cardinals and 30 delegates). His election to the papacy marked the end of having three sitting popes at a time in the history of the Catholic Church in the West and laid to rest the greatest Western schism in Christian history. He returned to Rome on September 28, 1420. As a pope, he worked very

¹²⁷ Jedin, ed. *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Band III/2, p. 567.

assiduously to restore the papal monarchy to its known prestige and independence. He died in Rome on February 20, 1431 at the age of 63 years.¹²⁸

Pope Martin V played a key role in the history of the Portuguese military expeditions and trade along the Western coast of the African Atlantic. In pursuit of the official teachings of the Church which held that: “Outside of the Catholic Church, there is no salvation,”¹²⁹ and that the pope has a universal authority over all mankind, pope Martin V issued the Bull “Sane Charissimus” on April 4, 1418 as a Crusade Bull against the infidels in Africa. With this Bull, the pope boosted the Portuguese military raids against the Saracens and other non-Christians in West Africa. This Bull is very important in the history of the Portuguese relationship with the papacy which lasted for centuries and their entire trading business in Africa. Its importance lies in the fact that it serves as the first foundational papal Bull in the whole political and economic enterprise of the Portuguese in Africa. It opened as we shall see later, the way as well as served as a reference point for other Bulls issued by the renaissance papacy from 1418 to 1514 with which the renaissance popes donated Africa to the kings of Portugal and their successors in perpetuity. It also served as a source of authority in the hands of these popes in their treatment of matters concerning Africa and Africans, Portugal and other European nations and gave authenticity to their subsequent Bulls issued with regard to the business enterprise of the Portuguese in Africa.

In its tone and character, the Bull “Sane Charissimus” is a Crusade Bull declaring war on Africa and served as a papal legitimization of the Portuguese economic and politically motivated military raids in Africa. It shows the papacy's unbreakable link with the Portuguese Crown since 1179 when the papacy promised this Crown of its protection and assistance if the king of Portugal remains a “Defensor fidei” (defender of the faith) and the sword-bearer of the Roman Pontiffs in the fight against the Saracens within and outside Portugal. With the force of this Bull, pope Martin V made a fervent call on all Christian kings, princes, prelates of the Church and all the faithful to support king John I of Portugal with all the necessary weapons and other means he required in his bid to fight and conquer the Saracens and other

¹²⁸ For further readings on pope Martin V, see the following: Jean-Marie Mayeur, & Charles Pietri, eds. *Die Geschichte des Christentums: Die Zeit der Zerreißproben*, Vol. 3, Freiburg.Basel.Wien 1991, pp. 107-111; Jedin, ed. *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Band III/2, pp. 567-572; K. Fink, “Papsttum und Kirchenreform nach dem großen Schisma,” *Theologische Quartalschrift*, 126, 1946, pp. 110-122; Johannes Haller, “England und Rome unter Martin V.” *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, Bd. 8, Roma 1905, pp. 249-304; Kelly John Norman, *Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, New York 1986, pp. 239-241; Marthaler, ed. *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Second Edition, Vol. 9, pp. 217-219.

¹²⁹ Eugene IV, The Bull “Cantate Domino” of 4th Feb. 1441, in: Denzinger-Hünemann, No. 1351; Pope Boniface VIII, Bulle, “Unam Sanctam,” in: Denzinger-Hünemann, No. 870.

“unbelievers” in Africa with the view of extending his territory to Africa and to spread the Christian religion there.

As one can read from its introductory part, this Bull was addressed to all: “Venerabilis Frater, Archiepiscopus, ac dilectis filiis Electis, Administratoribus, Abbatibus, Prioribus, aliisque ecclesiarum et monasteriorum Praelatis, necnon caeteris Christianae Religionis professoribus ubilibet constitutis, ad quos praesentes literae pervenerint, Salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem.”¹³⁰ He praised the effort of king John I of Portugal for invading the city of Ceuta and praised him as an “Athlete of the Christian faith,” who has committed every resource under his control to wage war against the Saracens and other “unbelievers” in Africa with the hope of bringing them into the Catholic fold. This fact is seen when the pope said:

This king, who is a defender of the Catholic Faith and a strong hero, strives for victory over the unbelievers in the Christian faith, and wishes to gather an army of believers around himself in order to wage war against the Saracens and unbelievers with the intention of subjugating them as well as to bring back the territories under their control into the fold of the true faith once more. To carry out this, he wishes to assemble all his armies and kingdoms and pleads humbly for our Apostolic assistance and that of the entire Catholic Church, so that this intention of his will be fully and joyfully realised.¹³¹

Having found this task as a worthy one, pope Martin V then declared a Crusade against Africa and pleaded with the emperors, kings, princes, army generals and all those occupying positions of power and honour in the society, their representatives, parishes and states etc., to support the king of Portugal in his war against Africa. In his very words, the pope appealed:

We welcome gladly in the name of the Lord, this intention of the king of Portugal. We would like to request the help and attention of all emperors, kings, dukes, counts, princes, barons, army commanders, magistrates and all public officials and their representatives, parishes, communities, states, villages, and all with the burning desire for the interest and good of the Christian faith, to rise up in support of this intention of the

¹³⁰ Martin V, “Sane Charissimus,” in: Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, ad annos 1418, Vol. 10, No. 21-23. See a Latin copy of this Bull in Appendix A No. 2. See also *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. 1, pp. 9-10. In a parallel Bull “Ab eo,” issued on 4th April 1418, Martin V also praised the work of king John I of Portugal in the land called Ceuta in North Africa. For reference to this Bull, see: *Bullarium Diversam do Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo*, ANTT-Livro 2 dos Breves da Torre do Tombo, ap. 50.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* The historian and author Burton Keith in his Book, *The Blessing of Africa* accused Martin V here that he used this Bull to authorize a Crusade against Africa and with a later Bull in 1441 he sanctioned the Portuguese trade in African slaves. Cf. p. 197. For further comments on this Bull, see: Setton, “Papacy and the Levant,” Vol. 2, p. 46; Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*. Davidson asserted in this Book that pope Martin V received 10 Black slaves from Prince Henry the Navigator as a reward for the grant he made in this Bull in 1418.

king, undertaken for the sake of heaven and for which we are very grateful to him. We beseech all who strive for the forgiveness of their sins, to make themselves courageous and ready to make war against the unbelievers and to destroy their heresy. We hereby urge and invite you all to give heed to this call of the king of Portugal, to support him with various means through which his plan could be realised, and with this decree we undertake the responsibility by reason of the grant we made to our brother (king of Portugal).¹³²

The German historian Jörg Fisch was right to assert that this Bull was a serious appeal made to the kings and princes of the then Christian Europe to engage themselves in the fight against the Saracens and pagans in the northern and western regions of Africa. This is seen when he wrote: “The Christian princes were exhorted to arm themselves for the eradication of the unbelievers and their heretical teachings.”¹³³ With this in mind, pope Martin V then revealed the “good plan” of king John I of Portugal to the entire Christian World of his time to raise a formidable and strong army that would be able to defeat the Saracens and other unbelievers in Africa and called on all the patriarchs, archbishops, administrators and all the prelates of the Church to lend their support with weapons and other necessary assistance to the king of Portugal that will enable him carry out his goal in Africa. He also enjoined them to raise their voices in their dioceses, monasteries, parishes, states and villages so as to convince their subjects to freely engage themselves in this war against the Saracens and other non-believers in the Christian religion. This request of Martin V is vividly made clear when he wrote:

Therefore, we wish to communicate to you through this Apostolic letter, patriarchs, archbishops, the chosen ones, administrators and prelates of the Church, that king John of Portugal intends to raise a strong and powerful army to fight against the unbelievers. It is our wish to support this enterprise of king John as long as he lives, then it requires some armament in order to carry out successfully such a responsible and salutary enterprise. That is why, we urge you to strongly raise your voices in the states where you plan to assemble, through you, and other public officials, whom you consider worthy and capable of appealing to the feelings of those faithful Christians, who through God's providence will be streaming to listen to their preaching, and feeling led by true penance and confession of their sins, will be ready to render such a service in defence of the Christian faith. When you impose on them 40 days fasting, by reason of our apostolic authority, they will be granted complete absolution for their sins.¹³⁴

¹³² Martin V, *Sane Charissimus*, *Ibid.*

¹³³ Fisch, *Die europäischen Expansion und das Völkerrecht*, p. 206. It reads thus in German: “Die christlichen Fürsten werden ermahnt, sich zu rüsten zur Ausrottung der Ungläubigen und ihrer Irrtümer.”

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

In order to encourage all those who might take part in this war against the Saracens and other unbelievers in Africa, Martin V made to them in the same manner that pope Urban II did to the Crusaders of the Crusades to the Holy Land in 1095, a promise of perpetual indulgence for the punishment due to sin, so that at the moment of death, they might go to heaven. In view of this, Martin V asserted:

In order to motivate them with a burning zeal and to receive more graces, with the help of the mercy of Almighty God, and that of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, on whose authority we rely, and with the authority, though, unworthily granted to us by God to bind and to loose, we grant all those faithful who have taken up the sign of the cross in this manner to take part in this war against the unbelievers, the forgiveness of all their sins, which they truly renounced with all their hearts and truly confessed with their mouths, and we promise them an increase of the eternal salvation for the recovery of the righteous.¹³⁵

The pope, now acting on the ground of the tradition of the Roman Pontiffs as those who have the authority to give the right of possession of non-Christian territories to the Christian kings of their choice, finally reminded all the kings, archbishops, bishops, prelates of the Church and other addressees of this Bull that the right to own the territories that will fall into the hands of king John of Portugal after this Crusade against Africa will exclusively belong to him alone and his successors. According to him: "It is very befitting to grant benevolence to those, who raised such an army, or those who send others to fight in war, or who give help to the army through good advice or through their deeds: all territories and places namely, which through this military enterprise would be retrieved from the hands of the barbarians, will be subjected to the control of the king of Portugal and his successors."¹³⁶ By so doing, pope Martin V went into the annals of history as the first pope of the Holy Roman Catholic Church who, not only sanctioned but also blessed the Portuguese plan of territorial expansion and business monopoly in Africa under the cover of spreading the Gospel of salvation to Africa. This action of his, like we shall later see in this work, will serve as a justification for the behaviours of other popes towards Africa and Africans in general, who ruled the Church after him in all their dealings with the kings of Portugal in matters relating to Africa. It became the stepping stone and a means of justification in the hands of the popes that ruled the Church after Martin V, from which they gave other grants and privileges to the kings of Portugal as well as their support and authority behind all the activities of the Portuguese in Africa. A proof of this fact has been confirmed

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

by the most famous Bull “*Romanus Pontifex*” of Nicholas V of 1454, issued 36 years after “*Sane Charissimus*.” In confirming this Bull as a reference point for the future support of the popes with regard to the Portuguese activities in Africa and the authenticity of the grants made to Portugal in this Bull of Martin V, pope Nicholas V affirmed:

Moreover, since this is fitting in many ways for the perfecting of a work of this kind, we allow that the aforesaid king Alfonso and his successors and the Infante (Prince Henry) as also the persons to whom they, or any one of them shall think that this work ought to be committed, may according to the grant made to the said king John by Martin V of happy memory, and another grant made also to king Edward, king of the same kingdoms, father of the said king Alfonso by Eugene IV, of pious memory, Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors.¹³⁷

Martin V also issued another Bull “*Cum Charissimus*” a year later in 1419, with the help of which he once again confirmed his unalloyed support for the ongoing mission of political conquest and economic pursuits of the Portuguese in Africa. In this Bull, he admonished all Christians to remain steadfast in their financial support to the king of Portugal in his war against the so-called “enemies” of the Christian faith. In this appeal the pope said as follows:

...We wish our trusted allies to give their support through proper means to the above mentioned king of Portugal, who had undertaken to carry out this praiseworthy action in defence of the faith. We need your entire support, and we exhort and remind you in view of this, of your duty to defend the faith and the Christendom by rendering help and sacrifice to those who have undertaken to engage themselves in so pious and praiseworthy work of defending the reverence of God and of the Christian religion.¹³⁸

As a sign of his gratitude to pope Martin V for supporting his work of territorial expansion in Africa and for granting the request of his father king John I, Prince Henry the Navigator, who was a “major role player” in the Portuguese expeditions in West Africa, gave to the pope as gifts some of the first set of African captives brought into Portugal in 1421. These were men taken by force during the first expedition and military conquest of Africa led by captains Antão Gonçalves and Nunó Tristão during this period. Attesting to this development, a Portuguese traveller and historian João de Barros (1496-1579) wrote as follows:

¹³⁷ Nicholas V, “*Romanus Pontifex*,” Document of the Vatican Secret Archives, ASV. Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 73v. Cf. Jordão, ed. *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. I, pp. 31-34. English translation in: Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 18. See the Latin text in Appendix A, No. 7 of this Book.

¹³⁸ Martin V, “*Cum Charissimus*” of 4th April 1419, in: Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, Ad Anno, 1419, No. 8. See also, *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. I, p. 11.

Since the major intention of Prince Henry the Navigator for discovering these lands was geared towards subjecting the barbaric nations under the yoke of Christ and to extend the Royal heritage as well as to promote the honour and the glory of the Portuguese empire, and he (Henry the Navigator), through the captives, which Antão Gonçalves and Nunó Tristão brought from Africa, and through whom they received information about the inhabitants of those lands in Africa, he wanted to proclaim this goodnews to pope Martin V, who then was the Head of the Catholic Church by giving him the first fruits of this enterprise, which duely belonged to him, because this work was performed to the glory of God and for the spread of the Christian faith.¹³⁹

By so doing, Prince Henry the Navigator intended to beg the pope to allot a perpetual right of ownership to the Crown in Portugal over other explorations and discoveries that will be made in future along the Atlantic Coasts of Africa. He also begged for the granting of plenary indulgence to any one of his military crew who may lose his life in the course of fighting the natives in Africa so that his soul will be given a place of rest at the bosom of St. Peter the head of the Apostles. These intentions have been corroborated by João de Barros when he further wrote:

also he wanted to beg him (pope Martin V), while he had begun this enterprise for many years and by so doing... had spent a greater part of his wealth on this expedition, that it might please him (Martin V) to donate perpetually to the Crown of Portugal all the lands discovered along the African Atlantic which lay beyond Cape Bojador and extending up to the Indian coast; and to grant eternal forgiveness of sins to all those who might die in the course of carrying out this conquest, since God had placed him (Martin V) on the throne of Saint Peter.¹⁴⁰

All these privileges were granted to Prince Henry as he requested. And J. Goni Gantzambide was correct when he said that: “The Holy See did all in order to promote this enterprise. Martin V summoned in 1418 the entire Portuguese to engage in the Crusade against the Moors for the spread of the Christian faith.”¹⁴¹ In 1436, the Venetian pope Eugene IV (*1383, pontificate 1431-1447) confirmed these privileges contained in the Apostolic letter of his predecessor Martin V in the three Bulls “Dudum Cum” of 1436, “Illius Qui” and “Etsi Suscepti” he issued in 1442 respectively. Let us at this juncture briefly examine the contents of these Bulls.

¹³⁹ João de Barros, *Die Fahrten entlang der Westküste Afrikas und die Entdeckung der Inseln Porto Santo und Madeira*, in: Gabriela Pögl, *Heinrich der Seefahrer oder die Suche nach Indien*, Wien, 1989, p. 282ff. See also, Koschorke, et al., eds. “Außereuropäische Christentums Geschichte,” *Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika 1450-1990*, Bd. VI, p. 111.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Gantzambide, *Historia de la Bulla de la Cruzada en Espana*, in: Hans-Georg Beck, et al., eds, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Band 2, Freiburg im Breisgau 1985, pp. 488-489.

2.4 The Bull “Dudum Cum” of Pope Eugene IV in 1436

Pope Eugene IV (1431-1447) was born in Venice in 1383. His real name was Gabriele Condulmaro. His father was a successful rich merchant from Venice. His mother was a sister to the nepotistic Pope Gregory XII. As a young man, Gabriele entered into the St. George monastery in Venice, where he received his formation as an Augustinian monk. In 1407 his uncle pope Gregory XII appointed him bishop of the diocese of Siena when he was just 23 years of age, a position he could not fit in well as a result of his tender age. That notwithstanding, he was made a cardinal priest of St. Clement a year later in 1408 by his uncle pope Gregory XII. In the conclave that took place in Rome to elect a possible successor of Martin V on March 3, 1431, Gabriele was elected pope as a compromise candidate on March 16, 1431 and he chose the papal name Eugene IV to succeed pope Martin V. His pontificate was characterised by many worldly and theological struggles especially his struggle with the Council of Basel (1431-1437), where he sought to dissolve the Council due to its hostility towards the papacy. The Council fathers however, opposed this move and declared the superiority of the Council over the pope in 1433. Worthy of mention in his pontificate is his love for the unity of the entire Church, especially reuniting the Greek Church with the Roman Catholic Church. This union, although temporarily made, saw the light of the day on July 6, 1439 and was proclaimed with the papal document “Laetentur Caeli.” His other successes include among others, the restoration of the papal authority and sovereignty to the Church at the Council of Basel. He died in Rome on February 23, 1447.¹⁴²

His Bull “Dudum Cum” was issued as a result of the complaints made to him by king Eduard of Portugal (1433-1438) concerning the attitude of the king of Magazan (Castile in Spain), who felt unjustly cheated by the grants and rights given to king John I of Portugal over Africa as contained in the Bulls of pope Martin V in 1418 and 1419 respectively. This exclusion of the king of Castile brought about conflicts between him and king Eduard of Portugal. All the efforts made by the king of Castile to obtain the right of ownership over the regions he conquered in Africa, where the Portuguese had not even registered any presence before, was not rewarded by pope Eugene IV. Instead, the pope listened to the reports made by Prince Henry the Navigator, who falsely

¹⁴² For further readings on the pontificate of pope Eugene IV, see the following: Jacob E. Safra, *The new Encyclopaedia Britannica* Vol. 4, 15th Edition, 2003, pp. 594-595; Marthaler, ed., *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Second Edition, Vol. 5, 2000, pp. 444-445; Kelly John Norman, *Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, p. 241; R. Kay, *The Conciliar “Ordo of Eugene IV,”* *Council and Clerical Culture in the Medieval West*, 1997, p.16; Michel Mollat du Jourdin und Andre Vauchez, eds. *Die Geschichte des Christentums: Die Zeit der ZerreiBproben 1274-1449*, 2007, Vol. 3, pp. 111-131.

claimed that he had rescued the Atlantic islands of Madeira, Porto Santo and Ilhas Dessertas from the hands of their pagan rulers while he was indeed pursuing his economic and colonizing ambition in the African Atlantic. The truth of the matter remains that at the time he discovered these islands in the 1420s, they were still uninhabited with neither Saracens nor other unbelievers in Africa whom as he claimed had been converted to Christianity through his conquest. Based on this truth, Prince Henry therefore fed the ears of pope Eugene IV in this case with erroneous information, who at the time was ignorant of the facts on ground in the African Atlantic. In reference to this fact, Peter Russell affirmed that Prince Henry: “Had Eugenius IV informed that he had freed Madeira and its neighbouring islands from the Saracens' yoke and returned their (then non-existent) inhabitants to the Christian faith.”¹⁴³ Going a step further in demonstrating his distrust of the genuine intention of Prince Henry the Navigator in the West African Atlantic Coasts, Russell is of the view that even though Prince Henry was a dedicated Christian, he all the same “never considered that there was anything wrong with feeding successive popes with misleading information if it would help them to help him.”¹⁴⁴ With this kind of tricks on the side of Prince Henry the Navigator and the existing relationship of the papacy with the Portuguese Crown, pope Eugene IV decided this conflict between the king of Portugal and Castile in favour of the former by extending the power and right of Portugal to claim ownership over all the regions in Africa already within and outside of its possession. This power and grants made by pope Eugene IV are contained in the Bull “Dudum Cum” of 1436, where he confirmed the grants and right of ownership given to Prince Henry over the Atlantic Islands mentioned in the Royal Charter of 1433.

Eugene IV hinged his decision to make these grants in favour of the Crown in Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator on the letter tendered to him by the delegates sent by king Eduard.¹⁴⁵ This letter is a Royal Charter issued at Sintra by king Eduard on the 26th day of September, in the same year (1433) of his ascension to power, wherein he granted his brother Prince Henry the Navigator the right to own (as a life-long property) as well as to govern the islands of

¹⁴³ Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator,' p. 94. For reference to this claim made by Prince Henry the Navigator, see, (M.H.), IV, No. 138, pp. 354-355.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ King Eduard was the first son and successor of king John I of Portugal. He was born on the 31st of October 1391 in Viseu. He was the 11th king of Portugal and the 2nd Mayor of the city Ceuta. As king, he had a very short reign of only five years. And within this period, he pursued with vigour the expansion politics of his late father in Africa and as a result of this, he heavily supported the military expeditions of his brother Prince Henry the Navigator and his military Order of Christ in Africa with a numerous number of Royal Charters and Letters which encouraged the Prince to secure more territories in Africa and beyond for the kingdom of Portugal.

Madeira, Porto Santo, Ilhas Dessertas and others discovered along the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa which Prince Henry and his military Order of Christ had earlier discovered.¹⁴⁶ In brief, this letter contained among other things:

Prince Eduard, by God's grace the king of Portugal, Algarve and the lord of Ceuta. To all those who will see this letter, let it be known to all, that we want to make a mark of favour to my brother Prince Henry: we find it worth-doing and pleasing and declare that he has received from us as long as he lives, the islands of Madeira, Porto Santo, Deserta and all other islands located in Africa with all their rights and incomes, including their civil justice and jurisdiction, but excluding death sentences and cutting-off of limbs, which are the exclusive reserves of the Court of Justice in Lisbon; we also empower him to undertake and make use of all the benefits and improvements of the landed properties of the said islands in accordance to his will, and to give definitely or indefinitely to whom

¹⁴⁶ The islands of Madeira, Porto Santo and Ilhas Dessertas are Portuguese islands on the Western Atlantic Coasts of Northern Africa discovered by Prince Henry and his military Order of Christ after the conquest and fall of Ceuta in 1415. It is believed among historians that this discovery took place between 1418 and 1420. They were Portugal's first Atlantic colonies along the African Atlantic Coast. In the above Royal Charter, king Eduard made a life-long donation of these islands to his brother Prince Henry the Navigator. This donation included among other things: surrendering to the Prince the "customary taxes and Imposts due to the Portuguese Crown." Cf. Russell, Prince Henry "the Navigator," *A Life*, p. 92.

The term "Madeira" is the Portuguese word for wood or Timber. It was thus named as a result of too much trees found on it and to describe its status at the time of its discovery as being one of a piece of forest land. It was known for its wonderful climate for agricultural productions. At the time of its discovery and colonisation by the Portuguese, it was still uninhabited by people. The early Portuguese settlers of this island cultivated cereals, vine, sugar-cane for the production of great quantity of sugar for the Portuguese and the whole of Europe such that "by the time of Henry's death in 1460, this island had in fact become a major exporter of sugar to Europe and a major contributor to the Prince's treasury." See, Russell, *Ibid.* p. 90. This Island was also famous for its ability to grow Timber trees used for building of houses in Portugal. Even Eannes Azurara, the Royal chronicler attached to the Portuguese Crown attested to the quality of the woods grown on this island when he recorded: "The timbers from the Atlantic islands had made it possible for the Portuguese for the first time to erect buildings several storeys high." Cf. Azurara, in: Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator', p. 90.

The second island discovered by the Portuguese in Africa was named Porto Santo. The island of Porto Santo on its part was thus called because it was discovered by the Portuguese on the Feast of All Saints. It produced a lot of corn, barley, cattle, fish, wild pigs and it also grew trees from which the Portuguese settlers obtained Dragon's blood used as gum and for dying of articles of clothing. The historian C. R. Crone, in the *Voyages of Cadamosto and other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century*, chp. IV, pp. 7-8, made a wonderful description of this island of Porto Santo. According to Peter Russell, the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo located at the western part of Morocco on the southern part of the African Atlantic were colonised by Prince Henry the Navigator, not simply for the purpose of evangelizing them as he claimed in the report he made to pope Martin V in 1424. His main reason for colonising these islands was to use them as a protection against interlopers in the discoveries he was about to make in the West African Guinea Coasts. Attesting to this view, Russell wrote: "For many scholars, the practical reason for his attempt in 1424 to establish himself in the Canaries has seemed conveniently obvious, he wished to secure control of the Archipelago to protect the sea route to Guinea when this was opened." Cf. Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator', p. 266.

ever he wishes the said landed properties, but however, without violating the lease-form, with which we have provided the islands....¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, this Royal letter granted Prince Henry the right and power to receive tax payments from those who might settle in the said islands or make trade businesses with the inhabitants of the said islands and other regions of Africa in future. These rights were clearly spelt out in the following words:

We wish to assure the said Prince Henry that he is empowered to rent the lands partly or wholly to all those who in his lifetime would come to dwell in the said islands, with the hope that they will also continue to make payment for the lands even after the death of the said Prince Henry... Moreover, we wish to issue the following guidelines for the occupation of the islands: if the said Prince Henry rents the land to someone, then let it really belong to him, if the favoured person dies, the land will belong to his children, provided that they will pay the dues according to the dictates of the rentage agreement. However, it remains our exclusive right to ensure that the said Prince Henry does not permit the printing of a different currency for usage in the said islands, we want instead, that our currency remains the permitted currency in use in these islands. We are sending him this letter with our great support and assurance, it was signed by us and stamped with our lead-seal by Dante in the city of Sintra on the 26th day of September. The king granted permission to write this letter and Affonso Cotrim wrote it in the year of the Lord 1433.¹⁴⁸

This Royal Charter of 1433 is very significant in the history of the Portuguese monopolistic enterprise in Africa in the sense that it served as a landmark in the history of the Portuguese overseas colonies in the African Atlantic. According to Peter Russell: "It marked the adoption by the Portuguese Royal Crown of a form of overseas government that would become the norm in all the Atlantic islands. In it, we see the Portuguese Royal Crown, after the death of king John I, relinquishing the task of itself attempting directly to colonize or administer any of them. Instead they were handed over, as semi-feudal fiefs, to a donatory (Prince Henry) who, it was assumed, would for a variety of motives among which self-interest predominated, set about developing them as he could."¹⁴⁹ On the strength of the significance of the contents of this letter and in the

¹⁴⁷ Don Eduarte, Carta porque o Senhor Rei Don Duarte fez merce ao Infante Don Henrique das Ilhas de Porto Santo, Madeira e Outras. See a Portuguese copy of this Royal letter in Appendix C, No. 1 in this Book. The original copy of this Letter is found in: Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo Portuguese: ANTT- Chancelaria de Don Duarte, Liv. I, Fl. 18. Further citations of the documents of this National Archives in Portugal will be given as: ANTT- followed by the name of the document. This letter is also reproduced in Microfilm in: ANTT- Livro Primeiro do mesmo Rey, No. 924, Fl. 18. A printed copy of this Letter is found in: Caejetano de Sousa, *Provas da Historia Genealogica da Casa Real Portugueza*, Tomo I, p. 442; Brasio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana (M.M.A.)* Vol. I, No, 38. p. 261; (M.H) IV, Nos. 81 & 82.

¹⁴⁸ Don Eduarte, *Ibid.* Cf. (M.H.), IV, No. 138.

¹⁴⁹ Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 93.

awareness of the fact that the king of Portugal is only a sword-bearer and an “extended hand” of the pope in the war against Islam, pope Eugene IV henceforth did not hesitate to issue the Bull “Dudum Cum” in favour of king Eduard of Portugal and Prince Henry, so as to encourage them to pursue with vigour their economic and political interests undisturbed in Africa under the cover of religious Crusade.

In the introductory part of this Bull, the pope acknowledged having received the delegates sent by king Eduard of Portugal and assured him of his readiness to grant him more rights so as to edify him to remain steadfast in his purported works of spreading the Gospel in the conquered regions of Africa. This assurance of pope Eugene IV was made clearly when he said:

Your Highness, due to the fact that your envoys appeared before us and requested many things on your behalf, we would like to please Your Highness by granting You many favours for the preservation and defence of the city called Ceuta, which Your father of blessed memory captured with a strong army and retrieved from the hands of the godless Saracens located in some parts of Africa, and surely for the recovery of other areas, places and towns, which were built up and inhabited by these godless Saracens.¹⁵⁰

The pope acknowledged in this Bull that he has also received the delegation sent by the king of Castile and the letters he sent, through which he expressed his dissatisfaction over the rights granted to king John I of Portugal by Martin V which excluded him from having any right of ownership over the regions his troops conquered in Africa. He assured king Eduard of Portugal that he intended in no way with the tenor of this Bull to grant the king of Castile any right of ownership in Africa as he demanded. All these are made clearer when the pope wrote:

But due to the fact that our illustrious son in Christ, John, king of Castile and Leon subsequently learned of the concessions we granted to You as contained in the above named letter, and sent his envoys often-times with letters wherein he complained to us and declared that a big quarrel arose among you as a result of our aforesaid letter, which as he complained, tended to lessen his rights of possession of the aforesaid regions and islands in Africa, which he had previously conquered from the hands of Saracens. While we do not want to give room for such quarrel to arise as a result of our concessions earlier made to You, and at the same time we do not intend in any way to withdraw the right that belongs to anyone, which he has duly acquired. We have recently through our

¹⁵⁰ Eugene IV, “Dudum Cum,” Document of the Vatican Secret Archives, ASV, Reg. Vat. 359, Fl. 157v. Cf. Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, Vol. 10, Ad Anno 1436, No. 24; *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. 1, p. 19. A Latin copy of this Bull is found in Appendix A, No. 3 in this Book.

letter announced, that it was, and remains still our intention in no way through such concessions to decide beforehand over the rights of the aforesaid king.¹⁵¹

This Bull ended with an appeal to king Eduard of Portugal to avoid any further action that will disrupt his peace as well as admonished him to restrain from any quarrel with the king of Castile and Leon. In his own words the pope admonished as follows:

therefore, we would want to counter all annoyances, that could arise from this quarrel and ensure that nothing new arises which could disturb Your peace in anyway; we appeal to Your Majesty to consider our letters with mature deliberation and wise advice so that nothing will occur again that would renew the denial of rights or quarrels with the aforesaid king of Castile, and that You do not give any ground for quarrels or an occasion that would call for any annoyance in future.¹⁵²

With the Bull “Dudum Cum” pope Eugene IV exercised his role on the international scene as an arbiter and a judge among Catholic kings, a role which was very characteristic of the renaissance papacy. With this role of an arbiter, whose decision must be obeyed by all men for fear of the hammer of excommunication, he brought to rest the claim and agitations of the king of Castile and Leon to be given the right of ownership in the Atlantic islands of Madeira, Porto Santo and other islands along the North-West Atlantic Coasts of Africa. Six years after this, he issued another Bull “Etsi Suscepti” where he granted the requests of both kings Eduard and Alfons V of Portugal to grant the right of authority to Prince Henry the Navigator and his military Order of Christ to oversee the Portuguese enterprise in Africa and all other missions of Portugal in overseas.

2.5 The Bull “Etsi Suscepti” of Pope Eugene IV in 1442

As we stated above, the Bull “Etsi Suscepti” was issued as a confirmation of the decision made by kings Eduard and Alfonso V of Portugal to transfer the authority for the administration of their missions in Africa and other places to the military Order of Christ (*militia Christi*) with the appointment of Prince Henry the Navigator as its administrator. This decision was taken in recognition of another grant earlier made by their late father king John I of Portugal, who requested pope Martin V on May 25, 1420 to appoint his son Prince Henry the

¹⁵¹ Eugene IV, “Dudum cum,” Reg. Vat. 359, Ibid.

¹⁵² Eugene IV, “Dudum cum,” Ibid.

Navigator the administrator General of this Order.¹⁵³ The document containing this grant made to Prince Henry the Navigator by his brother, king Eduard is a Royal Charter issued by the king himself on October 26, 1434. When Prince Henry the Navigator wanted to make use of the authority of this Royal letter to receive favours from the reigning pope Eugene IV, it was discovered that the content of the said letter in its originality was not only unreadable but also damaged as a result of the quality of the writing materials in vogue at that time. He now went to the reigning king and his nephew, king Alfonso V, who then ordered that a new copy of this letter should be issued to Prince Henry the Navigator from the preserved copy in the palace registry for this purpose. This fact is shown in the concluding part of this letter which partly reads as follows: "...I hereby confirm that a copy of this letter was therefore sent to the aforesaid Prince Henry, since he declared that his original copy was damaged and is therefore unreadable. Given in Lisbon on the 20th day of May. The king Afonso V gave orders to write this letter to a member of his Council doctor João Dossem through his grand Chancellor Luis Fernandes in the year of the Lord 1439."¹⁵⁴

In the main body of the said Royal Charter, king Eduard granted Prince Henry the Navigator and his military Order of Christ the power to administer spiritual authority over the islands discovered and conquered by the Portuguese explorers and army in the various regions of Africa. The grants and rights made in this letter by king Eduard in 1434 were confirmed by king Alfonso V in 1439 as follows:

Prince Alfonso, by God's grace the king of Portugal and Algarve and lord of Ceuta. To all who will see this letter, we declare that a copy of this letter was presented to me, which was sealed with our stamp and signed by a member of our Council doctor João

¹⁵³ The Document used to confer this appointment on Prince Henry the Navigator by his father king John I and pope Martin V in 1420 is contained in a Royal Charter found in (M.H.) II, Nos. 179-183. The decision of the kings of Portugal to have a direct Royal control of this Military Order of Christ was based on the growing wealth and influence of this Order. Peter Russell gives us a clue to such influence of the Order of Christ when he observed: "The Order which had come under Henry's rule in 1420 considered itself an elite institution. When it was founded in Portugal in 1319, it inherited all the lands and other properties that belonged to the Templars. Its Statutes then fixed the total number of Friars at eighty-six, of whom at least seventy-one must be laymen and knights of the Order. The number of clerics must never exceed fifteen. The lay Friars had to take vows of celibacy. Each was assigned a Commandery from whose lands he derived his income. By Prince Henry's time, the Headquarters of the Order was in the great former convent of the Templars in Tomar." See, Prince Henry 'the Navigator,' p. 77. As Administrator of this Order, Prince Henry, though a layman, exercised all the powers both temporal and spiritual only reserved to the office of the Supreme Master of this Order of Christ.

¹⁵⁴ Carta Regia ao Infante Don Henrique, ANTT- Chancelaria de Don Afonso V, liv. 19, Fl. 19. Cf. ANTT- Liv. dos Mestrados da Ordem de Christo, Fl. 154v. See original copy of this Royal Charter in Appendix C, No, 3 in this Book.

Dossem and our grand chancellor in favour of my uncle Prince Henry, whose wordings are as follow: king Alfonso etc. To all, who will see this letter, we declare that a letter was registered in our palace register in the reigning time of king Eduard my father, may God grant him peace, whose wordings are: To all who will see this letter, we declare that we, who are in the service of God and in honour of the military Order of Christ, and at the request of Prince Henry, my brother, the Grandmaster and commander in chief of the said military Order, grant to him and the said military Order in perpetuity from today onwards all the spiritual rights for the administration of our islands of Madeira, Porto Santo, Dezerta and others located along the Atlantic Coasts of Africa; the said islands could now be possessed by Prince Henry under our authority and in consideration of any other decisions to be made by him with regard to the future dwellers of the said islands. However the rents to be paid for the leasing of the said islands and the payment of one tenth tax that will accrue from them and other Royal benefits will remain our exclusive reserves and that of the Crown of our kingdoms; and we are sending to him this letter signed by us and sealed by our Royal seal, and therewith request the Holy Father, in his Holiness to grant and confirm this grant and favour we made to the said Order of Christ. Given in Santarem on the 26th day of October, Lopo Affonco wrote this letter in the year of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ 1434.¹⁵⁵

Armed with this letter as well as the confirmation of the grants and privileges made by king Alfonso V, pope Eugene IV therefore did not hesitate to issue this Bull for the purpose of continuing the economic mission of Prince Henry the Navigator in Africa on January 9, 1442. In stating the purpose of issuing this Bull, the pope affirmed:

...also if you are supported with care and so be guided that some persons and individual places were marked with the title of religion so as to improve their condition in a blissful manner, this, we still have to give our support with the help of our fatherly will, we therefore confirm to the military Order of Christ and certainly their brothers and persons, who through individual helps intend to bring about benefits through those who made requests that they could make constant progress through prayers in the Lord.¹⁵⁶

The pope then proceeded to confirm the appointment of Prince Henry the Navigator as the administrator of the military Order of Christ and recognised his authority to exercise both temporal and spiritual powers in all the Portuguese islands in Africa. What the pope did here is a re-confirmation of the Bull “Manifestis Comprobatum” of 1179, which granted to the first king of

¹⁵⁵ Afonso V, ANTT- Carta Regia ao Infante Don Henrique, Chancelaria de Don Afonso V. Liv. 19. Fl. 19; ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados da Ordem de Christo, Fl. 154v; ANTT- Chancelaria de Don Duarte, Liv.1, Fl. 18. See also, ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fl. 153v. For the printed copies of this Letter, Cf. Cajetano de Sousa, *Provas do Livro III. da Historia Genealogica Portugueza*, No. 25, anno 1449, p. 444; Brasio, (M.M.A.), Vol. 1, No. 38, pp. 260-262. For the Portuguese copy of this Royal letter, see, Appendix C, No. 3 in this Book.

¹⁵⁶ Eugene IV, “Etsi Suscepti,” ANTT- Chancelaria de Don Afonso V. Liv. 24, Fl. 61-61v; ANTT- Misticos, Liv. 3, Fl. 278v. Printed copies of this Bull are found in: Cajetano de Sousa, *Provas da Historia Genealogica Portugueza*, Vol. 1, p. 442-443; Brasio, (M.M.A.), Vol. 1, No. 39, pp. 263-265. See the Latin copy of this Bull in Appendix A, No, 4 in this Book.

Portugal among other things the right to be totally in-charge of the organisation of the Church within his kingdom. This right includes the power to appoint bishops, Priests and all those to be sent as missionaries in all the territories of Portugal in overseas. That means that the pope acknowledged the Portuguese overseas missions and territories as places under the sovereign power of the king of Portugal. And the king through his representative in the overseas missions - Prince Henry the Navigator, has the right to determine what is to be done in these territories. In recognition of these powers conferred on Prince Henry the Navigator, the pope said: "From this, it came to be that we recognise as a noble and esteemed son Prince Henry, the duke of Vizeu, adjudged by the Holy See as Official of the Order of Christ and to appear as administrator in spiritual and temporal matters of his Order, and according to what was presented to us on his behalf, he is entitled to carry out the usual activities of the Order in accordance with the rules to be set down by his brothers."¹⁵⁷

Pope Eugene IV also recognised in this Bull the authority of the members of the military Order of Christ to exercise the same power that was given to their Grandmaster Prince Henry the Navigator so as to be able to carry out this mission in Africa and elsewhere even after the death of Prince Henry the Navigator. The pope concluded this apostolic letter with the placement of the wrath of God on anyone that might attempt to go contrary to the authority of the decision made in this Bull. This fact is brought to light when the pope authoritatively asserted: "No one is allowed in any way to invalidate or refute any part of our concessions and instructions stated on this page, or to resist and defy the contents of this letter through reckless venture. But if anyone attempts to do this at all, let him know that the wrath of the Almighty God and those of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul will fall upon him."¹⁵⁸

Pope Eugene IV also issued another Bull titled "Illius Qui" in the same year with the above Bull under discussion, where he granted the military Order of Christ the right to organise military raids and expeditions in Africa and gave the blessing of indulgence for the forgiveness of the sins of their members and all those who might lose their lives in the course of the slave raids viewed as Crusade against Africa by Prince Henry. Let us cast a brief glance at the content of this Bull and examine carefully its contribution to this economic ambition of Prince Henry and the Crown in Portugal which they hoped to achieve via the trade on African gold and human beings.

¹⁵⁷ Eugene IV, "Etsi Suscepti," Ibid. In the same year, Eugene IV issued another Bull "Etsi Cunctos Christi Fideles," where he praised the activities of Prince Henry and the military Order of Christ and forbade all other nations from mingling in the affairs of the administration of the acquired territories in Africa. A copy of this Bull is found in the National Archives in Portugal: ANTT- Bullarium Diversam Collectio, Liv. 2, dos Breves da Torre do Tombo ap. 57.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

2.6 The Bull “Illius Qui” of Pope Eugene IV in 1442

The Bull “Illius Qui” is a quintessence example of the manipulative ploys of Prince Henry used to impress the popes in order to get an uninterrupted flow of approval and support of the papacy in the military raids carried out by the members of his military Order of Christ in Africa. The goal of his military raids was to capture innocent natives of Black Africa as slaves so as to boost his economic quest. As already observed in section one above, the ambition of Prince Henry the Navigator to carry out exploration in Africa has been on a very high course since the rounding of Cape Bojador by one of his captains Gil Eannes in 1434. From this point onwards, news of a great profit that laid in store for his collection started trickling in and he was indeed gladdened with such. We have to recall here that it was in 1441 that the first set of Black African slaves arrived in Portugal. They were captured in a slave raiding voyage ordered by Prince Henry himself and carried out by two of his trusted men and captains: Antão Gonsalvez (his Chamberlain and a young captain) and Nuno Tristão (a noble knight of the Order of Christ). These two men set off with their armed caravel and landed safely in the land of the Blacks. According to Raymond Beazley, Tristão had for this voyage: “An express order from his lord (Prince Henry) to go to the port of Gallee and as far beyond as he could, and that he should try and make some prisoners by every means in his powers.”¹⁵⁹ This order yielded good results by the first expedition undertaken in that year and they caught about 38 Black captives. Among them was a native chief called Adahu who helped Prince Henry with the information he needed to know more about the land, its king and people. With the other captives that arrived in this caravel, the Prince rejoiced that he was making profit and progress in his discovery and decided to send more caravels so as to yield more captives to be sold as slaves. To achieve this goal, he has first and foremost to raise troops for the raids by attracting them with the promise of a perpetual indulgence and to elevate the slave raids to the status of a Crusade so as to attract the interest of the papacy to give support and blessing to this mission. This mission was so important to the Prince that it did not of course escape the attention of the Royal chronicler Gomes Eannes de Azurara (attached to the service of Prince Henry), who included it in his day to day recording of the history of the discovery and conquest of Guinea. According to him:

¹⁵⁹ Beazley, Prince Henry the Navigator, p. 169. Cf. Phillips, Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Atlantic Trade, P. 138. On this page, Beazley observed that Antão Goncalves and Nuno Tristão commanded the expedition of 1441 and took captives from among the Berbers and returned with them to Portugal as ordered by Prince Henry.

The Prince was so gladdened and encouraged by the sight of the first captives that he at once began to think 'how it would be necessary to send to those parts many a time his ships and crews well-armed, where they would have to fight with the infidels. So he determined to send at once his embassy to the Holy Father to ask of him to make a Partition with himself of the treasures of the Holy Church for the salvation of the souls of those who in the toils of that conquest should meet their end.¹⁶⁰

The very man sent to the then reigning pope Eugene IV by Prince Henry the Navigator to make this request was “a honourable Cavalier of the Order of Christ, called Fernão Lopez de Azervedo, a man of great counsel and authority on account of which he had been made chief commander in the same Order and was of the council of the king and the Infant (Prince Henry).”¹⁶¹ To achieve his objectives, the Prince gave Fernão Lopez among other things, a copy of a Royal Charter obtained from his nephew, the youthful king Afonso V issued in 1439, which confirmed to him all the grants made to him and his military Order of Christ in the past by the Royal Crown in Portugal. And with this new confirmation contained in this Royal Charter, he went to pope Eugene IV to secure his blessings and approval. The wordings of the said Royal Charter read as follows:

King Alfonso etc. To all who will see this letter that is known to us, we wanted to make favours and graces to the Order of our Lord Jesus Christ of which Prince Henry is its Governor and Grandmaster, duke of Viseu and lord of Coujilhã, my very dear and beloved uncle. We have confirmed to him all those things and privileges, graces, favours and liberties that were given and granted to him by the various letters of the kings of Portugal that were before us, all the things that were in the possession and use of this kingdom until the death of my virtuous and of glorious memory, the king, my Lord and father, may he rest in the Lord;.... Given in Almada on the first day of June in the year of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ 1439. The king sent this letter with the authority

¹⁶⁰ Azurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, chpt. XV, p. 52. The Prince did this so as to get ready for the main attack his men would launch on innocent Black natives. Azurara also recorded on the same page, that the Prince rewarded his captains Antão Goncalves and Nuno Tristão with Knighthood and other presents for capturing and bringing the first Black natives as slaves into Portugal. See also, Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 200. Basil Davidson also recorded that Prince Henry was enlivened by the news of the great profits that awaited for his collection in Africa. Thus he said: “Much encouraged, Prince Henry thereupon sent a special embassy to the pope, explaining his plans for further raids and even conquest, and the pope, welcoming this new Crusade, granted to all of those who shall be engaged in the said war, complete forgiveness of all their sins.” Cf. Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 55.

¹⁶¹ Azurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, p. 52. Azurara also observed on this page that Fernão Lopez was also commanded by the Prince to ask the pope for other favours such as 'the indulgences of St. Mary of Africa in the town of Ceuta with many other graces that were to be requested of the pope.

of Her Majesty the Queen, his mother, as her Guardian and Councillor and in agreement with Prince Pedro, his uncle, defender of the said kingdom and empires.¹⁶²

The response of the pope to this request made by Prince Henry was immediate and positive. Azurara even added in his chronicle that: “The Holy Father (Eugene IV) was very glad to grant him such a grace as he was requested.”¹⁶³ Attesting to the positive response of the pope to grant such a request geared towards capturing innocent Black natives for sale as slaves under the cover of a religious Crusade, Raymond Beazley cynically wrote: “Pope Eugenius IV, then reigning, if not governing in the great Apostolic See of the West, answered this appeal with great joy and with all the rhetoric of the papal Register.”¹⁶⁴ It was therefore in the bid to fulfil this request of Prince Henry the Navigator and to show him the full support of his papacy that pope Eugene IV issued this Bull on January 19, 1442 which now made this slave-raiding mission to wear the face of a Crusade. In its introduction, the pope acting as the very one who ordered this mission to convert the Saracens and pagans in West Africa either by persuasive or forceful means did not refuse to accept the false assurance made by Prince Henry the Navigator that it is only through the means of his military expeditions in Africa that the souls of the unbelievers could be saved. This point is made clear when the pope stated: “Even though the benefits of those people, who do not refuse to make sacrifices for the saving of the flock of God is held undeservedly on earth, we are being directed with constant requests that the superstition of the unbelievers and their errors could be driven aback and by so doing the number of the souls of the believers will continue to increase.”¹⁶⁵ But the records of this expedition by the Portuguese Royal chronicler proved this reasoning of the pope in this introduction to be very misleading. In his account of the second voyage sent by Prince Henry in 1441 which took place before pope Eugene IV made this claim above, Azurara spoke of the tactics employed by Prince Henry's men while conducting their slave raiding from one village to another in Arguin and Senegambia in order to

¹⁶² Afonso V. Carta de Don Afonso V. a Ordem de Christo, ANTT- Liv. dos Mestrados, Fl. 153v. See a Portuguese copy of this Royal letter in Appendix C, No. 2 in this Book. See also a printed copy of this letter in: Brasio, (M.M.A.), Vol. 1, No. 37, p. 260.

¹⁶³ Azurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, p. 52.

¹⁶⁴ Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 200; Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 55, Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 37.

¹⁶⁵ Eugene IV, “*Ilius Qui*,” Document of Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo Portugueza, ANTT- Ordem de Cristo, cod. 234, pte. 4, Fl. 59. See a Latin copy of this Bull in Appendix A, No. 5 in this Book. Printed copies of this Bull are found in the following works: (M.H.), VII, 336-337; Pires de Carvalho, *Enucleationes Ordinum Militarium*, Vol. 11, p. 161. Azurara also attached a copy of this Bull translated into English as evidence of this grant given to Prince Henry and his Military Order of Christ. Cf. *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, p. 53. Cf. Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, pp. 200-201.

please the Prince. According to him, the men of Prince Henry laid ambush to capture unarmed and innocent natives and waited until the men and women came out of their dwellings. And when all their calculations were rightly made, they fell on them and took them captive.¹⁶⁶ And on this day alone, the captures made by Prince Henry's men - Antão Goncalvez and Gill Eannes were placed at 165 persons. This figure was confirmed to be true by Azurara when he observed: "And at last our Lord God, who gives to all a due reward, gave to our men that day a victory over their enemies in recompense for all their toil in His service, for they took captive of those Moors, worth with men, women and children, a hundred and sixty-five, without counting the slain."¹⁶⁷ Going by the fact of the above citations, it was therefore this kind of operation and kidnapping of innocent civilians to be used as slaves that Eugene IV gave his approval and went as far as extending this approval to the military Order of Christ, so that in the event of Prince Henry's demise, this murderous enslaving mission will continue in West Africa. And using the power of apostolic authority, Eugene IV granted perpetual indulgence for the forgiveness of sins to Prince Henry and all those in his military expeditions against the Saracens and "other enemies" of the Christian faith in Africa. This fact is seen when the pope wrote:

If the attack constantly continues, as it was made known to us through our highly esteemed son, the noble man Prince Henry, the duke of Vizeu, who suggests in his capacity as an official of the Order of Christ, recognized by the Holy See as administrator of the said Order to carry out the activities of his Order in both spiritual and temporal matters, that it is by confusing and chasing away of the Saracens and other enemies of the Christian faith that the preaching of the Catholic faith in those parts held in the possession of the Saracens could be achieved. This, he personally intends to achieve by launching a strong military charge in those regions and with a powerful army to direct an attack against the Saracens and other likely enemies of the Church. Strengthened with strong faith in the Lord, and with the fact that this war could go on for a long time when he could no longer be present to send soldiers and the brothers of the said Order of Christ and certainly many other Christians whom he brought under the fold of this Order to fight against the Saracens and other enemies for the glory of the Almighty: in order to motivate the Christian believers with a burning spirit, we therefore grant to him through our Apostolic authority a complete forgiveness of sins confessed and repented of, to these and others who will take part in this conflict and war against unbelievers.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ For the citation of the description of how this ambush and attack on innocent civilians were carried out, see section one of this work. See also, Azurara, *Chronicle of Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, p. 65; Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, pp. 210- 213.

¹⁶⁷ Azurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, p. 66; Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 213.

¹⁶⁸ Eugene IV, "Illius Qui," ANTT- Ordem de Cristo, Cod. 234, Fl. 59; Pires de Carvalho, *Enucleationes Ordinum Militarium*, Vol. 11, p. 161; Azurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and*

And as it is always the case when such important grants are given by the popes, this Bull ended with a strong warning with the penalty of excommunication and the invocation of the eternal wrath of the Apostles Peter and Paul on all those who may venture to weaken or nullify the authority and the grants contained in this Apostolic Letter. This threat is pronounced by the pope in these words: “No one is allowed in any way to invalidate the concessions and instructions we granted on this page or dares to nullify it by any act of reckless venture. But if anyone attempts to go contrary to this, let it be known to him, that the wrath of the Almighty God and those of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul will descend upon him.”¹⁶⁹ Based on the authority of the apostolic power therefore: “Any doubts about the legitimacy of enslaving the earliest prisoners taken in the expedition of 1441 quickly disappeared when the wars were recognized as Crusades and therefore indisputably just.”¹⁷⁰ The Bull “*Illius Qui*” therefore, served as a legitimization of the use of military raids against the natives of West Africa as a just war. This Bull also serves as a perpetual assurance to the members of the military Order of Christ that the papacy is fully behind them in such acts of slave-drive, and that they have nothing to fear even in danger of death in the course of carrying out their slave raids against the Saracens and other unbelievers in Africa. With the effects of these Bulls issued by Eugene IV, aware of the dangerous economic motive at the back of Prince Henry's mind, the Prince had succeeded in drawing to his side the popes of this period under discussion to his enslaving enterprise. Entrapped in this web of deception, pope Eugene IV gave as the above Bulls showed, his full support to the enslaving mission of Prince Henry in Africa under the cover of a religious Crusade aimed at saving the souls of “unbelievers” in Africa. By so doing, the military raids conducted by Prince Henry and his military Order of Christ for the kidnapping of innocent civilians for use as slaves in Portugal and in other European countries for economic gains were now freed from any hindrance to deal with the natives of their discovered and colonized territories in Africa without any qualms of conscience.

Other subsequent Bulls issued by other renaissance popes after Eugene IV will serve as re-confirmation and strengthening of the various grants and approval given to the Crown and Prince Henry of Portugal by popes Martin V and Eugene IV respectively. And like we shall see, they will speak in one accord, without contradicting each other to authorize Portugal to reduce Black Africans to perpetual enslavement and colonisation. The proof of this fact, is the goal of the next chapter of this work.

Conquest of Guinea, p. 66. English translated copy of this Bull is found in: Beazley, Prince Henry the Navigator, pp. 200-201.

¹⁶⁹ Eugene IV, “*Illius Qui*,” Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Saunders, A Social History of Black Slaves, p. 36.

3. Papal Bulls Empowering Portugal to Reduce Black Africans to Slaves (1452-1455)

3.1 Prelude to this Empowering: The Royal Charter of 1443

The expeditions undertaken in the West African Atlantic by Prince Henry the Navigator and his military Order of Christ mainly for economic and political reasons received a serious boost during the pontificate of pope Eugene IV as we saw in the preceding chapter of this work. Much encouraged by the Bulls of the aforesaid pope and the imminent profits made from the sales of the first 165 Black African slaves that arrived in Portugal in 1441, the Prince now decided to make sure that no one should venture to go into the land beyond Cape Bojador to undertake any money-yielding ventures without first and foremost obtaining his approval. To secure his business in Guinea against foreign interlopers therefore, he now turned to the Crown in Portugal under the ruler-ship of his young nephew king Alfonso V and obtained from him a Royal Charter issued on October 22, 1443. This Royal Brief granted him the sole right of ownership of all the regions of Guinea (West Africa) and the right of monopoly over all trades transacted in the said regions in Africa such that all ships travelling to Cape Bojador and beyond it, must buy licences from him or risked confiscation.

In the introductory part of this Royal Charter, the king praised the efforts of his uncle (Prince Henry) and narrated how he had undertaken to do this work in the service of God and with all the risks involved, he dared to send 15 times his ships into those regions of Africa, whose names according to him, were never mentioned on the maps of the world and very unknown to the Western world.¹⁷¹ This remark was vividly stated when king Alfonso V said:

King Afonso, etc...we want to make known to all who will see this Letter, that Prince Henry, my highly esteemed and beloved uncle undertakes in accordance with the mind of Christ and the desire to render services to us, to send his ships to Africa in order to explore the land lying beyond Cape Bojador, because until now, no one throughout the

¹⁷¹ The Venetian traveller of the fifteenth century Alvise da Cadamosto, who got permission from Prince Henry the Navigator to travel for the first time by sea to the Land of the Blacks in 1455 dabbled himself also into the same erroneous historical information like king Afonso V of Portugal did. In his Book "Le Navigazioni" that was translated into English by C.R. Crone as "The Voyages of Cadamosto," Alvise wrote about the regions of West Africa thus: "Know therefore that the first to initiate the navigation of this portion of the ocean sea towards the south of the land of the Blacks in lower Ethiopia, for from the time of our first father Adam there is no record that it was ever navigated until today was the illustrious Lord Infante Henry of Portugal son of the illustrious king John I of Portugal." Cf. Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents*, pp. 1-2.

whole Christendom had ever ventured to explore this part of land located beyond the said cape Bojador, and no one neither knew if any people ever existed there nor if it was really included on the maritime and geographical maps of the world, or if its knowledge appeared at all in the discretion of those people who made the map of the world. While it is a very risky venture to be undertaken, and as such people did not trust themselves to go into such areas, the said Prince Henry has already sent expeditions for 15 good times to this land in order to gain information about the said land. And his captains brought to him 38 captured Moors¹⁷², and he commanded that a sea chart be made and he informed us that it is his intention to send more ships later-on to the said land in order to explore it. And he approached us to ask for a favour to be granted him in written form, so that no one dares to sail to the said lands without first and foremost obtaining his permission and consent, be it to make war or to conduct trading business, and that we transfer to him the right to collect the payment of the Fifth and the Tenth taxes that rightly belongs to the Crown, from all those that he will be sending to these lands and others who will obtain licenses from him.¹⁷³

What king Alfonso V attempted to do in this introduction, was to present the intention of Prince Henry to explore the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa (to all who will come in contact with this letter including pope Nicholas V as we shall see later) in a manner that would capture their interest on reading it, while at the same time he tried to hide the quest for economic motive as the major motive behind the exploration of the African Atlantic as we have shown in the preceding chapter of this work. That means, he made a projection of this project as a novelty that has never been undertaken before and to be carried out in a land unheard of before, whose people had never been known to the Christian world of his time. Such is a portrayal of ignorance of historical knowledge on the part of king Alfonso V. Even before his uncle Prince Henry was born, evidence of the knowledge of the people of West Africa and their lands was already identifiable on the world map of the time and the story of the riches in the African trade in gold, ivory and silver was not something strange in the Western world of his time. This view had been maintained by renowned historians such as C. R. Crone, Peter Russell, Edgar Prestage, Raymond Beazley, E.W. Bovill et al., who argued that prior to the Portuguese incursions on the Atlantic Coast of Africa, information about the very source of the African richness- gold, was already making its rounds in Europe. Already in 1375, the Catalan map of emperor Charles V, which was drawn by the Majorcan cartographer Abraham Cresques provided information about the

¹⁷² These 38 Black Moors were the captives brought to Portugal by Prince Henry's captain Nunó Tristão during the first expedition ever made beyond Cape Bojador in 1441 as observed in the preceding chapter of this work.

¹⁷³ Dom Afonso V, Carta de Privilegio ao Dom Henrique, ANTT- Chancelaria de Dom Afonso V, Liv. 24, fl. 61-61v. See also ANTT- Místicos, Liv. 3, fl. 278v. For the Portuguese copy of this Royal letter, see, Appendix C, No. 4 in this Book. Printed copies of this letter are found in: (M.H.), VI, No. 63; (M.H.), VIII, 62; Brasio, (M.M.A.), Vol. I, No. 40, pp. 266-267.

Black Africans, West African interior and the source of the African gold. The historian and author E. W. Bovill for instance, presented a copy of this map wherein Abraham Cresques made a representation of a West African king sitting on a throne at the middle of the desert fully adorned with all his kingly regalia, with a staff of his office (sceptre) on his left hand and holding a ball of gold in his right hand which he presented to a horse rider approaching his palace. This king was Mansa Musa of Mali (+1332). The inscription written on this map reads as follows: "This Negro lord is called Musa Mali, lord of the Negroes of Guinea. So abundant is the gold which is found in his country that he is the richest and most noble king in all the land."¹⁷⁴ Bovill added to this inscription a short remarks which read: "The fame of this great Negro ruler long persisted, and many believed him to be no less a personage than the mythical Prester John."¹⁷⁵

Alluding to the information provided in the same Catalan map of 1375, C. R. Crone wrote: "It is probable that some knowledge of the Coast of West Africa as far as the Gulf of Guinea¹⁷⁶ was current in Western Europe at the time. The Catalan Atlas of 1375, which may be taken as a typical fourteenth century cartographic document displays some slight acquaintance with the trade routes and markets of the Niger Basin."¹⁷⁷ Going a step further, Crone mentioned another historic document which showed that the trading activities going on in the African regions of the Gulf of Guinea were already familiar in Europe. According to him: "This document recorded a voyage by Jaune Ferrer in 1346 along the Coast in search of the semi-legendary Rio de Oro. From another contemporary document, the "Libro del Conoscimiento" of the anonymous Spanish Franciscan, it is possible to obtain a glimpse of the trading activities of the Moors along this coast, and to deduce that these extended as far as the Gulf of Guinea."¹⁷⁸

Peter Russell on his part argued that Prince Henry and his men were not the first to discover this region of West Africa via the sea way. According to him prior to the rounding of Cape Bojador by Gil Eannes in 1434, there were other European seamen who had rounded and crossed this Cape many years before the Prince sent his men there. Confirming this, Russell recorded as follows:

¹⁷⁴ Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, p. 90. The said Catalan map of Charles V is attached before the title page of this book with clearer view and a translation of the drawings and the inscriptions made therein in 1375 by the Majorcan cartographer Abraham Cresques.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Gulf of Guinea is a general term used to refer to the Atlantic Ocean west of Africa. This region embodies at the present time the West African countries of Guinea, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Liberia, Ghana, Togo, Cameroon, Benin, Ivory Coast etc.

¹⁷⁷ Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto*, p. Xviii. Cf. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, p. 109.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

“From Azurara onwards, this event, which took place in 1434, has been described as the first time any European seamen passed the Cape and returned home to tell the tale. It seems pretty certain, however that a party of European seamen had reached the Cape, landed near it, and carried out some reconnaissance of the region thirty-three years before the celebrated voyage of Gil Eannes.”¹⁷⁹ Continuing, Russell made reference to the very historic source that gives credence to his argument above. This source was a chronicle popularly known as 'Le Canarien' written in French on the Canarian island of Lanzarote around 1402-1404. Making reference to this chronicle, Russell recorded: “The season before we arrived in this region (in 1401), a boat carrying fifteen compaignons set out from one of our islands called Erbania (Fuerteventura) and sailed to Cape Bojador, which is in the kingdom of Guinea and twelve leagues away from where we are. They took captive there some people of the country, and then returned to Grand Canary, where they found their ship, which was waiting for them.”¹⁸⁰

And from all these historical sources, it is therefore unhistorical for king Alfonso V of Portugal to present to the world of his age those voyages undertaken by his uncle Prince Henry on the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa as a novelty. In the same token, to claim that knowledge of West Africa and the source of its wealth - gold, was not known in Europe at the time Prince Henry began his explorations into the coastal regions of West Africa does not represent a fact of historical reality at all. The historian and author C. R. Crone was therefore right to deduce that: “The voyages initiated by Prince Henry were not therefore thrusts into the Unknown, but part of a sustained attempt to wrest control of an important economic artery then in alien and often hostile hands.”¹⁸¹ And having wrested control of this trade from the alien and hostile hands of the Moors of North Africa by means of the discovered sea route to the source of this trade, Prince Henry now received from king Alfonso V the right of ownership that gave him control over all the regions of the West African Atlantic Coasts to the effect that no one is allowed to reach the source of the gold, which dominated the trading activities in the Gulf of Guinea. That would imply, that it is only the ships sent by him and of those, whose owners obtained licence from him that could venture to use this seaway to transact trade business with the Black Africans. In the light of this injunction, king Alfonso V decreed:

¹⁷⁹ Russell, *Prince Henry the Navigator, Portugal, Spain*, Chpt. XV, p. 19.

¹⁸⁰ “Le Canarien,” edited by Elias Serra Rafols & Alejandro Cioranescu, iii, *La Laguna and Las Palmas* 1965, pp. 104-105. Cf. Russell, *Prince Henry the Navigator, Portugal, Spain*, p. 19.

¹⁸¹ Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto*, p. Xix.

And as we are very certain of what he writes and are in possession of the knowledge of the huge expenditure which he had invested in this venture, we decree that as long as my aforesaid uncle is alive, that no one is allowed to cross the said Cape Bojador without his orders and permission. And that all those who might attempt to do this, will forfeit and lose their ship or ships with which they sailed there, to the aforesaid Prince, my uncle. And we order our palace officials and judicial officers to carry out these instructions to the fullest, without any delay or hindrance, and if they do the contrary of our instructions, let them know that we are going to take an action against them like we treat those who violate our own command and orders.¹⁸²

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent the exercise of this control was able to reach. But some evidence showed that it was not binding on the whole of the merchants and captains of Europe in the sense that the right of the king of Portugal to make such a rule was only restricted to the kingdoms and peoples under his power. For this decree therefore to receive an international status, which will enable it to be binding on others outside the territorial influence of the king of Portugal, it has to be issued by the pope, whose authority was the only authority at that time that has an international recognition and binding force. This view was hinted by Peter Russell when he rightly pointed out that: "The 1443 monopoly granted to the Prince by the Royal Regent was of course only effective as far as the subjects and territories of the Portuguese Crown were concerned. It could have no international validity unless it was underwritten by the authority of the pope."¹⁸³

Despite this lack of international character of this Royal Charter of 1443, it suffices here to say that it was able to help the Prince at least internally to control the flow of commercial movement along the Western Coasts of the African Atlantic such that it helped him to make profits from the goods brought into Portugal from this West African Atlantic. In addition to this, the king waved off for Prince Henry all the taxes known as "Quinto e Dizima,"¹⁸⁴ which were the prerogatives of the Royal Crown obtained from the goods such

¹⁸² Dom Afonso V, Carta de Privilegio a Dom Henrique, ANTT- Chancelaria de D. Afonso V, Liv. 24, Fl. 61v; ANTT- Misticos, Liv. 3, Fl. 278v; (M.H.), VI, No. 63; Brasio, (M.M.A.), Vol. I, p. 267. Azurara, Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea, pp. 53-54.

¹⁸³ Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator,' p. 199. This international character lacking in the important Royal charter of 1443 will be supplemented by pope Nicholas V in form of a Bull as we shall shortly see in this chapter.

¹⁸⁴ Quinto is a Portuguese word for five and refers here to the Royal fifth which was a five percent tax dully belonging to the Crown charged on any booty taken by force of arms. While Dizima means ten. In its usage here, it has to do with a ten percent tax payable to the king of Portugal on all goods imported by sea into Portugal. In this sense therefore, Prince Henry will be cashing into his private pocket all the five and the ten percent taxes on all material goods including Black African slaves that would be brought into Portugal during the Atlantic slave raids he ordered to be conducted in the whole Gulf of Guinea from 1443 to the period when he finally died in 1460.

as gold, slaves and other products brought into Portugal from West Africa by the ships belonging to the Portuguese merchants. In the light of this grant, the king affirmed:

because we want to render our help to him, in order to reward him for what he has done, and while we want to grant him favours and graces, we consider it something good if we grant him from now onwards, as long as our favour lasts, the Fifth and the Tenth of all that the said ships will bring into our kingdom, either the one sent by him or those that sailed with his permission. And we command also our immigration and seaports officials to carry out our instructions without neglecting any part of what they contain, and that they communicate this instruction properly to those sailors whom the said Prince Henry had allowed to sail to the said Cape Bojador. Given in Villa of Panela on the 22nd day of October, by the authority of our Lord Prince Pedro, regent and defender of our kingdom etc. Afonso Anes wrote it down in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1443.¹⁸⁵

To show the importance of the grants made in this Royal Charter of 1443 in the hands of Prince Henry in the history of the Transatlantic slave trade, the palace chronicler attached to the service of the Prince documented it in his record of events. According to him: "Also the Infant Don Pedro who at that time ruled the kingdom in the name of the king, gave the Infant Prince Henry his brother a Charter by which he granted him the whole of the Fifth that appertained to the king and this on account of the great expenses he had incurred in the matter... And considering how by him alone, the discoveries were made, not without great trouble and expense, he granted him moreover this right, that no one should be able to go there without his license and special mandate."¹⁸⁶ From all this, it has now been made crystal clear that the goal of this voyages reckoned as a great feat in this Charter was to control this trade so as to make maximal profit from it. The historian E. W. Bovill was right to say that the missionary motive put forward by Prince Henry and the Portuguese Crown and presented to the popes of his time as the goal of his explorations of the Guinea Coast was a mere hypocrisy. According to him: "Their real purpose was not as they pretended, to spread the Gospel, but to discover the source of the gold which was being imported into Morocco overland by the Taghaza road."¹⁸⁷

With this Royal Charter now in his hand, all is now set for the Prince to prove to the European world of his time that his claimed crusading zeal against

¹⁸⁵ Dom Afonso V, Carta de Privilegio a Dom Henrique, ANTT- Chancelaria de D. Afonso V, Liv. 24, Fl. 61v; ANTT- Misticos, Liv. 3, Fl. 278v; (M.H.), VI, No. 63.

¹⁸⁶ Azurara, Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea, Chpt. XV, pp. 53-54. Cf. Beazley, Prince Henry the Navigator, p. 201.

¹⁸⁷ Bovill, The Golden Trade of the Moors, p. 114. Cf. Russell, Prince Henry the Navigator, Portugal, Spain, chpt. XI, pp. 19-20.

“unbelievers” in Africa was not born out of a religious and devotional spirit for the spread of the Gospel in West Africa but rather, it was born out of material greed to spread in Europe and beyond innocent Black Africans as slaves in an unprecedented mass that was never known before in the European and the entire Western history.

The veracity of this fact is shown in his action just few months after obtaining this Royal Charter, when he sent a military expedition of six caravels in 1444 under the captain-ship of Lançarote with the mandate to ransack and attack the villages in the Gulf of Guinea for the sole purpose of catching innocent civilians for sales as slaves in Europe. A cursory look at this great event of 1444 will enable us a great deal to know the very character and attitude of this great Portuguese Prince towards his claimed religious motive, which he would present to pope Nicholas V as a major motive for undertaking to explore the West African Atlantic regions. The knowledge gained from this, will open our eyes to know really what pope Nicholas V and his successors would be supporting under the cover of religion by issuing Bulls that would help Prince Henry the Navigator to accomplish his ulterior and selfish motive in West Africa.

3.2 Prince Henry the Navigator and the Great Event of 1444/5

The year 1444 went into the annals of historical record as a great year in the Portuguese exploratory mission on the Atlantic Waters of West Africa. It was the year in which Portugal under the influence of king Alfonso V and Prince Henry the Navigator had her foretaste of the Transatlantic slave trade. On this day a total of 235 to 240 kidnapped Black Africans arrived the Portuguese Lagos shores as slaves and were auctioned before the watching eyes of the crusading Prince Henry. Peter Russell rightly observed with regard to this event that: “The first Portuguese expedition beyond Cape Bojador to be overtly concerned with nothing except slave-raiding on a substantial scale was organized in 1444.”¹⁸⁸ The very Portuguese, who served as overseer of the six caravels that carried out this slave razzias was Prince Henry's strongman Lançarote da Ilha, who served the Henrican expeditions in the capacity of a Royal tax collector in Lagos (in Portugal). Together with some other Lagos merchants and adventurers, he obtained licence from the Prince and promised to play the game according to the rules of paying the 5% tax to the Prince on all goods including slaves brought from the West African Atlantic Coasts. Referring to this incidence as the beginning of the Transatlantic slave trade,

¹⁸⁸ Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator', p. 239.

Gomes Eannes Azurara, the renowned Portuguese Royal chronicler said as follows:

One Lançarote... a man of great good sense was the spokesman of these merchant adventurers. He won his grant very easily, the Infant (Prince Henry) was very glad of his request, and bade him sail under the banner of the Order of Christ, so that six caravels started in the spring of 1444 on the first exploring voyage that we can call national since the Prince had begun his work... what was more unfortunate, from a modern standpoint, the African slave trade, as a part of European commerce begins here too. It is useless to try to explain it away.¹⁸⁹

Azurara has confessed truly in the above citation that this incident flaged off the beginning of the Transatlantic slave trade. Toeing in his footsteps, the historian John Ure also recorded this great event as the major beginning of the Transatlantic slave trade. He was truthful enough to describe the method of the raid that yielded such a huge number of captives as a raid conducted with no other purpose than to capture the natives as slaves for sales in Portugal. Thus he presented this incident in the following words: "Prince Henry fitted out six caravels. Among their commanders was Gil Eannes who had first rounded Cape Bojador. They returned to the Bay beyond Cape Blanco in which Arguin and other islands lay scattered, and they systematically set about raiding the mainland and the island for natives."¹⁹⁰ Continuing, he gave insights into the nationality and number of these captives brought into Portugal by Prince Henry the Navigator and his men and emphatically asserted that with their arrival in Portugal, the Transatlantic slave trade had really begun. This point was revealed when he wrote: "Between them they captured two hundred, ranging in color from the darkest black to the lighter shades of those who had admixtures of Arab or Berber blood. These captives were no longer specimens of new breeds brought home for the disinterested study of Prince Henry. They were a commercial commodity. The European slave trade had begun."¹⁹¹ All these authors cited above speak with one voice in establishing that this event marked officially the beginning of the Transatlantic slave trade.

¹⁸⁹ Azurara, in: Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, pp. 206-207.

¹⁹⁰ Ure, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 119.

¹⁹¹ Ure, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, *Ibid.* There has been a discrepancy among authors on the actual number of Black Africans captured during this slave raid. John Ure placed the number of captured natives of West African Guinea during this raid at 200 captives. But other authors such as Raymond Beazley, M. Saunders as well as Azurara, who as the Palace chronicler attached to Prince Henry's household and who saw these captives on arrival in Portugal, placed their number at 235. Cf. Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 214; Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 5. Peter Russell on his part placed this number at 240. See, Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 240. In all, the majority of authors consulted on this subject maintained that the number of Black captives brought into Portugal in the course of this voyage in 1444 was 235.

In the early June of 1444, Lançarote and his crew numbering about 30 men landed on the shores of West Africa and began attacking the villages on the Island of Arguin and forcefully taking them as war booty. Those of the natives who refused to be taken as captives were mercilessly butchered by the men of Prince Henry. And getting information from the captured natives that there were other neighbouring islands near the bay of Arguin, “they raided these for more prisoners. In their next descent, they could not catch any men, but of women and little children, not yet able to run, they seized seventeen or eighteen.”¹⁹² The actual number of seizures made on this slave raiding voyage was placed at 235 captives. Gomes Azurara, who recorded this expedition of 1444 in the palace register gave also an inkling into the nature of the attacks launched by the men of Prince Henry on the innocent natives of the region of Guinea. According to him: “The actual seizure of the captives—Moors and Negroes along the Coast of Guinea, was as barbarous and as ruthless as most slave-driving. There was hardly a capture made without violence and bloodshed, a raid on a village, a fire and sack and butchery was the usual course of things and the order of the day.”¹⁹³ With the help of this report on the nature of the expedition of 1444, one could adduce that this voyage has nothing in its nature and manner of conduct that makes it deserve the name “discovery” or mission of reuniting all into one fold of the Church as agreed with the Councils fathers and pope Eugene IV at the Council of Basel. This is just Prince Henry's own hidden agenda. It was in the words of Raymond Beazley at best: “A slave chase from first to last and two hundred and thirty-five Blacks were the result.”¹⁹⁴

The said six caravels returned from their slave raiding mission on the 6th day of August 1444 with human cargoes of great magnitude. Confirming the size of these human cargoes in number, Azurara, the palace chronicler recorded as follows: “I hear the prayers of the innocent souls of those barbarous peoples, almost infinite in number, whose ancient race since the beginning of the world had never seen the divine light.”¹⁹⁵ The reference of barbarity made of these Black captives herein is among the criteria that convinced the Portuguese to begin this enslavement of Black Africans as we saw in the justification of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans in section two of this work. The strangeness of the arrival of the caravels carrying such a huge crowd of Black captives on the port of Lagos in Portugal made it to be a great historical feat in the history of Portuguese maritime enterprise. To demonstrate its historical landmark, their arrival was publicly announced throughout the whole kingdom

¹⁹² Azurara, in: Beazley, Prince Henry the Navigator, pp. 213-214.

¹⁹³ Azurara, *Ibid*, p. 208.

¹⁹⁴ Beazley, Prince Henry the Navigator, p. 214.

¹⁹⁵ Azurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, p. 7.

of Portugal. On disembarkation at the Lagos port, a huge crowd of spectators gathered to witness this historic breakthrough in the maritime adventures of Prince Henry, who on this very occasion was indeed the very man to watch and as such the man of the day. In a very short speech made by Prince Henry's chief executor of this slave-raiding voyage conducted in a manner of a handover-ceremony to his master, Lançarote addressed the Prince in the following words: "My lord, your grace well knoweth that you have to receive the Fifth of these Moors and of all others that we have gained in that land whither you sent us for the service of God and of yourself."¹⁹⁶ Sitting on the back of his white princely horse, Prince Henry smiled at such a great feat made by Lançarote and his crew members, and watched with great admiration the disembarkation of the scared and frightened innocent Black captives of this murderous expedition ordered by him. The decision to make such a public exhibition of these Black Africans was in the views of Peter Russell a way of promoting his political interest before the people as well as to show that Portugal has now become a slave-holding nation like the Genoese, Catalans and Valencians. It was therefore for this reason that Prince Henry "decided to make a major public spectacle of the disembarkation and disposal of the large number of captive men, women and children taken by force of arms in a distant land never seen by Europeans until about ten years (1434-1444) before."¹⁹⁷

After their disembarkation on this very day, these Black African captives were divided into five groups according to their market value. This division brought about separation of family members from one another. Mothers carrying their little children in their hands refused to be separated from their children, but the men of Prince Henry pitilessly snatched these children away from their mothers. The cries and wailing of these men and women that ensued from this could be heard and felt with sympathy by all but one man - Prince Henry, who rather rejoiced because of the profits he was about to make from their auctioning. In a long narrative passage in his "Chronicle of Guinea," which deserves a considerable attention in this chapter, Gomes Azurara made a very passionate description of this separation and the sorrows it wrought in the hearts of these kidnapped natives of West Africa. According to him:

These people, assembled together on that open place were an astonishing sight to behold. Among them were some who were quite white-skinned, handsome and of good appearance; others were less white, seeming more like brown men; others still were as black as Ethiopians, so deformed of face and body that, to those who stared at them, it almost seemed that they were looking at spirits from the lowest hemisphere. But what heart, however hardened it might be, could not be pierced by a feeling of pity at the sight

¹⁹⁶ Azurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, p. 79.

¹⁹⁷ Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 241.

of that company? Some held their heads low, their faces bathed in tears as they looked at each other, some groaned very piteously, looking towards the heavens fixedly and crying out aloud, as if they were calling on the father of the universe to help them. Others struck their faces with their hands and threw themselves full length on the ground, yet others lamented in the form of a chant, according to the custom of their native land, and though the words of the language in which they sang could not be understood by our people, the chant revealed clearly enough the degree of their grief. To increase their anguish still more, those who had charge of the division then arrived and began to separate them one from another so that they formed five equal lots. This made it necessary to separate sons from their fathers and wives from their husbands and brother from brother. No account was taken of friendship or relationship, but each one ending up where chance placed him. Who could carry out such a division without difficulty for as soon as the children who had been assigned to one group saw their parents in another, they jumped up and ran towards them; mothers clasped their other children in their arms and lay face downwards on the ground, accepting wounds with contempt for the suffering of their flesh rather than let their children be torn from them.¹⁹⁸

Unmoved by the feelings of human tragedy caused by this separation, the Prince now ordered for their auctioning. This was carried out in accordance with the value of the individual slaves. The able-bodied young men and women were exchanged for one Portuguese *peça* each. Non able-bodied men, women and children who in the eyes of Prince Henry's Auctioneers did not worth a *peça* were separated from each other irrespective of their family-ties and ages, and grouped into two or three persons to be auctioned as an equivalent for one *peça*.¹⁹⁹ This being the case, Prince Henry and his men laid by this action, a foundation for the future humiliation and devaluation of Black Africans on an international level that was witnessed throughout the period of the Atlantic slave trade. These were men and women, whose salvation he claimed to bring about in the course of his exploration of the West African Atlantic and for which he was given support and approval by the popes. In his characteristics as a cunning and tricky religious Crusader, he ordered in the course of this auctioning that some slaves should be given as a gift to the Churches in Portugal, so as to evoke in the minds of the people gathered for this brutal human auctioning the feeling that he was really doing this outrageous enslavement as a service to God and to the Christian Church. According to Russell, the Prince ordered his men to give as a present: "One captive to the principal Catholic Church in Lagos and another to the Franciscan monastery on

¹⁹⁸ Azurara, *Cronica dos Feitos na Conquista de Guine*, Vol. II, pp. 145-148. This English translation was made by Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, pp. 242-243. See also, Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times*, p. 138; Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, pp. 214-215; Ure, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, pp. 119-120; Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 5.

¹⁹⁹ *Peça* was a Portuguese unit of Legal tender during this slave trade. It was used as the exchange value for a healthy male or female slave between 15 and 38 years of age. Other slaves between 38 and 50 years of age, as well as those between 8 and 14 years of age were valued at 2/3 *peça*.

Cape St. Vincent. This was intended both as a thanks-offering to God for the success of the venture and to give force to the claim that it was concern for the salvation of the souls of these captives and nothing else that had caused the Prince to arrange for them to be brought to Portugal.”²⁰⁰

But this pretence on the part of the Prince could no longer be hidden as it was shortly learnt that he collected for his own part the tax of the Royal Fifth (Quinto) per capita of all these captives granted to him in the Royal Charter of 1443. In all, Prince Henry collected for himself 46 able-bodied Black African men and women as a portion due to him from these Black African captives. Commenting on this, Peter Russell rightly observed: “The Prince, who mounted on a horseback, supervised the proceedings, taking for himself as the Royal Fifth some forty-six of the best slaves. These already, had been specially set aside for him.”²⁰¹ His military Order of Christ under whose banner this slave raiding voyage was conducted likewise received her Royal Twentieth (Vintena) per capita of these captives during the auctioning.

However, this conduct of the Prince and the auctioning of these human Black cargoes in 1444 was not watched by all with great admiration as the Prince did, and would have expected his spectators to have done on that infamous day. Instead, there were among the common folk those, who were outraged by the conduct of this auctioning and the inhuman treatment associated with it. What really moved those men and women was not that they were opposed to the enslavement of their fellow humans of West African origin, but rather the human misery and the tragedy they saw in the wailing and cries of those mothers, whose children were mercilessly separated and torn from their hands by the feeling-less hands of the Auctioneers carrying out the order from their master Prince Henry the Navigator. Commenting on this incident, M. Saunders remarks: “There is no doubt that the Portuguese saw and could be moved by the sufferings caused by slavery: in 1444 for instance, the first slave auction at Lagos was interrupted by the common folk, who were enraged at seeing the separation of the families of slaves.”²⁰² Their reaction and disapproval of such

²⁰⁰ Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator,'* p. 242. Russell placed the number of the captives given to Portuguese Ecclesiastics at two. But Azurara the palace chronicler of this event placed the number at four. This is contained in the Portuguese version of his *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*. For a reference to this number, Cf. Azurara, *Cronica de Guine*, Cap. Lv. See also, Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 149. Saunders recorded in this page that one of the four slaves given to the Churches “was simply sold to buy ornaments for the Church which received him.” Going a step further, Saunders said: “But another, a boy, grew up serving the monastery of São Vincent do Cabo and eventually became a Franciscan friar or lay brother.” See, p. 149; Azurara, *Cronica de Guine*, Cap. Xxiv. This slave boy who later became a Franciscan monk is called in the referred chapter “a Frade de Sam Francisquo (the Friar of Saint Francis).” See also Saunders, Footnote No. 2 on p. 216.

²⁰¹ Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator,'* p. 242.

²⁰² Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 35.

humiliating conduct on the side of the Prince and his men did not escape the human feelings of the palace chronicler Gomes Azurara, who gave a recorded account of this event. Azurara, though a knighted member of this Order of Christ under whose banner this seizure and auctioning of innocent Black African men and women was conducted, refused to reason monetarily like his co-members did at this event. Instead he was moved with pity at the human tragedy elicited in the fate of those Black African captives and acknowledged at least the fact of a common humanity he shared with those greatly terrified and humiliated Black Africans, whose fate was decided by the Prince at this event. Expressing his feelings for these traumatized and auctioned Black African captives, this chronicler wrote:

I pray Thee that my tears may not wrong my conscience, for it is not their religion but their humanity that maketh mine to weep in pity for their sufferings. And if the brute animals, with their bestial feelings, by a natural instinct understand the sufferings of their own kind, what wouldst Thou have my human nature to do on seeing before my eyes that miserable company and remembering that they too are of the generation of the sons of Adam.²⁰³

Despite his pity for the enslaved Black Africans and the recognition of a common humanity with them, one would not of course expect Gomes Azurara to make a paradigm-shift from the dominant thought and mentality of the medieval Christians on the issue of dehumanizing and humiliation of non-Christians considered as enemies of the Christian faith. He was therefore, as convinced as his master Prince Henry and his co-members of the military Order of Christ were, that these captives were the accursed descendants of Ham, whose enslavement and humiliation was demonstrated as an act designed by God by the early patristic and medieval Christian writers. And that such treatment of humiliation and sufferings meted out on these unfortunate Black captives were nothing to compare with the conversion and salvation, which their enslavement now hold in stock for them at the end of life. As a proof of this fact, Gomes Azurara could not hide his religious background and state of mind while addressing this issue in form of an intercessory prayer for the enslaved, requesting that God will open their hearts to come to the realisation of the goal (salvation) of their enslavement. Thus in the following words, Azurara prayed: "Oh! All-Powerful Fortune, whose wheel moves forwards and backwards arranging the affairs of the world according to your whims, at least place before the eyes of these miserable people some awareness of the

²⁰³ Azurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, chpt. XXV, p. 81. Cf. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 35.

wonderful new things that await them at life's end, so that they may receive some consolation in the middle of their present great distress."²⁰⁴

Undoubtedly, Azurara saw the salvation of these Black Africans as the sole goal of his master and his military Order of Christ and he tried all he could in the record of this event to view the conduct of his master on this occasion with a positive lens. And even when the Prince rejoiced for the profit that he has made from this auctioning, Azurara would interpret the source of his master's delight as something that was not coming from the material benefits he had won, but rather as something that comes from the salvation of the souls of his victims, which his hands had caused to bring about. This effort of Azurara to wash the hands of Prince Henry clean from the stains of blood and of the evils of the slave trade has been uncovered by Peter Russell when he wrote:

Azurara, anxious to make sure that future readers of his chronicle could not fall into the error of thinking that Henry was involved in the slave trade for the money, proceeded to give his readers a final assurance that it was not the fact that forty-six valuable slaves had just become the Prince's property which pleased him, but the thought of all the souls, who, thanks to the action of Lançarote and his companions, had been saved from eternal perdition.²⁰⁵

But for the Prince, it mattered less to him, whatsoever the position of his critics on this issue was. What mattered most to him was his irresistible desire and interest on continuing his economic enterprise in Africa. Lured by the gains he had already made in the human cargoes of 1444 therefore, Prince Henry just a few months afterwards, sent another caravels led by Lançarote to West Africa in 1445. Using the same method of slave razzias, Lançarote was able to come home with another huge human cargoes. On arrival in Lagos, the same display of a spectacular disembarkation of the slave captives was ceremoniously made like in the previous one. Writing on this, the chronicler Azurara described it as follows:

How could anyone not take pleasure on observing the multitude of people who rushed to see the caravels? As soon as these had lowered their sails, the officers who collect the imposts due to the king were rowed out in boats from the waterfront to verify where these ships came from and what they carried. When they returned, the news that they carried a cargo of slaves spread in a very short time and so many people went aboard the caravels that these were in danger of sinking. The crowd were no less the following day when the captives were brought ashore from the ships to be marched to the Prince's palace, which was a considerable distance from the waterfront. From all over the city

²⁰⁴ Azurara, *Cronica dos Feitos na Conquista de Guine*, Vol. II, p. 147. English translation in: Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 244.

²⁰⁵ Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 245.

people rushed to the streets through which they would have to be taken... when they watched the prisoners bound with rope being marched through the streets, the tumult of the people was so great as they praised aloud the great virtues of the Prince that if anyone had dared to voice a contrary opinion to theirs, he would very quickly have been obliged to withdraw it... The Prince himself was away in Viseu from where he gave orders for the disposal of his Fifth of the captives. As for the rest of them, the captains of the caravels arranged for them to be auctioned in the city as a result of which each one secured great profits.²⁰⁶

Be that as it may, the events of 1444 and 1445 in Portugal had helped to unravel the hidden agenda of the “saintly” Prince Henry of Portugal, who since the fall of Ceuta in 1415 began his dreamt mission of exploring the Western Atlantic Coasts of Africa. His hidden agenda has now come to a point where it could no longer be hidden from the ambient of critical rational minds. The goal of his enterprise was nothing other than the enslavement of the Black Africans. And the very method employed in doing this was the Crusade as a just war, which turned out in his hands to be a method of conducting slave drives for his personal economic aggrandizement. His on-the-spot knighting of a slave raiding champion like Lançarote as a key member of the military Order of Christ to herald the end of this auctioning, is in the views of Peter Russell: “A seal of his approval of the whole thing”²⁰⁷ that took place on that occasion. No matter how he would further and cunningly present his goal for the voyages in West Africa to the popes so as to garner their support and approval, the human cargoes of 1444 and 1445 respectively are an indubitable proof of the fact that it was not for the salvation of the pagans in West Africa that he set-out to achieve through his explorations, rather to enrich himself and the kingdom of Portugal economically. If this great “Crusader Prince” of Portugal considered such slave-raiding voyages in West Africa as evangelization of the pagan natives of Guinea region and expected to go down into the annals of history as one, who brought the light of the Gospel to the so-called “Gentiles” of the said regions, one would better suppose that he got it completely wrong. Today, modern history views him unfortunately with a very negative lens. Modern historians of the Iberian maritime history such as Peter Russell, Edgar Prestage, M. Saunders, Raymond Beazley, Samuel Johnson, E. W. Bovill, C. R. Crone, John Ure, inter alia, hold him in a very poor light as far as the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans is concerned. Samuel Johnson for instance, observed that the Prince's association with the enslavement of the Black Africans “made it difficult to decide, taking everything into account, whether he

²⁰⁶ Azurara, *Cronica dos Feitos na Conquista de Guine*, Vol. II, pp. 204-206. English version in: Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator,' pp. 245-246.

²⁰⁷ Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator', p. 245.

had been a force for good or for evil in World history.”²⁰⁸ M. Saunders described the human cargoes brought into Portugal by Prince Henry as inauguration of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Thus in his very words, Saunders remarked: “The introduction of Black slaves into Portugal marks a turning point in the history of slavery. The voyages of the Portuguese’s caravels were the inauguration of the Atlantic slave trade and from thenceforward, Black slavery was to be a typical feature of Atlantic civilization in early modern times.”²⁰⁹ Bovill on his part, viewed the introduction of Black Africans as slaves into Portugal by Prince Henry as a scandal that brought tragic consequences not only to the Portuguese but to Europeans at large. Referring to the human cargoes of 1444 in Portugal, Bovill said: “Later, a whole cargo of captives was shipped to Lisbon where they were sold into slavery, with profoundly tragic consequences, for it taught Europeans how rapidly money could be made by the enslavement of Africans. The character of the voyages then began quickly to change.”²¹⁰ On the same parameter, C. R. Crone shared the same view with Bovill and reduced the voyages sent into West Africa by the Prince to a mere level of a journey made to acquire quick money. According to Crone: “As soon as it was quickly realised that there was money in the enslavement of Black Africans and thenceforward the character of these voyages altered. Discovery was no longer pursued for its own ends, but as a source of personal gain. Buccaneers regularly descended on the north-west coast of Africa to raid the Azaneguys. All, who resisted capture, were ruthlessly slain.”²¹¹ Even the liberator of the enslaved Indians, bishop Bartolomé da Las Casas, but unfortunately the very one who in the sixteenth century suggested replacing Indians with the Black Africans in the New World did not fail to castigate the Prince's method of evangelization with a barrel of criticisms. In the views of Las Casas, Prince Henry and his men are: “Violent evil-doers, who, while professing to spread the faith, had in fact broken in Guinea most of the Church's laws and teachings.”²¹²

In all of these, the action of Prince Henry and his men in the years of 1444 and 1445 respectively had cast a big cloud of doubt on his genuine intention of exploring the Western Coasts of the African Atlantic. The huge human cargoes of those years brought into Portugal had led many to crown him with an honorary title of a “slave Prince,” the first Patron of the Transatlantic slave trade as well as the first European that opened the seaway for the first time for the Atlantic transportation of Black Africans into Europe. This fact was echoed

²⁰⁸ Johnson, in: Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator,' p. 246.

²⁰⁹ Saunders, A Social History of Black Slaves, p. 177.

²¹⁰ Bovill, The Golden Trade of the Moors, p. 115.

²¹¹ Crone, Voyages of Cadamosto, p. 20.

²¹² Las Casas, Historia de Las Indias, Vol. I, p. 120; Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator,' p. 246.

by Peter Russell when he said: “What is unique about the event of that year is that the Prince was the first European to use the Atlantic for long distance seaborne transport to Europe of Africans of diverse racial origins captured or bought by barter in the newly discovered lands beyond Cape Bojador.”²¹³ And by so doing, Prince Henry was crowned by history with the title of being the first man that brought Portugal on an International scene as a slave holding nation and largest supplier of slaves of Black African origin worldwide. In the light of this, Russell was therefore right to remark that by reason of this particular Henrican initiative: “Portugal became during the Prince's lifetime an important and ever-growing market which supplied Castile especially Seville and the Crown of Aragon especially Valencia with slaves from Black Africa.”²¹⁴ From this year of great event onwards, that is, from 1444 to 1448, it is on record that the Prince sent over 40 ships into West Africa for the same economic purpose of capturing Black natives of the Gulf of Guinea for sale in the European slave markets. It is estimated that over 900 Blacks were brought into Portugal as slaves. Confirming this, Raymond Beazley observed that from 1444 to 1448: “More than forty ships sailed out, more than nine hundred captives were brought home, and the new lands found are all discovered by three or four explorers. And the rest?”²¹⁵ The answer to this question here like many historians believe, is that they (explorers) were simply merchants and enslavers.

But would the popes of this period pay attention to this statistic records in dealing with the Prince when they will be approached for further support of this Henrican business enterprise in Guinea or would they rather pretend not to be aware of the evil machinations of the said Prince and allow themselves to be roped into this evil business done on the altar of evangelization of the natives of the West African Atlantic? How they would fare in this task, is definitely left open for the pontificates of pope Nicholas V and his successors to show in the next sub-section of this chapter.

3.3 Pope Nicholas V and his Approval of the Atlantic Enslavement of Black Africans

The above treatment of the Royal Charter of 1443 and the great event of 1444/5 coupled with the papal support given to the business enterprise of Prince Henry the Navigator as we saw in the preceding chapter of this work, had now placed us on a better footing to understand the very mission of Prince

²¹³ Russell, Prince Henry 'the Navigator,' p. 247.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Beazley, Prince Henry the Navigator, p. 209.

Henry the Navigator and the Crown in Portugal in embarking upon an exploring mission on the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa. Having begun a booming economic enterprise in Africa through the help of the Royal monopoly contained in the Royal Charter of 1443 and the unflinching papal support received during the pontificates of popes Martin V and Eugene IV respectively, which made this business ambition of Prince Henry to put-on the face of a religious Crusade in Africa, the Prince is now faced with the task of protecting the flow of this economic booming enterprise against the encroachment of unauthorized foreign interlopers. Owing to the fact that the monopoly-control he won from the Portuguese Crown in 1443 was limited in power to bind on other non-Portuguese nations, merchants as well as adventurers so as to prevent them from sailing on the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa for business enterprise, the Prince now needed again the support of the popes to give this Royal monopoly an international character and undertone. And at that time, this could only be granted by the authority of the pope, whose power is binding on all Christian nations, kings and their subjects. It is based on this motive that Prince Henry now sought the intervention of the reigning pope Nicholas V, who in his pontificate, not only blessed this adventure but also gave it an unlimited scope and support that remained unrivalled throughout the history of the papacy and the Transatlantic slave trade. This, he did by issuing two important Bulls in the history of the Transatlantic slave trade that gave approval and great support to the economic ambitions of this Portuguese Prince and his kingdom in West Africa.

While the previous Bulls of his predecessors Martin V and Eugene IV as we saw in chapter two above concentrated on the rights of ownership granted to Portugal over the properties in her conquered territories in the Muslim areas of Morocco and other islands along the Western Coasts of the African Atlantic, the Bulls of Nicholas V did not only acknowledge such rights but also included them among the new rights granted to Portugal in the regions of the Western Coasts of Africa - the so-called Guinea and land of the Blacks. Nicholas V failed to know that Portugal's newly discovered territory of the Gulf of Guinea was not the land of Saracens but that of believers in African traditional religion, who did not in any manner posit any threat to the practice of faith for the European Christians. He neglected the fundamental answer given to the medievalist canonists' question which asked: "Is it just to make wars on territories which had never been in Christian hands before or not?" The reply given to this question especially by the renowned medieval canonist Sinibaldo Fieschi - the future pope Innocent IV was absolutely No. For this great canonist: "Unbelievers should not be converted into the Christian faith by means of force but by persuasive means, and he denied Christians of having any right of the use of force to convert them, make wars against them or to

deprive them of their possessions.”²¹⁶ The use of force could only be employed when such territories were used as a base for attack against Christians or if Christian missionaries were refused entry into such territories to preach the Gospel message.²¹⁷ All this in the opinion of Ernst-Dieter Hehl means that: “Only the lands belonging to the ancient Roman Empire were open to Christian reconquest and attacks.”²¹⁸ In all this, the region of West African Guinea did not fall into the category of regions or peoples, who should be attacked or be converted with force by Christians, for they did neither refuse to accept the Gospel of Christ nor posed any threat to the missionaries. Moreover, the said region was never before a part of the defunct ancient Roman Empire and as such should not be a subject of Christian reconquest and attacks. That notwithstanding, pope Nicholas V abandoned this teaching and adopted the extreme position of cardinal Hostiensis and archbishop Giles of Rome, who as we saw in chapter one of this section of our work granted the popes an unrestricted authority in the whole world and gave them the right to launch military conquest under the umbrella of a “just war” against pagans even in their own territories and to dispossess them of all their rights and possessions. It was exactly in this very tradition of unrestricted papal authority that Nicholas V as an ardent renaissance pope, found justification for his action against the peoples of West Africa in granting Prince Henry and the Crown in Portugal the authority to forcefully handle and treat the natives of this region in the same manner that Saracens of North Africa were handled. And by so doing, he authorised the king of Portugal and his successors to use military force against them, to capture them, and gave them the right to possess them together with their land as well as to enslave the natives living along the Western Coast (Guinea Coast) of Africa. These authority and rights are contained in the Bulls “Dum Diversas” and “Romanus Pontifex” issued by the Genoese and renaissance pope Nicholas V in 1452 and 1455 respectively.

Pope Nicholas V (*1397, pontificate 1447-1455) was a native of Sarzana in the Genoese republic. His original name was Tommaso Parentucelli. He was the only child of his impoverished parents. As a young priest, he worked as a librarian for the bishop of Bologna Niccolo Albergati, whom he later succeeded as bishop in 1443. He was created a cardinal by pope Eugene IV in December 1446. In the conclave that assembled after the death of pope Eugene IV in

²¹⁶ Sinibaldo Fieschi, *Apparatus super quinque Libros Decretalium*, Fl. 177r, in: Vauchez, ed. *Die Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 2, p. 784.

²¹⁷ Zabarella, *Commentaria de Decretales*, III, Xxxiv. 8, No. 24, Fl. 201v. It reads in Latin: “Alios autem infideles in pace degentes, etiam alios, quos servos teremus, non per bellum vel violentiam aliquam, sed per praedicationem debemus convertere, etsi praedicatorum non admittunt, debeant compesci.” See also, Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, pp. 131-132.

²¹⁸ Hehl, in: *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. I, p. 226.

1447, he was elected a pope and successor of pope Eugene IV. Tommaso Parentucelli was also a known humanist. His humanistic tendencies made him to devote much time and resources to scholarship and learning. He conceived for the first time the very idea of building the new Basilica of St. Peter in Rome and founded the Vatican Library which today serves as the crowning glory of his pontificate. He also encouraged the translation of many Greek texts into Latin and proclaimed the Jubilee year in 1450, which attracted pilgrims to Rome from all over the world. With the help of this Jubilee celebration, the influence of the papacy around the globe as the centre of the Church was enhanced. He has been described by some authors and historians such as Joseph Gill, Ferdinand Gregorovius etc. as the most liberal of all popes of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Joseph Gill for example, made reference to this aspect of his life when he wrote: “In his literary pursuits, Nicholas V spent vast sum of money and was generous to a fault to the humanists, several of them Greek refugees, who thronged the papal court.”²¹⁹ Also one notices a trait of his negative generosity from the tone of his two Bulls “*Romanus Pontifex* and *Dum Diversas*” through which he opened the gate widely for the traffic in Black African natives which dominated the entire trade along the Atlantic Coast of West Africa.

However, he will always be remembered by historians as a pope of peace and unity, who dedicated himself to peace and unity of the whole Christendom and saw this, as the only way out for the Church to survive the incessant incursions and threats of Islam and the Turks. But unfortunately his dreams did not come through, primarily due to the fact that the many European states and their rulers pursued particular economic and political interests for the maintenance and progress of their respective states and as a result, were no longer willing to risk their wealth for the protection of the Christendom. On the other hand, this goal of uniting the entire Christendom against the threats of Turks and Islam did not see the light of the day due to the much deteriorated health of Nicholas V and his subsequent death on March 24, 1455. But three years before his death, he made a remarkable impact to the Portuguese business monopoly and control of the Western regions of the African Atlantic. Such impacts are clearly seen in the tone and the authority of the rights and favours he granted to king Alfonso V of Portugal and his successors. Let us now turn to these favours as contained in his first Bull “*Dum Diversas*” of 1452.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Gill, in: *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 10, p. 369.

²²⁰ For further readings on Nicholas V, see: Marthaler, ed. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second Edition, Vol. 10, 2003, pp. 368-369; G. Manetti, *Vita di Nicolo V*, trans. A. Modighani, Rome 1999; Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*; Franz Xaver Seppelt, *Geschichte der Päpste von der Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, München 1956.

3.4 The Bull “Dum Diversas” of Pope Nicholas V in 1452

3.4.1 Brief Introduction

The Bull “Dum Diversas” was the first Bull written by Nicholas V on the issue of the Black African enslavement together with the right of ownership granted to Portugal over West Africa. It was issued on June 18, 1452, exactly ten years after the Bull 'Illius Qui' of Eugene IV of 1442 (see chapter two above) which raised the slave raids organised by Prince Henry in West Africa to the status of a religious Crusade. Writing in connection with this, M. Saunders remarked: “Ten years later, the Portuguese sought confirmation that they could enslave infidels seized in the Crusade. The pope responded with 'Dum Diversas,' which allowed them to conquer and reduce to perpetual slavery all Saracens and pagans and other infidels and enemies of Christ in West Africa.”²²¹

Prince Henry the Navigator obtained this grant from pope Nicholas V by using exactly the same deceptive ploys as he did in obtaining the approval for his selfish ambition from pope Eugene IV in 1442, which as we earlier saw, culminated in the slave-raiding and capture of over two hundred Black African natives forcefully brought into Portugal and auctioned as slaves in 1444. While pursuing a pure economic interest in West Africa, Prince Henry would once again present this interest to the reigning pope in a form of a religious interest of fighting the Muslims and spreading the Gospel message to West Africa which as we saw earlier was also among the interests of the renaissance popes in their ambition to establish a world-wide monarchy with themselves as monarchs having international authority. And to achieve this, Prince Henry first and foremost received from his nephew king Alfonso V a Royal Charter in the name of the military Order of Christ, whose Grandmaster he was at that time, granting him and this Order a re-confirmation of all the rights and privileges granted to him by the former kings of Portugal who were solidly behind his economic and political interests in West Africa. The re-confirmation of all the grants, which he enjoyed since ever he began this economic-political ambition in Africa that began with the attack and fall of Ceuta in 1415, is contained in a Royal Charter entitled “Carta de Dom Afonso V ao Ordem de Cristo” issued at the Portuguese city of Santarem on June 27, 1449. This Royal Brief reads as follows:

King Alfonso etc. To all who will come in contact with this letter, let them know that we wanted to grant favours to the Order of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Governor and Grandmaster is Prince Henry, the duke of Viseu and lord of Covilhã, my most respected

²²¹ Saunders, A Social History of Black Slaves, p. 37.

and beloved uncle. We find it worthy to grant him a favour by confirming to him all honour, privileges, freedom, graces and favours which were granted to him through the letters of the kings of Portugal who ruled our kingdom before us and in whose possession and use these favours were kept until the death of the virtuous king of blessed memory, my lord and father, whose soul is now resting in God.²²²

Continuing, king Alfonso V ordered all his Royal officials and other persons including the popes to ensure that these grants made to Prince Henry beginning from the reign of the great king John I of Portugal are respected and to avoid any thing contrary to that which could proof a hindrance to the Prince in carrying out his economic and politically set objectives in Africa. This order is seen when the king stated.

And we command also all the officials and other persons in authority to fulfil and uphold these grants and ensure that they are kept and carried out, without posing any hindrance to the Prince in obtaining them. And as a proof of our authority, we send him (Prince Henry) this Brief signed by us and sealed with our Royal emblem. Given in our city of Santarem, on the 27th day of February. The king sent this letter. Martim Gill prepared it in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1449.²²³

With this Royal Brief, The Prince was able to convince pope Nicholas V in 1452, who in his Bull “Dum Diversas” even went beyond the detects of the grants contained in the said Royal Briefs to give approval to his selfish economic ambition in Africa. What surprises historians in this matter is the ease with which the popes granted Prince Henry whatever he requested from them on matters bordering on Africa and Africans in general, and always raised in such Bulls the impression that it was only for a religious purpose that those grants were made, while on the contrary, the opposite is the case. But the truth of the matter remains in the fact that both pope Nicholas V and the Prince were using the Crusade and mission to the West African Atlantic as a cover-up in pursuing their different goals in West Africa and in that sense, were complementing each other. While the Prince was pursuing the goal of expanding and enriching himself and the kingdom of Portugal which was placed under the protection and lordship of the pope since 1179, the pope on the other hand was pursuing the obligations of the papal Office to fulfil his part in the aforesaid deal signed with the Crown in Portugal as well as establishing his papal authority in the places discovered by Prince Henry and the king of Portugal. Based on the terms of this Padroado Real (Royal Patronage) of 1179,

²²² Dom Afonso V, Carta de Dom Afonso V a Ordem de Cristo, ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fls. 153v-154. For the original copy of this Royal Brief, see, Appendix C, No. 5 in this Book. See also a printed copy of this Royal Brief in: Brásio, (M.M.A.), Vol. I, No. 41, p. 268.

²²³ Dom Alfonso V, Ibid.

it implies that any new territory discovered, including the “New World” of the Portuguese in West Africa, invariably fell automatically under the lordship and authority of the pope. That means that this newly discovered region of Africa becomes automatically a part of the papal world-wide hierarchy, where the pope could extend his universal authority in deciding what is to be done in this “New World.” And in this whole arrangement, the king of Portugal serves only as a papal tutelage and vassal king of the newly discovered regions in Africa.

On the matter now at hand, pope Nicholas V having this in mind therefore, ignored all the obvious reasons that showed that Prince Henry the Navigator had ulterior motives other than what he presented to him. This being the case, the pope now carved this request in the mould of a crusading Bull so that anyone who reads it at first glance, would definitely believe that it was purely issued for a religious purpose. But the undeniable historical fact still remains that this purported religious motive of this Bull was very far from being the historical reality surrounding this ulterior pursuit. That notwithstanding, Nicholas V patterned the structure and the wordings of this Bull to that of a crusading Bull which in the words of Frances Davenport “granted king Alfonso V general and indefinite powers to search out and conquer all pagans, enslave them and appropriate their lands and goods.”²²⁴

3.4.2 The Bull “Dum Diversas” and Enslavement of Black Africans

In the introductory part of this Bull, Nicholas V made known his intention for issuing this Bull. It was for no other reason than that of eliminating the so-called enemies of the Christian faith and to spread the Christian faith in order to bring those outside of its enclave into the fold of the Church under the authority of the pope. That is to say, that he was pursuing a realization of the Church’s teaching that: “Outside of the Catholic Church there is no salvation.” This intention is therefore seen when he asserted: “While we, who are by the Grace of God entrusted with the Apostolic Office, and faced by all sorts of worries and also driven by zealous encouragement, we consider the following thought and bear those concerns in mind, especially, that the wrath of the enemies of Christ against the orthodox faith will be pushed back and be subjected to the Christian religion.”²²⁵ Continuing, Nicholas V praised the kings of Portugal as those, who had professed faith in the true religion and are still

²²⁴ Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 12.

²²⁵ Nicholas V, “Dum Diversas,” *Archivo Secreto Vaticano (ASV)*, Reg. Vat. Vol. 431, Fls. 194v-196. See a Latin copy of this Bull in Appendix A, No. 6 in this Book. Printed copies of this Bull are found in the following works: (M.H.), XI, pp. 199-202; Brasio, (M.M.A.), Vol. I, No. 42, pp. 269-273; Pires de Carvalho, *Enucleationes Ordinum Militarium*, Vol. 2, p. 282; Waddingius, *Bullarium Collectio*, Vol. 22, p. 10; *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. 1, pp. 22-23.

bent on ensuring with stronger hands to suppress the influence of the enemies of the faith and bring them under their subjection. This, the pope considered as a work that ought to be supported by the use of the apostolic authority in defence and spread of the message of the Gospel of Christ. And he called on all the Christian faithful to support this mission of Prince Henry and the king of Portugal in Africa. In his own words, he said as follows:

For this reason, and while the occasion required it and we direct our eagerness towards this goal, and due to the fact that individual faithful Christians especially the beloved sons in Christ, the noble kings who confessed the Christian faith, who in honour and to the glory of the Eternal King defend the Christian faith and seek to defeat those enemies with a powerful arm. Therefore, we are pursuing this with paternal feeling, and we intend to participate in this redemptive work that serves the defence and the spread of the Christian religion. So we would like to encourage individual Christian believers to apply their forces in support of the Christian faith through spiritual works.²²⁶

In the main body of this Bull, Nicholas V accepted the claim that it was as a result of the religious zeal of Prince Henry and the king of Portugal in fighting the Saracens and other enemies of the Christendom that they have undertaken this course and not in pursuit of an economic and political ambitions as we have observed above. And for that reason, and coupled with the fact that he has the authority to deprive non-Christians of their rights to self-rule, and to own property and can give these to a Catholic king of his choice, the pope then assured Prince Henry and his kingdom of the recognition and support of the Apostolic authority in this venture. And to match his words with action, he permitted the king and Prince Henry to invade, search out, dispossess the Saracens, pagans and other unbelievers in the Christian religion of all their kingdoms, possessions, lands, locations, villas and all movable and immovable properties and to make them their own. This papal permission granted to the king of Portugal to take over West Africans and their possessions is made clearer when the pope decreed:

As we can see that you seek out of devotion and Christian desire to subjugate the enemies of Christ, especially the Saracens, and with a strong hand to spread the Christian faith, therefore the Apostolic authority will be granted to you for this purpose... Justly desiring that whatever concerns the integrity and spread of the faith, for which Christ our God shed his blood shall flourish in the souls of the faithful, and inspired by the love of the Christians, and as required by our pastoral office... we therefore permit you to dispossess the Saracens, pagans and other infidels, and all enemies of Christ, of all their kingdoms, commands, dominance, other belongings, lands, towns, villas, castles and all

²²⁶ Nicholas V, "Dum Diversas," ASV, Reg. Vat. Vol. 431, Fls. 194v-196. See also: Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae, Vol. 1, pp. 22-23.

other possessions, movable and immovable property which they have held, under whatever name they are also made.²²⁷

The remaining part of the main body of this Bull contained the very lines and words which indicated the active role of the leadership of the Church in the Black African enslavement. In these lines, the Church represented by pope Nicholas V declared a just war against the Saracens of North Africa as well as the natives of the regions of the West African Atlantic Coasts as enemies of Christ. He commanded the king of Portugal to search out, capture, colonise, subjugate and to reduce the natives of this region of West Africa to perpetual slavery, thereby approving as well as authorising the trade on human beings of Black African origin. This attitude of the pope here made David Brion Davis to justly remark that: "In 1452 pope Nicholas V authorized the king of Portugal to deprive Moors and pagans of their liberty."²²⁸ In the light of this, pope Nicholas V said authoritatively and without mincing words to king Alfonso V of Portugal:

We grant to you by these present documents with our Apostolic authority, full and free permission to invade, search out, capture and subjugate the Saracens and pagans and any other unbelievers and enemies of Christ wherever they may be, as well as their kingdoms, duchies, counties, principalities, lands, towns, villas and other properties... and to reduce their persons into perpetual slavery. And appropriate all their kingdoms, commands, retainers, dominance, and other possessions, lands, towns, villas, and any possessions to yourself and to your successors on the throne of Portugal in perpetuity. By reason of our Apostolic authority, we allow you and your successors to use and enjoy these assets fully and freely.²²⁹

The geographical length of this concession made to the king of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator here in this Bull is very ambiguous, in the sense that it did not specify where the areas of their possession began and where it ended. But the historian and author Richard Raiswell attempted an explanation to this geographical ambiguity. According to him: "The use of the term 'Pagans' and 'other enemies of Christ' indicates that the scope of the Bull was applicable to the newly discovered lands along the West coast of Africa and that the ambiguity of the text was such that it encouraged the Portuguese to extend

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, Vol. II, P. 126. See also, Iris Origo, 'Domestic Enemy,' *The Eastern Slaves in Tuscany in the Fourteenth Centuries*, *Speculum*, XXX, July, 1955, pp. 334-335; Donnan, ed. *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade*, Vol. 1, p. 5.

²²⁹ Nicholas V, *Dum Diversas*, ASV, Reg. Vat. Vol. 431. Ibid. See also, Waddingius, *Bullarium Collectio*, p. 10.

their explorations further afield.”²³⁰ With such inflammatory words of this Bull as the above indicated, the accusers of the Church find their supportive grounds in their allegation that the Church not only supported the enslavement of Black Africans but also really approved of it. This is exactly the position of Werner Stein, who rightly observed that: “In 1441 the Portuguese who were on their journey of discovery at Cape Blanco (West Africa) met there the Negroes for the first time. With this Bull now they received from the highest authority of the Holy See the permission to enslave these people. This practice was common since 1441, but has now been sanctioned by pope Nicholas V.”²³¹ The pope did not only sanction in this Bull the enslavement of West Africans but also commanded Portugal to make their own whatever belongs to Africa and Africans such that at the end of the day, Africans were left with nothing of their own. This command was carried out to the letters by all the participating European nations in the Transatlantic slave trade as we have already observed in the first section of this work. It is based on this fact that many Black Africans trace the root of their present economic and developmental woes that have been their lots throughout the sad period of the Transatlantic slave trade and until in the present time back to the contents of this Bull.

In the concluding part of this Bull, pope Nicholas V assured king Alfonso V, his chief army commander, his soldiers and all who will actively take part in this Crusade, together with all those who would give their support either in kind or in cash, the blessings of God and those of the chief Apostles Peter and Paul. He also granted them perpetual indulgence for the remission of all their sins and the excesses they might commit in the course of carrying out the words of these papal instructions in Africa. Thus in the words of this Bull the pope assured the king of Portugal as follows:

We grant to you complete indulgence for the forgiveness of sins and also to the esteemed noble commander, barons and soldiers and other Christian believers, who are on your side in this battle of faith and are helping you with their goods, and who, with the intention of receiving salvation are more eager to attack the enemies of the Christian faith. Therefore, we assure you and all the Christian faithful of both sexes who are giving you aids in this work of faith, and even those who do not want to take part in person, but who are ready to make contributions from their property according to their capacity, the mercy of the Almighty God and that of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul.²³²

Like it is always the case when the popes grant Apostolic privileges of this magnitude to the Christian kings, this Bull ended with the threat of

²³⁰ Raiswell, *The Historical Encyclopaedia of World Slavery*, p. 469.

²³¹ Stein, *Fahrplan der Weltgeschichte*, in: Raiswell, *Ibid.*

²³² *Ibid.* Cf. Brasio, (M.M.A.), pp. 272-273.

excommunication on all those who might venture to infringe on the contents of this papal grant or in any way challenge the authority contained therein. In the light of this, the pope threatened: “No one is allowed to challenge this document issued by us, our recovery, our will, our forbearance and our decisions or to act contrary to its detects. Should anyone attempt to do this, let him know that the indignation of the Almighty God and those of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul will fall upon him. Given in St. Peter at Rome, on the 18th day of June 1452, in the sixth year of our pontificate.”²³³

With this Bull, the Church under the papacy of pope Nicholas V officially supported and blessed the enslavement of Black Africans as a way of promoting the faith and encouraging Catholic kings in doing the same. By commanding the king of Portugal and Prince Henry the navigator to force the Black Africans into perpetual enslavement, he has not only approved of the continuation of the Church's support and teaching on the institution of slavery in vogue since the time of the patristic and the medieval period in the history of the Catholic Church, but also accepted as correct all the Western institutions and schools of thoughts which approved of the Aristotelian theory of natural slavery as we saw in the justification of slavery in section two of this work. That would mean that Black Africans for pope Nicholas V were slaves of nature whose enslavement was justified on the grounds of their barbarity and lack of enough wisdom to rule themselves and as such should be ruled and governed by the stronger and wiser Portuguese folk. In the light of this action of pope Nicholas V herein, Prince Henry the Navigator and his men have been freed from any hindrance and qualms of conscience in pursuing their economic and political ambitions in Africa. And as such they are now free to use as well as deal cruelly with the innocent natives of West Africa as their slaves to be captured via incessant military slave raids and to be auctioned as slaves as they did in Portugal in 1444/5 for the enrichment of themselves and that of their kingdom Portugal.

This same procedure and attitude of the popes in treating matters relating to Black Africans of this period under discussion was again repeated by pope Nicholas V in the second Bull “*Romanus Pontifex*” he issued with regard to the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans. With this Bull, whose contents we shall now consider in this discussion, the whole of the Atlantic Waters of West Africa and beyond, became an exclusive right of Prince Henry and the Royal Crown of Portugal.

²³³ Nicholas V, “*Dum Diversas*,” ASV, Reg. Vat. Vol. 431, Fl. 196; Brasio, (M.M.A.), p. 273.

3.5 The Bull “*Romanus Pontifex*” of Pope Nicholas V in 1454

3.5.1 Brief Introduction

The business monopoly which Portugal has continued to enjoy in West Africa has remained a source of an irresistible economic interest for most European nations and kings. As of 1452, this Portuguese trade in African gold and slaves was yielding so much money for Portugal that everyone wanted to have a share in it. Upon learning about this flourishing trade in Guinean Africa, it is not surprising that the famous Venetian traveller and merchant Alvise Cadamosto (1432-1483) quickly bought a license from Prince Henry the Navigator and navigated to the Atlantic Coast of West Africa in 1455 in order to engage himself in this trade. Having witnessed the great profit flowing from this trade, he confessedly expressed the hope of the gains in this trade in the following words: “From no traffic in the world could the like be had.”²³⁴

That being the case, it is little wonder then that king Juan II (*1405, reigned 1406-1454) of Spain also renewed his interest to carry out exploration on the Atlantic Coast of West Africa. In his bid to realise his dream of having a share in this flourishing trade, king Juan II without first of all obtaining permission from Prince Henry and the king of Portugal, gave licence to the duke of Medina Sidonia in 1449 to explore and at the same time exploit the land facing the Canary islands south of Cape Bojador with the claim that his ancestors had earlier been in possession of this region of Africa. The king of Portugal was alarmed at this interference in what he called his “Waters.” Portugal became watchful by stationing her army on the West African island of Arguin. In 1454 Portugal intercepted and seized a Castilian ship belonging to the captains and merchants of king Juan II of Castile which was heading to the Coast of Guinea in West Africa under the full control of the king of Portugal. As a result of this seizure, king Juan II of Castile wrote a letter to king Alfonso V of Portugal in 1454, wherein he protested against the seizure of his ship and demanded the restitution of the captured vessels and the release of his subjects from captivity.²³⁵ After noticing that his letter did not yield the required results, king Juan II now sent ambassadors to the king of Portugal and threatened to make war against him unless he desisted from the conquest of Barbary islands and that of Guinea, which he claimed had belonged to him and his kingdom of Castile. The king of Portugal replied that the authority of the Bulls of pope Eugene IV and Dum Diversas of Nicholas V assigned Guinea to him and his

²³⁴ Cadamosto, in: Beazley, & Erdgar Prestage, eds. *Introduction to Azurara, Guinea*, Vol. II, p. Xxii. Cf. Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 10.

²³⁵ For a reference to this letter of protest by king Juan II of Castile on April 10, 1454, see the following works: Las Casas, *Historia de Las Indias*, Vol. I, pp. 141-151; Viscount de Santarem, *Quadro Elementar* (1842-1876), Vol. II, pp. 352-367.

successors in perpetuity. He made recourse to Rome to seek aid from the pope, who at that time was seen and upheld as an arbitrator between nations and kings partly because of his independent potentate position as well as his spiritual powers especially his powers of excommunication and interdict.

What we witnessed above in this quarrel between the kings of Portugal and Castile is a concrete example of the weakness and the limit of the binding force of the Royal Charter of 1443, which as we observed above gave Prince Henry the sole right of monopoly control over the flourishing trade on gold and slaves from West Africa and prohibited other merchants from sailing on the Atlantic Waters of West Africa without the permission of Prince Henry. That the king of Castile ever ventured to send his captains and ships to the regions of Guinea, unveiled the very shortcomings of this Royal Charter, and established the fact that its binding force really lacked an international character. And it can only receive such a force, if and only if, it was underwritten by the pope. To achieve this, a copy of this Royal Charter of 1443 was now presented to pope Nicholas V through the diplomats of Prince Henry in Rome for his acknowledgement and recognition that he knew that Portugal had conquered and owned Africa as far as the Gulf of Guinea and beyond is concerned. It is only by doing so, that what Portugal claimed to be her own in Africa could be internationally recognized and be respected by all Christian kings and their kingdoms.

However, the pope as an arbitrator among medieval Christian kings and princes decided this matter in favour of the king of Portugal. And this decision of pope Nicholas V on this matter is the birth of this most famous papal Bull "Romanus Pontifex" of January 8, 1454, wherein the pope reconfirmed the papal grants he made to Portugal in "Dum Diversas," acknowledged those of his predecessors Martin V and Eugene IV as well as recognized the grants made to Prince Henry in the Royal Charter of 1443 and raised its status to an international law having a binding force of law on all Christian kings, kingdoms and nations the world over. While making reference to this decision of Nicholas V in this Bull, Peter Russell made this observation: "Nicholas V in the famous Bull Romanus Pontifex exercised his temporal power to cede the lordship of Guinea for all time jointly to the king of Portugal and to Prince Henry. In the light of the 1443 donations, this meant that in practice, Prince Henry alone was, if only in terms of papal authority, titular lord of Guinea until his death."²³⁶ And as an insight of what this decision of Nicholas V meant for both the kings of Portugal and Castile, Frances Gardiner Davenport rightly observed that this decision of Nicholas V marked an important stage both in the history of Portugal and its colonies and gave her a monopoly right over the territories discovered in Africa. She gave a clue to the geographical areas

²³⁶ Russell, Prince Henry the Navigator, Portugal, Spain, Chpt. XV, p. 16.

involved in this papal grant made to Portugal, which in her view covered the whole of “Ceuta and the district from Capes Boyador and Não through all Guinea and beyond towards that southern shore and declared that this together with all other lands acquired by Portugal from the infidels before or after 1452, belonged to king Alfonso, his successors and Prince Henry, and to no others.”²³⁷

The papal Bull “*Romanus Pontifex*” is therefore, an official apostolic declaration and confirmation of the Western Coasts and regions of Africa as a private property of Portugal and her Royal Crown. In this Bull, Nicholas V out-listed and gave approval to all the political and economic feats which Prince Henry the Navigator had accomplished for his kingdom since the on-start of Portuguese maritime territorial expansion and exploration of Africa in the early beginnings of the fifteenth century. Little wonder then did many historians like Thomas Hugh describe it as an apostolic compendium of Portugal’s monopoly in politics, trade and religion in Africa.²³⁸ This Bull has much in common with the Bull “*Dum Diversas*” which preceded it. Based on this fact, we shall bring out only those things that are new and peculiar to *Romanus Pontifex* in this section of our discussion so as to avoid unnecessary repetitions.

3.5.2 The Bull “*Romanus Pontifex*” and the Transatlantic Enslavement of Black Africans

Like *Dum Diversas* written two years before it, Nicholas V for the second time in series, while protecting and promoting the monopolistic business interests of Portugal in Africa, tried to raise a non-existent situation among readers of this Bull by given this Bull a crusading tone as if there was a war of faith going on between Portugal and the pagan natives of West Africa. But the obvious fact remained as we have observed above that he was supporting the economic and political interests of Prince Henry and the king of Portugal in West Africa as part of his quest to have a universal authority in the whole world and to show that he is the one, who has the authority to decide what is to happen in the newly discovered territory of West Africa and beyond. In his bid to achieve this, he presented his intention for issuing this Bull in the introductory part of it, to be the same motive of bringing all into the same fold of Christianity, which has remained part of the political interests of the renaissance papacy in

²³⁷ Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 12. A renowned papal historian Ludwig von Pastor is of the view that pope Nicholas V not only decided this matter in favour of the king of Portugal as a reward for his unflinching support of the papacy in the summoned Crusade against the Turks after the fall of Constantinople but also rewarded him with a gift of a consecrated golden rose. See, Ludwig Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, Vol. I, Freiburg 1901, p. 608; Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 14.

²³⁸ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 65.

its quest to establish a quasi-world-wide monarchy with the popes as the head and the king of Portugal as the vassal king of the newly discovered territories. The papacy found in the king of Portugal and Prince Henry the executors of this politically motivated papal project in the “New World” of the Portuguese in Africa.

On a careful reading of the introductory part of this Bull, one notices a hidden intention for its issuance. As it were, the main intention of Nicholas V for issuing this Bull is nothing other than to bestow favours to the Catholic kings and princes of Portugal as a reward for being an extended arm of the popes as well as the sword-bearer of the popes in the Crusade against Saracens and other “perceived enemies” of the Christian faith. That is to say, that it was written to grease the palms of king Alfonso V and Prince Henry of Portugal with the oil of a monopoly in trade, politics and control over all material goods in West Africa for extending the political powers of the popes to this new Portuguese domain. This was done so as to encourage them for more military actions against Muslims, pagans and other perceived enemies of the Catholic Church even in the regions, where no such “perceived enemies” ever existed in West Africa and subjecting them to their temporal powers and indirectly to the papal authority of the popes. This intention of Nicholas V was brought to a limelight when he wrote:

...contemplating with a father's mind all the several climes of the world and the characteristics of all the nations dwelling in them and seeking and desiring the salvation of all, wholesomely ordains and disposes upon careful deliberation those things which he sees will be agreeable to the Divine Majesty and by which he may bring the sheep entrusted to him by God into the single divine fold, and may acquire for them the reward of eternal felicity and obtain pardon for their souls. This we believe will more certainly come to pass through the aid of the Lord, if we bestow suitable favours and special graces on those Catholic kings and Princes, who like athletes and intrepid champions of the Christian faith, as we know by the evidence of facts, not only restrain the savage excesses of the Saracens and of other infidels, enemies of the Christian name, but also for the defence and increase of the faith, vanquish them and their kingdoms and habitations, though situated in the remotest parts unknown to us, and subject them to their own temporal dominion sparing no labour and expense, in order that those kings and Princes relieved of all obstacles, may be the more animated to the prosecution of so salutary and laudable a work.²³⁹

²³⁹ Nicholas V, “Romanus Pontifex,” Document of Archivio Secreto Vaticano (ASV), Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 71r; ANTT- Coleção de Bulas, maco, 7, No. 29; ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fl. 165. I worked with the original manuscript of this Bull found in both archives of Archivio Secreto Vaticano in Rome and Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo Portuguese in Portugal and found out that they corresponded word for word with each other. For the citation of this Bull in this work, I have chosen to work with the original manuscript of this Bull preserved in the Vatican Secret Archives. See this Latin text in Appendix A, No. 7 in this Book. Printed text of this document has been published in many monumental works such as the following: Cocquelines, ed. Bullarium

The later part of the introductory stage of this document recognised the zealousness of Prince Henry the Navigator who followed in the footsteps of his father late king John I in spreading the Gospel of Christ in some areas in the North African city of Ceuta and to bring the enemies of the Christian faith (Saracens and other non-Christians) under his own subjection. This recognition is made known when this document reads:

We have lately heard, not without great joy and gratification, how our beloved son, the noble personage Henry, Prince of Portugal, uncle of our most dear son in Christ, the illustrious Alfonso V, king of the kingdoms of Portugal and Algarve, treading in the footsteps of John I, of famous memory, king of the said kingdoms, his father, and greatly inflamed with zeal for the salvation of souls...has aspired from his early youth with his utmost might to cause the most glorious Name of the said Creator to be published, extolled and revered throughout the whole world, even in the remote and undiscovered places, and also to bring into the bosom of his faith the perfidious enemies of Him and of the life-giving Cross by which we have been redeemed, namely the Saracens and all other infidels whatsoever.²⁴⁰

Acting on the information provided to him by Prince Henry and king Afonso V of Portugal on the claimed motives of Prince Henry to explore the Western Atlantic Coasts of Africa, Nicholas V outlined these motives as contained in the Royal Charter²⁴¹ of 1443 and using the information contained therein, he showered praises on Prince Henry the Navigator for his discovery of a new route to Africa through the sea voyage along which contact could be established with the Christians in the East (Indians) so as to enter into alliance with them in the fight against the Saracens and other enemies of Christ. Relying on this Royal Charter as his “*instrumentum laboris*” for writing this Bull, he fell into the same historical loophole just like king Afonso V did on the issue of the strangeness of the knowledge of the lands and peoples of West Africa among Europeans in the fifteenth century. In view of this, Nicholas V affirmed:

Moreover, since some time ago, it had come to the knowledge of the said Prince that never, or at least not within the memory of men, had it been customary to sail on this ocean sea toward the southern and eastern shores, and that it was so unknown to us Westerners that we had no certain knowledge of the peoples of those parts, believing that he would best perform his duty to God in this matter, if by his effort and industry that

Privilegiorum, pp. 70-73; (M.H.), XII, pp. 72-79; Brasio, (M.M.A.), Vol. I, pp. 277-286; Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae, Vol. I, pp. 31-34. A complete English translation of this Bull is found in: Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 21-26.

²⁴⁰ Nicholas V, “*Romanus Pontifex*,” ASV, Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 71r-71v; Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 21.

²⁴¹ The referred Royal Charter here is the one whose contents have been treated at the beginning of this chapter. See, *Carta de Privilegio ao Dom Henrique*, ANTT- Chancelaria de Dom Afonso V. Liv. 24, Fl. 61-61v.

sea might become navigable as far as to the Indians who are said to worship the name of Christ, and that thus he might be able to enter into relation with them, and to incite them to aid the Christians against the Saracens and other such enemies of the faith, and might also be able forthwith to subdue certain gentile or pagan peoples living between, who are entirely free from infection by the sect of the most impious Mahomet, and to preach and cause to be preached to them the unknown but most sacred Name of Christ.²⁴²

This papal document also recalled the many military conquest which Prince Henry the Navigator and his men had long undertaken in Africa and regretted the huge losses in human and material wealth he suffered in the course of his expeditions in Africa. It recognised and confirmed that through such military actions taken by Prince Henry against the natives of the Gulf of Guinea, many harbours, islands and seas in both the provinces of Guinea and Senegal are in the possession of Prince Henry the Navigator and his kingdom. This section of Romanus Pontifex also confirmed the truth in the behaviours of Prince Henry the Navigator and his men who, using their military prowess in the slave-raids of 1444 as we witnessed above, attacked the innocent natives of West Africa and forcefully took at once 235 of them into captives which they auctioned as slaves in the great event of June 1444 in Portugal.

It is very surprising here, that the pope learnt of such criminal slave raiding conducted by Prince Henry and his men in West Africa and yet he did not see anything wrong in that action of Prince Henry as well as in the first slave auctioning of 1444 in Portugal. Instead, he approved of it and encouraged it, and even went as far as expressing hope that if Prince Henry continued to forcefully catch such innocent civilians and deprive them of their freedom as humans just for his selfish economic aggrandizement, they might be converted to the Christian faith. This attitude of Nicholas V here is in the opinion of a Jesuit Priest Michael Stogre, S.J, an introduction of force rather than a peaceful means of evangelization. According to him: “Romanus Pontifex introduced the concept of military force rather than peaceful evangelization for missionary purposes and that it applied to lands that had never previously been subjected to Christian ownership subsequently leading to brutal dispossession and enslavement of the indigenous population.”²⁴³ This method of forcefully catching the natives of West Africa, turning them into slaves by auctioning in order to convert them to the Christian faith had led a German historian Jörg Fisch to conclude that the pope placed enslavement of Black Africans before their conversion in this papal document. This view was maintained by Fisch when he observed: “The Portuguese have acquired slaves in Guinea. Many of

²⁴² Nicholas V, “Romanus Pontifex,” ASV, Reg, Vat. 405, Fls. 71v-72r; ANTT- Bulas, maco. 7, No. 29; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 21-22; Brasio, (M.M.A.), p. 278.

²⁴³ Stogre, “That the World May Believe,” p. 65.

them have already become Christians, there is still hope for the conversion of others. Enslavement was therefore placed before conversion.”²⁴⁴ This expression of hope of conversion in this manner and the approval of this unjust manner of acquiring innocent Black African natives as slaves by Prince Henry the Navigator was praised and encouraged in this Bull when pope Nicholas V unmistakably wrote:

strengthened, however always by the Royal authority, he has not ceased for twenty five years past to send almost yearly an army of the peoples of the said kingdom, with the greatest labour, danger and expense, in very swift ships of this kind had explored and taken possession of very many harbours, islands and seas, they at length came to the province of Guinea, and having taken possession of some islands, harbours and sea adjacent to that province, sailing farther they came to the mouth of a certain great river commonly supposed to be the Nile, and war was waged for some years against the peoples of those parts in the name of the said king Alfonso and of the Infante, and in it very many islands in that neighbourhood were subdued and peacefully possessed together with the adjacent sea. Thence also many Guinea-men and other Negroes, taken by force, and some by barter of unprohibited articles, or by other lawful contract of purchase have been sent to the said kingdom. A large number of these have been converted to the Catholic faith, and it is hoped, by the help of divine mercy, that if such progress be continued with them, either those peoples will be converted to the faith or at least the souls of many of them will be gained for Christ.²⁴⁵

And refusing to care for the protection and well-being of those Black Africans enslaved by Prince Henry the Navigator, as well as feeling less-concerned with those of them, who were slaughtered while refusing to be taken as slaves by the men of Prince Henry, the pope, as this document demonstrated, was rather concerned with the protection of the victimizers themselves and regretted the loss in human and material goods which Prince Henry suffered in the course of his slave-raids in Guinea. And to prevent any further losses as well as to avoid any incursion in the conquered territories now belonging to Prince Henry the Navigator and the king of Portugal, Nicholas V acknowledged and at the same time gave authority to the prohibitions made by the king of Portugal in the said Royal Charter of 1443 against any external interference in those territories already acquired by them through the use of force. He allayed fears that such external interference might bring aids to the natives of the conquered regions of Guinea in form of supplying of iron, wooden materials for construction of

²⁴⁴ Fisch, *Die europäische Expansion und das Völkerrecht*, p. 207.

²⁴⁵ Nicholas V, “*Romanus Pontifex*,” ASV, Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 72r; ANIT- Liv. dos Mestrados, Fl. 165; Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 22; Raiswell, *The Historical Encyclopaedia of World Slavery*, p. 469.

weapons for use in defence of their lives and properties.²⁴⁶ In modern parlance, he called for a military blockade and sanctions against the Black Africans in these regions of Guinea, so that by means of trade relations with other foreigners, they could not obtain any weaponry to defend themselves against their unjust Portuguese aggressors. And to achieve this aim, the pope banned all other Christian kings and their subjects from trading and sailing on the rivers and seas of this province of Guinea already in the possession of Prince Henry and his kingdom. And by so doing, he confirmed the Royal letter of 1443 made to Prince Henry, authorising the Prince and his military Order of Christ to take into their possession the entire Africa for the kingdom of Portugal. All these were confirmed by pope Nicholas V when he decreed:

Fearing lest strangers induced by covetousness should sail to those parts... either for the sake of gain or through malice, carry or transmit iron, arms, wood used for construction, and other things and goods prohibited to be carried to infidels or should teach those infidels the art of navigation, whereby they would become more powerful and obstinate enemies of the king and the Prince, and the prosecution of this enterprise would either be hindered or would perhaps entirely fail, not without great offence to God and great reproach to all Christianity. To prevent this and to conserve their right of possession, under certain most severe penalties then expressed, have prohibited and in general had ordained that none, unless with their sailors and ships and on payment of a certain tribute and with an express licence previously obtained from the said king, should presume to sail to the said provinces or to trade in their ports or to fish in their sea.²⁴⁷

In recognition of this right of ownership over the Western part of Africa given to Portugal, Nicholas V reiterated the authenticity and validity of the previous grants made to Portugal as contained in his preceding Bull *Dum Diversas*. As we saw above, this document authorized Portugal once again to deal with the innocent natives of West African Guinea and to handle them in the same manner in which the Saracens of North African Morocco were handled, especially to reduce them to perpetual slavery as well as to dispossess them of all their possessions and lands. He quoted word for word all that contained in his previous document and added more strength and force to them with the effect that the entire Africa together with her possessions belonged to and will continue to belong to king Alfonso V and Prince Henry the Navigator and to

²⁴⁶ The fears allayed by the pope here rested on the prohibitions of the sale of arms to Saracens and other unbelievers in Christ made already at the Lateran Council in 1179, which placed a ban on the sale of many items such as firearms, irons and wooden materials for construction of ships or dangerous weapons to be used against the entire Christendom. Later in history, some of the popes of the Church even prohibited the Christian kings and their kingdoms from engaging in any business transaction with unbelievers in Christ. For reference to this prohibitions, see, Decretal Gregor IX, Lib. V. Tit. VI, Cc. 6, 11, 12 and 17.

²⁴⁷ Nicholas V, "Romanus Pontifex," ASV, Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 72r-72v; ANTT- Bulas, maco. 7, No. 29; Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 22.

all their successors in perpetuity. These grants and powers to possess all the regions of West Africa and to reduce her sons and daughters to perpetual enslavement were made when the pope unmistakably and authoritatively stated:

We, therefore weighing all and singular the premises with due meditation, and noting that since we had formerly by other letters of ours granted among other things free and ample faculty to the aforesaid king Alfonso to invade, search out, capture, vanquish and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ where so ever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit. By having secured the said faculty, the said king Alfonso, or by his authority, the aforesaid Prince, justly and lawfully has acquired and possessed, and do possess these Islands, lands, harbours and seas, and they do of right belong and pertain to the said king Alfonso and his successors, nor without any special license from king Alfonso and his successors themselves has any other even of the faithful of Christ been entitled hitherto, nor is he by any means now entitled lawfully to meddle therewith.²⁴⁸

In the light of the above citation, the historian and author M. Saunders was justified to say that: “In the Bull *Romanus Pontifex* of 1444, pope Nicholas V ceded the conquest and more importantly, granted a commercial monopoly of Atlantic Africa south of Cape Bojador to the Portuguese, who, assured of papal approval, proceeded to extend the slave trade ever further south along the Western coast of Africa.”²⁴⁹ The German historian Jörg Fisch blamed the attitude of the pope in connection with his failure to differentiate between Muslims and the pagans of Guinea whom the pope collectively branded “enemies of Christ” that deserved punishment with perpetual enslavement and deprivation of all their possessions and lands. The position of this historian is vividly seen when he remarked: “In this Bull, Portugal was granted exclusive rights in Africa. The pope praised the Portuguese for their attacks against Saracens and other infidels in Africa. There was no difference made between the action carried out against Saracens and other unbelievers.”²⁵⁰ Going a step further, Fisch identified in this Bull a glaring mistake made by the pope for not recognizing the rights of the native population of Guinea in decreeing that their fundamental rights as humans and that of owning movable and immovable possessions should be taken away from them. Thus according to him: “The complete disregard of possible rights of the inhabitants of those regions,

²⁴⁸ Nicholas V, “*Romanus Pontifex*,” ASV, Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 72v-73r; ANTT- Bulas, maco 7, No. 29; Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 23.

²⁴⁹ Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 35.

²⁵⁰ Fisch, *Die europäische Expansion und das Völkerrecht*, p. 206.

especially with regard to the international human rights is a breach of the respect to the rights of these people. The Bulls from 1455 to 1456 went further and granted the right to enslave the native population, a legacy which comes from the struggle against Islam.”²⁵¹

However, this legacy of depriving the pagan natives of West Africa of all rights, private possessions and loss of freedom is not just a legacy that comes from the hatred against Islam but also one that incorporated many other legacies in the past history of the Church such as the attitude of the Christian Church towards the Black African race since the patristic and medieval times. One notices in the above citation that the pope was really operating from the background of the aforesaid tradition. Without mentioning them by name, he adopted these traditions whole and entire and crowned all the legacies and anti-Blacks attitudes of the Church, which ranged from her viewing Black African race as an accursed race of Ham punished with blackness of skin-color and perpetual enslavement, as a barbarous and an inferior race of people, that is good for nothing and synonymous with sin and all sorts of abominations, and worst of all, to her viewing the Black Africans as children of the evil One, enemies of the Christian faith, whose existence in this life should be extinguished like a wild fire by the Christians etc. This is the tradition which pope Nicholas V was fostering and implementing in this Bull by decreeing in the above citation that the Black Africans should be invaded, raided, deprived of all possessions and be forcefully held by the Portuguese Christians as slaves in perpetuity.

Furthermore, in order to encourage king Afonso V and Prince Henry the more to continue with their dispossession of the lands and properties belonging to the native inhabitants of these West African regions, the pope assured them of his continuous supports and approvals. He recognized and confirmed all the previous faculties given in the past to the king and to Prince Henry to own and possess all the territories under her control and authority as lawfully made and possessed by the kingdom of Portugal. This came about, when the pope extended the right of ownership to both discovered and yet to be discovered territories beginning from Ceuta, Cape Bojador, Guinea and finally to the island of Não.²⁵² Commenting on this, Jörg Fisch noted as follows: “In the Bull *Romanus Pontifex* of 1455 the Portuguese were granted for the first time monopoly rights. The pope prohibited all other powers and their families to

²⁵¹ Ibid, p. 51.

²⁵² Cape Não according to the Venetian merchant and traveller Alvise da Cadamosto, was thus named by the European seamen and merchants who first discovered this island on the north Atlantic coast of Africa located on the southern part of Morocco. According to Cadamosto: “This cape has been called thus to this day and it was found always as the termination. Because, it was found that anyone who rounded it never returned, it was called 'capo de non' - who passes never returns.”(Chil passa, ritorna non). Cf. Crone, *Voyages of Cadamosto and other Documents*, p. 2.

conduct any activity in the Portuguese area. Portugal received exclusive rights from Cape Bojador to the whole of Guinea and beyond it, stretching to those southern coasts.”²⁵³ This was done so as to exclude the king of Castile (Spain) from making any further claim of rights of ownership of Africa. And by so doing, the pope decided the struggle to own Africa and to dominate the lucrative trade along the Western Coast of Africa in favour of king Alfonso V and his successors. This decision of the pope was distinctly made in the following words:

We, being very fully informed of all and singular the premises, do motu proprio, not at the instance of king Alfonso or the Infante, or on the petition of any other offered to us on their behalf in respect to this matter, and after mature deliberation, by Apostolic authority, and from certain knowledge, in the fullness of Apostolic powers, by the tenor of these presents, decree and declare that the aforesaid letters of faculty (the tenor whereof we wish to be considered as inserted word for word in these presents, with all and singular the clauses contained therein) are extended to Ceuta and to the aforementioned and all other acquisitions whatsoever, even those acquired before the date of the said letters of faculty, and to all those provinces, islands, harbours, and seas whatsoever, which hereafter, in the name of the said king Alfonso and of his successors and of the Infante, in those parts and the adjoining, and in the more distant and remote parts, can be acquired from the hands of infidels or pagans, and that they are comprehended under the said letters of faculty. And by force of those and of the present letters of faculty the acquisitions already made, and what hereafter shall happen to be acquired, after they shall have been acquired. We do by the tenor of these presents, decree and declare have pertained, and forever of right do belong and pertain to the aforesaid king and to his successors, and that the right of conquest which in the course of these letters we declare to be extended from the capes of Bojador and of Nao, as far as through all Guinea and beyond toward that southern shore, has belonged and pertained and forever of right belongs and pertains to the said king Alfonso and his successors and the Infante and not to any others.²⁵⁴

To show king Alfonso V and the Prince that he does not leave any stone unturned in supporting their ambition in Africa, Nicholas V went as far as bending the ecclesiastical laws prohibiting any form of business transactions with the so called arch-enemies of the Church - the Saracens, pagans as well as other unbelievers in Christ and thereby permitted the king of Portugal and

²⁵³ Fisch, *Die europäische Expansion und das Völkerrecht*, P. 48. Peter Russell bought the idea of Jörg Fisch as expressed above when he, with regard to the grants made to Portugal in this Bull observed: “The pope, using his temporal authority over the whole world, discovered or undiscovered...also granted to the Portuguese Crown full and unfettered rights to conquer all the lands, rulers and peoples to be found in Guinea and to enjoy full dominion over all the three.” See, Russell, “White Kings on Black Kings,” Portugal, Spain, Bk. XVI, p. 154.

²⁵⁴ Nicholas V, “Romanus Pontifex,” ASV, Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 73r-73v; ANTT- Bulas, maco. 7, No. 29; ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fl. 165; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 23-24.

Prince Henry to conduct such trade with them. This permission was made by the pope in the following words:

Moreover, since this is fitting in many ways for the perfecting of a work of this kind, we allow that the aforesaid king Alfonso and his successors and the Infante, and also the persons to whom they, or any one of them shall think that this work ought to be committed, may, according to the grant made to the said king John by Martin V, and another grant made also to king Edward of illustrious memory king of the said kingdoms, father of the said king Alfonso by Eugenius IV, make purchases and sales of any thing and goods whatsoever, as it shall seem fit with any Saracens and infidels in the said regions, and also may enter into any contracts, transact business, bargain, buy and negotiate and carry any commodities whatsoever to the places of those Saracens and infidels, provided they be not iron instruments, woods to be used for construction, cordage, ships or any kind of armour and may sale them to the said Saracens and infidels.²⁵⁵

Having granted and fulfilled the cardinal wishes and ambitions of king Alfonso V and Prince Henry the Navigator in Africa which include among others: to extend the Portuguese kingdom to Africa by way of conquests and colonisation as well as to gain monopolist control over the wealth and resources flowing in Africa, the pope now gave them and their kingdoms the right of spiritual powers which was an exclusively reserved papal powers and rights to establish Churches and organise missions in all the regions of Africa that are in their possession. This included among others, the power to select and send missionaries of their choice to the mission lands as well as to appoint bishops as shepherds of those overseas missions. This transfer of papal juridical powers to the kings of Portugal and their successors was clearly made when Nicholas V commanded that:

The same king Alfonso V, his successors and the Infante, in the provinces, islands and places already acquired and to be acquired by him, may found and cause to be founded and built any Churches, monasteries or other pious places whatsoever, and also may send over to them any ecclesiastical persons whatsoever, as volunteers, both secular and regulars of any of the mendicant Orders, and that those persons may abide there as long as they shall live, and hear confessions of all who live in the said parts or who come thither, and after the confessions have been heard, they may give due absolution in all cases, except those reserved to the aforesaid See, and enjoin salutary penance and also administer the ecclesiastical sacraments freely and lawfully. And this we allow and grant to Alfonso himself and his successors, the kings of Portugal who shall come afterwards and to the aforesaid Infante.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ Ibid. Cf. Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 24.

²⁵⁶ Nicholas V, "Romanus Pontifex," ASV, Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 73v-74r; ANTT- Bulas maco, 7, No. 29; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 24-25.

To supplement what was lacking (international character) in the binding force of the Royal Charter of 1443 which could not prevent foreign captains, merchants, travellers, kings and kingdoms from sailing on the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa for business transactions along the Gulf of Guinea, Nicholas V now made his full papal authority to bear on the limited powers of this Royal Charter and hereby raised it to an international law, binding on all Christian nations, kings, kingdoms and all Christian faithful, to the effect that none of them is allowed to go or caused to go into the Gulf of Guinea and beyond, without first and foremost getting approval from Prince Henry and the Portuguese Royal Crown. This international prohibition on the ecclesiastical level served in the hands of the kings of Portugal as a bulwark (as we shall see in the next section of this work) in preventing even the papal curia and other Christian nations and kings from sending missionaries into Africa even when Portugal was no longer in the position to supply missionaries in the areas, where they eventually opened ecclesiastical overseas missions 30 years after obtaining this privilege from pope Nicholas V. The raising of this Royal Charter of 1443 into an international law was made when the pope ordered:

And also by this perpetual edict of prohibition, we more strictly inhibit all and singular the faithful of Christ, ecclesiastics, seculars and regulars of whatsoever orders, in whatsoever part of the world they live, and of whatsoever state, degree, order, condition or pre-eminence they shall be, although endowed with Arch-episcopal, Episcopal, imperial, royal, queenly, ducal or any other greater ecclesiastical or worldly dignity, that they do not by any means presume to carry arms, iron, wood for construction, and other things prohibited by law from being in any way carried to the Saracens, to any of the provinces, islands, harbours, seas and places whatsoever, acquired or possessed in the name of king Afonso, or situated in this conquest or elsewhere, to the Saracens, infidels, or pagans. Or even without special license from the said king Afonso V and his successors and the Infante, to carry or cause to be carried merchandise and other things permitted by law, or to navigate or cause to be navigated those seas, or to fish in them, or to meddle with the provinces, islands, harbors, seas and places or nay of them, or to do anything by themselves or another, or others directly or indirectly by deed or counsel, or to offer any obstructions whereby the aforesaid king Afonso V and his successors and the Infante may be hindered from quietly enjoying their acquisitions and possessions, and prosecuting and carrying out this conquest.²⁵⁷

To ensure that these decrees and the grants which they contained are well secured and protected and shall not be tampered with in any manner and form, Nicholas V spelt out penalties in form of excommunication and interdict to be incurred by anyone or by a group of individuals who may dare to infringe on them in any manner in future. The words establishing these penalties are seen when he decreed:

²⁵⁷ Ibid. Cf. Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 25.

We decree that whosoever shall infringe these orders, besides the punishments pronounced by law against those who carry arms and other prohibited things to any of the Saracens, which we wish them to incur by so doing; if they be single persons, they shall incur the sentence of excommunication, if a community or corporation of a city, castle, village or place, that city or village shall be thereby subject to the interdict; and we decree further that transgressors, collectively or individually, shall not be absolved from the sentence of excommunication, nor be able to obtain the relaxation of this interdict, by Apostolic or any other authority, unless they shall first have made due satisfaction for their transgressions to Alfonso himself and his successors and to the Prince, or shall have amicably agreed with them thereupon.²⁵⁸

In order to make these penalties effective and binding on all, Nicholas V enjoined the bishops of Lisbon, Silves and Ceuta to enforce them into law and to pronounce this excommunication on all offenders during the celebration of the Holy Mass and on festive days of the Church, where a large community of believers had gathered for Divine worship. In the light of this, the pope said as follows:

We enjoin our venerable brothers the archbishop of Lisbon, and the bishops of Silves and Ceuta, that they as often as they be required on Sundays and other festival days in the Churches, while a large multitude of people shall assemble for Divine worship, do declare and denounce by Apostolic authority that those individuals or group of persons who have been proved to have incurred such sentences of excommunication and interdict, are excommunicated and interdicted, and have been and are involved in the other punishments aforesaid. And we decree that they shall also cause them to be denounced by others, and to be strictly avoided by all, till they shall have made satisfaction for or compromised their transgressions as aforesaid. Offenders are to be held in check by ecclesiastical censure, without regard to appeal, the Apostolic constitutions and ordinances and all other things whatsoever to the contrary notwithstanding.²⁵⁹

Finally, this document ended with a warning that no other ecclesiastical ordinary or authority should dare to alter or nullify any part of the grants and rights over Africa and Africans given to Portugal as contained in this papal document. Such nullifications and alterations, if there be any in foreseeable future according to this document, shall remain null and void. It went further to

²⁵⁸ Nicholas V, "Romanus Pontifex," ASV, Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 74r-74v; Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 25. The excuratory Instruments (Executoria) used by the Dom Jayme Archbishop of Lisbon and Dom Álvaro Bishop of Silves who were given the rights as Executors of this Bull in the See of Lisbon, is found in *Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo Lisboa*, in: ANTT- Coleção de Bullas, maco, 32, No. 10; João Martins da Silva Marques, *Descobrimentos Portuguesas (D.P.)*, Vol. I, Lisboa, 1944, p. 525; The original Letter of Execution of Romanus Pontifex in the See of Rome is found in ANTT- Bulas, maco, 32, No. 10; João Martins da Silva Marques, *Descobrimentos Portuguesas (D.P.)*, Vol. I, p. 523 & p. 540.

²⁵⁹ Nicholas V, "Romanus Pontifex," ASV, Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 74v; Davenport, *Ibid*, p. 25.

threaten with the wrath of God any one, who should attempt to tamper with the real words of this document and all that they contained. In emulation of the judgement delivered by Pontius Pilate, Nicholas V maintained that what he has decided over Africa in this papal document is, “Roma locuta est, causa finita” and that it will remain so forever and ever. This decision is made clearer when Nicholas V authoritatively warned:

But in order that the present letters, which have been issued by us of our certain knowledge and after mature deliberation thereupon, may not hereafter be impugned by anyone as fraudulent, secret, or void, and by the authority, knowledge and power aforementioned, we do likewise by these letters decree and declare that the said letters and what is contained therein cannot in any wise be impugned, or the effect thereof hindered or obstructed on account of any defect or nullity, not even from a defect of the ordinary or of any authority, or from any other defect, but that they shall be valid forever and shall obtain full authority. And if anyone by whatever authority, shall wittingly or unwittingly attempt anything inconsistent with these orders, we decree that his act shall be null and void... Therefore let no one infringe or with rash boldness contravene this our declaration, constitution, gift, grant, appropriation, decree, supplication, exhortation, injunction, inhibition, mandate, and will. But if anyone should presume to do so, be it known to him that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. Given at Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the eighth day of January, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord one thousand four hundred and fifty-four, and in the eighth year of our pontificate.²⁶⁰

In summa, with the words of this document and in the exercise of his authority as a pope to give nations to Christian kings, Nicholas V excluded the king of Spain completely from having any entitlement in Africa. And in this manner, Spain lost completely her supposed rights and interest to operate on the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa. As important as this document on the one hand might have been, it made a land-mark achievement as expected by the Crown in Portugal by cladding the Royal Charter of 1443 with the robe of an international law prohibiting other Christian kings and their subjects from interference in the Portuguese's Africa. That being the case, the whole of Africa and other territories yet to be discovered were made an exclusive property and right of Prince Henry the Navigator and king Alfonso V of Portugal and their successors in perpetuity. But on the other hand, there were also a good number of issues raised by Nicholas V in this Bull, which needed to be given a considerable attention in this work. On the issue of the role of the Catholic Church and her leadership in the Atlantic enslavement of Black Africans, Nicholas V really involved and implicated the Church to a level that can no longer be hidden from the evidence of historical truth. In his bid to place the

²⁶⁰ Nicholas V, “Romanus Pontifex,” ASV, Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 74v-75r; ANTT- Bulas, maco. 7, No, 29; (M.H.), XII, p. 79; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 25-26.

maritime politico-economic expansion of Portugal under papal authority and protection, the pope conceived of this Bull as a crusading Bull so as to enable Prince Henry the Navigator and the Crown of Portugal to achieve the goal of their ventures in Africa. And by so doing, he adjudged the military raids of the Portuguese conducted with a view to take Black Africans as war prisoners and later to be turned into slaves in Portugal as a just war. With the effect of this, the pope has sanctioned the use of the just war theory of St. Thomas Aquinas and other Scholastics as a just means of acquiring slaves and ipso facto, he established a justified condition for the enslavement of Black Africans as witnessed during the Transatlantic slave trade.

His re-introduction of the use of military force in the service of these interests of Prince Henry and the Crown of Portugal in Africa is very questionable. From the evidence of historical facts as one can see in the first section of this work, Prince Henry had as far back as 1445 dropped the idea of military cum religious Crusade as a means of acquiring slaves from West Africa for sales in Portugal and had settled for a peaceful economic negotiations with the native chiefs of Senegambia. In view of this, the historian of Iberian maritime history M. Saunders observed with certainty that the period of Portuguese military raid in Africa was brief. According to him: "The period in which the Portuguese relied upon warfare for the majority of their Black slaves was actually very brief, no more than a few years in the 1440s."²⁶¹ This decision made to drop the idea of a religious Crusade in West Africa by Prince Henry the Navigator came about after recording a heavy loss in humans during the slave raids of 1445 as we showed in the first section of this work. Attesting to this fact, Peter Russell maintained that the crusading undertone which the pope gave to this Bull had been dropped ten years ago before the writing of this Bull. Thus in his own words, Russell confirmed that: "Since 1444, as a result of defeats suffered by the soldiers and sailors aboard the caravels at the hands of the Black warriors of Senegambia, Prince Henry had decreed that crusading there was to be replaced by peaceful trading."²⁶² And to achieve this motive, Prince Henry appointed his chief negotiator Gomes Pirés to sue for peace with the local chiefs and natives of the said regions with the assurance that the Portuguese came only to make a peaceful trading transaction with them. Through this means, they were able to obtain permission from the natives of Arguin to stay in the place where they latter built a fortress in 1448 for the control of the trade on African products. In the words of the Venetian traveller and merchant Cadamosto, who visited Arguin in 1455: "The lord Infante (Prince Henry) therefore caused a castle to

²⁶¹ Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 5

²⁶² Russell, "White Kings on Black Kings," *Portugal, Spain*, Bk. XVI, pp. 154-155.

be built on this island to protect the trade forever.”²⁶³ If all this were to be taken as historical facts, why then did pope Nicholas V re-introduce the idea of a religious Crusade and the use of military raids (for the purpose of catching slaves for sales) into this Portuguese business in Africa almost ten years after the chief proprietor and patron of this trade (Prince Henry) had settled for a peaceful trade with the natives of the said region of West Africa? This leaves no one in doubt that the aforesaid pope in his two Bulls considered above, encouraged this Atlantic slave trade beyond the level and manner in which it was proposed and carried out by Prince Henry the Navigator and the various kings of Portugal involved in the so called discovery of West Africa.

Also, we noticed that in *Romanus Pontifex*, Nicholas V gave the king of Portugal and Prince Henry permission to build Churches and to send missionaries into the Gulf of Guinea for the conversion of the pagans of this region as a justification for his issuance of this Bull. But what he wished to be done here, did not in any way correspond with the intentions of both king Alfonso V and Prince Henry the Navigator. And to prove to the pope that the idea of a religious Crusade, which prominently featured in this Bull was far removed from their intentions, there was no historical trace of evangelizing missions undertaken in West Africa throughout the life time of both Prince Henry (+1460) and king Alfonso V (+1481) as the principal recipients of this Bull. That means from 1454 to 1481, that is, 27 years after obtaining this mandate that purported to be an apostolic mandate for the spread of the Gospel in the West African Atlantic, no Churches were built and not a single soul was saved on the West African soil either by baptism or by conversion. Those who eventually received baptism were only slaves meant for shipment to Europe in the days of these major role players in the Atlantic slave trade. It was only during the reign of king John II (*1455, reigned 1481-1495), who succeeded Alfonso V that an attempt to evangelize West Africa was ever made. Peter Russell gave credence to this fact when he wrote: “As for attempts at evangelization in Guinea, all the evidence suggests that until John II's time, this was not really attempted at all, despite assurances to Rome that the work was proceeding apace. It was John II, who for the first time seriously set about trying to give some semblance of reality to the Portuguese commitment.”²⁶⁴ In other words, the inclusion of evangelization of Black Africans in this Bull therefore served only as a deceptive means aimed at confusing its readers, which actually had nothing to do either with the intentions of the principal

²⁶³ Crone, *Voyages of Cadamosto*, p. 17. For further references to this peaceful negotiation by Gomes Pirés and the building of the Portuguese first trade fortress on the island of Arguin, see, *Alvise Cadamosto, Le Navigazioni Atlantiche*, edited by T. G. Leporace, Vol. V, Rome 1966, p. 26; Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 5.

²⁶⁴ Russell, “White Kings on Black Kings,” *Ibid*, p. 155.

recipients of the numerous grants contained in this Bull or with that of its guarantor.

Furthermore, Nicholas V also brought in the method of military occupation and colonization of Black Africans in this Bull when he commanded the kings and princes of Portugal and their successors to occupy the lands and properties belonging to the Black Africans and to dispossess them of all they possessed and to make them their own. The question raised by this attitude of Nicholas V here is: Was this papal command necessary at all? We recall here that the erection of the Portuguese trade fortress in 1448 in Arguin was a product of a peaceful negotiation and permission to stay which was granted to the Portuguese by the local chiefs and people of Senegambia. And six years after erecting this fortress, this papal document under examination here was issued. What then is the rationale behind the command given by pope Nicholas V to occupy militarily the lands of the native population and to dispossess them of all that they had? Did the pope want to prove to history that he preferred the use of force to peaceful means in human relations? One is left here only with the option to ask this basic but very simple question: Did the pope really know what he was actually writing about and authorizing in this Bull? And from the look of things as the above shows, it is to say the least that he was completely out of touch with the actual situation of things on grounds in West Africa while issuing this Bull. But even at this point, his action herein has some implications. For instance, by commanding Prince Henry and the kings of Portugal to forcefully take away the lands of the poor and innocent natives of West Africa and their possessions and to occupy them, means that he adjudged the aforesaid natives in this Bull as those, who have no right to self-dominion and to own private possessions even in their own territories. In his judgement here, he allowed himself to be guided by two theories namely: Aristotelian theory of natural slavery, whereby the pope adjudged the said natives of West Africa to fall into the category of slaves of nature (*physei doulos*) as propagated by Aristotle and further taken up by St. Aquinas and the theologians of the School of Salamanca in Spain as we saw in section two of this work. And secondly, the pope was guided by the theory of papal universal authority, whereby he merely put into practice in this Bull the powers given to the popes by the papalist theologians and canonists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with an extreme view of papal authority such as Giles of Rome, cardinal Hostiensis etc., who as we saw in the first chapter of this section of our work, maintained that the pope has unrestricted powers and authority to take off the lands and private possessions of non-Christians and give them to the Catholic kings of his choice. The justification given by the aforesaid theologians for this kind of teaching is that the natives concerned in this Bull under discussion, are not Christians.

Over and above all this, one can also argue in the action of pope Nicholas V concerning the inhabitants of West Africa in this Bull that even if he lost touch with the actual situations of things going on in West Africa, it is more likely true that he knew about the flow of human cargoes of Black African origin crossing the Atlantic Waters annually and entering into Europe via Portugal. From 1443, when king Alfonso V granted Prince Henry a monopoly right of the trade in regions of Guinea, a good number of natives of West Africa were brought into Portugal as captives. The Royal chronicler Gomes Azurara, who was in the habit of shielding his master Prince Henry the Navigator from the guilt of the Atlantic slave trade reduced drastically the number of Black African slaves being brought into Portugal during the life time of his master. In view of this, he recorded that in Prince Henry's life time, up to the year 1448, only 927 Black African slaves were brought into Portugal.²⁶⁵ But from another historical source, there are facts and figures showing that more Black African captives were trooping into Portugal as slaves during the life time of the Prince more than Azurara would like us to know. For instance, the Venetian merchant and adventurer, who travelled to the West African island of Arguin for this trade in 1448 and participated in it, had to write in his memos that: "Every year, the Portuguese carry away from Arguin a thousand slaves."²⁶⁶ And corroborating this observation made by Cadamosto, a Portuguese historian Godinho Magalhaes confessed that in the 1450s, between 1000-2000 slaves were shipped into Portugal per annum from West Africa.²⁶⁷ Working with all these data, Peter Russell was then correct to remark that: "It can very tentatively be concluded that for the whole of the Henrican period, some 15,000 to 20,000 Black Africans were imported into Portugal as slaves on the Prince's behalf or under licence from him."²⁶⁸ All this happened before pope Nicholas V issued this papal Bull under discussion here. Then the very perturbing question that arises here is: Did pope Nicholas V know all this? Was he aware of the fact that 5% profit per capita of every Black African captive brought into Portugal as slave was flowing into the private pockets of Prince Henry whom he continued to praise in this Bull as a delighted son of the Church? Did he know that 20% profit per capita of these slaves was cashed by the knighted members of the military Order of Christ who were at the helm of affairs of the slave raids made in West Africa? Is there any intrinsic connection between the spread of the Gospel message of Christ and such blood money accruing from the slaves? What these statistics succeed to establish here is that ever before issuing this

²⁶⁵ Azurara, *Chronicle of the Conquest of Guinea*, chpt. II, p. 288; (M.H.), VIII, No. 62; Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 258.

²⁶⁶ Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto*, p. 18.

²⁶⁷ Magalhaes, *Documentos sobre a Expansão Portuguesa*, Vol. V, p. 157.

²⁶⁸ Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 258.

Bull, the pope knew all this, he also knew that the Atlantic slave trade had begun.²⁶⁹ Why didn't he then condemn it rather than approve of it? Judging from the point of view of a statement made by Kenneth Setton, who described the papacy in the medieval time as “the conscience of Europe,”²⁷⁰ one is wont to conclude here that the papacy represented at that time by Nicholas V really failed to be a good conscience to Europe and particularly to Portugal represented by king Alfonso V and Prince Henry the Navigator in this regard. In the light of this failure, one should not blame Peter Russell, when he considered pope Nicholas V as the very one, who led Prince Henry to get himself entangled on a large scale with the dehumanising enterprise of the slave trade. In his own words, Russell said: “It would have been impossible for a Prince of his standing, and with his highly publicized dedication to religious values, to have become involved in the slave trade in a major way without the ideological support and the authority of the Roman Curia.”²⁷¹ Prince Henry undoubtedly was propelled by the quest for fame and wealth and this landed him into doing things which are irreconcilable with his status as the Grandmaster and governor of a highly rated military Order of Christ. As implied by Russell in the above citation, it is undeniably true that Prince Henry received a serious boost for his deep involvement in the inhuman trade on slaves of Black African origin from his mentor - pope Nicholas V. And of course, it was a type that was not easy to be resisted by a fame and wealth-thirsty-prince like Prince Henry the Navigator. And by so doing, pope Nicholas V chose to write his name wrongly on the sand of history as the pope that not only supported the Atlantic slave trade but also commanded Prince Henry and king Alfonso V of Portugal to force Black Africans into perpetual enslavement on the large scale witnessed during the Transatlantic slave trade. But the question now begging for an answer is: Was he the only pope of the Church that did so? The answer to this question would be found in the brief

²⁶⁹ Part of the profits (5% tax and 20% tax per capita on all goods including Black African slaves) made by the Portuguese in the traffic on Black African captives upon arrival in Portugal was made an exclusive rights of both Prince Henry the Navigator and the members of his military Order of Christ as authorized by the king of Portugal in the Royal Charters of 1443 and 1449 respectively. These Royal Charters containing this monetary allotment to the Prince and the members of the Order of Christ were presented to pope Nicholas V by Prince Henry before issuing his two Bulls considered above which approved of all these grants made to the Prince and the said military Order. Also the information that Black Africans were been captured and sent to Portugal as slaves was made known to the pope as contained in the said Royal Charters which he quoted word for word in his Bull “Romanus Pontifex” seen above. From this point of view, it is therefore not an exaggeration to claim that the pope was in the knowledge of these facts and therefore did not act in ignorance while making all the grants to the king of Portugal and Prince Henry in the said Bull under discussion here.

²⁷⁰ Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571*, Vol. II, p. 46

²⁷¹ Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator'*, p. 251.

consideration of the pontificates of his immediate successors up to the sixteenth century in the next chapter.

4. Immediate Successors of Pope Nicholas V and Enslavement of Black Africans (1456-1514)

4.1 Brief Introduction

Chapter three of this section of our work has led us to know the official position of the Catholic Church under the pontificate of pope Nicholas V on the issue of the Church's support and involvement in the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans. The two Bulls of pope Nicholas V treated in the preceding chapter left no one in doubts to believe that pope Nicholas V stood fully behind the business ventures of Prince Henry the Navigator and king Alfonso V of Portugal. This present chapter is an attempt made to provide answer to the basic questions raised in the concluding part of chapter three above such as: Was pope Nicholas V “a lone ranger” in the issue of involvement of the Catholic Church in the enslavement of Black Africans? In decreeing that Black Africans should be forcefully led into slavery and be held in a perpetual enslavement by the Portuguese, did he act in his name, or in the name of the Catholic Church which he represented as its Head? How best can one understand his attitude manifested in his two Bulls on the issue under discussion: Is it to be taken as a binding Catholic Church-standing that should be carried on by other popes or as an individual opinion on this matter that could be altered by other popes of the Church? How did his immediate successors confront this issue during their pontificates as popes of the Catholic Church? These are the basic questions that should guide us in this investigation. And to be able to carry out this investigation, this chapter intends to look into the Bulls written during the pontificates of the immediate successors of pope Nicholas V on the issue of papal support given to the Portuguese Crown in her politico-economic quest in Africa. That means precisely, to know the handling of the issue of Black African enslavement during the pontificates of popes Callixtus III, Sixtus IV, Alexander VI and Leo X respectively.

4.2 The Bull “Inter Caetera” of Pope Callixtus III and the Enslavement of Black Africans

Pope Callixtus III was the immediate successor of pope Nicholas V. He was born on December 31, 1378 in La Torreta - a region that formerly belonged to the kingdom of Valencia and presently located in modern Spain. His original name was Alfonso de Borja. He started his early career as a jurist and as a professor of law at the university of Lérida. Latter, he was appointed to serve as a special adviser to king Alfonso V of Aragon and he represented the Crown of Aragon in the Council of Basel (1431-1439). In 1429, pope Martin V appointed him bishop of the wealthy diocese of Valencia and on May 2, 1444, he was created a cardinal by pope Eugene IV. In the conclave that gathered in Rome after the death of Nicholas V in 1455, he was elected a pope to succeed Nicholas V as a compromise candidate on April 8, 1455 at the age of 76. His three years long-lasting pontificate was unfortunately marred with nepotism. And as a nepotist pope, he created two of his nephews cardinals in 1456 namely: Luis Juan de Mila and Rodrigo de Borgia at a young age of twenty years, one of whom (Rodrigo de Borgia) later became pope Alexander VI. He died in Rome on August 6, 1458 at the age of 79 years.²⁷²

Just a year after his enthronement as pope, Callixtus issued the Bull “Inter Caetera” on March 13, 1456 to the Crown in Portugal at the request of Prince Henry and king Alfonso V of Portugal. This Bull was necessitated by the request made by Prince Henry the Navigator, who in a bid to compensate his military Order of Christ for sponsoring the expeditions and discovery of the Atlantic Coasts of Guinea obtained for this Order of Christ a Royal Charter from his nephew - king Alfonso V of Portugal. This Royal Charter, titled “Doação da Administração Espiritual da Guiné à Ordem de Cristo” (Donation of the Spiritual Administration of Guinea to the Order of Christ) which was issued on June 7, 1454 granted to Prince Henry the Navigator and his military Order of Christ the powers of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and control over all the overseas territories of Portugal beginning from Cape Bojador, Guinea, Nubia, Não up to the Eastern regions.

In the introductory part of this Royal Charter, king Alfonso V showered praises on this Order of Christ, which under the leadership of Prince Henry had extended its boundary to many lands and had wrought many land-mark

²⁷² For further readings on Pope Callixtus III, see the following: Christopher Hibbert, *The Borgias and Their Enemies, 1431-1519*, 2008, p. 11; Artaud de Montor, ed. *The Lives and Times of the Popes*, Vol. 4, 1911, p. 190ff; John Laux, *Church History: History of the Catholic Church to 1940*, New York 1930, pp. 412-413; Marthaler, ed. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, pp. 881-882; Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 2, pp. 315-495.

achievements in the areas of discoveries made and places conquered and brought under the powers of the kingdom of Portugal. In this shower of praises, this Royal Charter reads:

King Afonso, by the grace of God, the king of Portugal and the Algarve, and lord of Ceuta. To all, who get this letter, we want them to understand that we know that the knights of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which had been established in our kingdom by divine providence, had been in our days so virtuous and guided by the very illustrious Prince Henry, my very esteemed and beloved uncle, who has worked hard in ensuring that the said Order improved in the area of divine worship and has experienced spiritual growth; and in addition, the said Order under him has surely experienced significant improvement in worldly things, without which, the spirituality and military discipline acquired by his pious and religious will, would not have been able to be preserved, so that the Order of knights has grown so much that it goes far beyond its old boundaries, and that through the unique wisdom and the wonderful commitment of the said Prince Henry, which he has once again proved by the many fruitful islands, which he has recently taken into his possessions.²⁷³

Continuing, king Alfonso V narrated to the pope the many feats brought to his kingdom through the courage and efforts of Prince Henry and how with the military and financial support given by his kingdom many lands and islands had been conquered with the intention of bringing the barbaric natives of those lands under his subjection and under the powers of the Holy Church of God. We notice in this request made by king Alfonso V below, the cunning way through which he enticed the new pope to grant his wishes in the new Portuguese territories in Africa. This enticement consisted in reminding the pope that the discovery of the new territories in Africa was made both in the interest of the holy Church of God under the powers of the pope and of the Christian kingdom of Portugal under the authority of the king of Portugal. And this implies, an extension of the universal authority of the pope into the newly discovered areas as well as an extension of the temporal authority of the king of Portugal into the newly annexed regions of Africa. And this was exactly the politics being played by both the Crown in Portugal and the renaissance papacy since the beginning of the Portuguese conquest and discovery of the Western Atlantic Coasts of Africa in 1418. And this was the idea that the king is now reminding the new pope Callixtus III to continue to foster in this Royal Charter. It was based on this motive that the king now asked the pope to give

²⁷³ Dom Afonso V, "Doação da Administração Espiritual da Guiné à Ordem de Cristo, ANTT-Ordem de Cristo, Cod. 235 (Livro das Escrituras da Ordem de Cristo), Fls. 12-12v; BNL-Ms. 737 (F.G.), Fl. 20. See the Portuguese copy of this Royal Charter in Appendix C, No. 6 in this Book. See also Printed copies of this Royal Charter in: Brasio, (M.M.A.), Vol. I, No. 43, pp. 274-276; (M.H.), XII, p. 5.

his approval to the realisation of this goal and ambition in Africa. In the light of this ambition, this Royal document further reads as follows:

...the said Prince Henry, a man of many virtues and distinguished by unique talent and moved by effective divine grace, led by our authority conquered the islands of Guinea, Nubia and Ethiopia, with the intention of bringing these territories under the powers of the Holy Church of God and under the power of my obedience together with their inhabitants, those poor barbarians, to which no Christian had ever dared to enter into their land, either by the waters or on land. This enterprise was certainly not without the help of our Lord and God and it was wonderful in our eyes.²⁷⁴

And considering the huge sum of money which these expeditions and discoveries had taken the military Order of Christ, the king decided as compensation for their financial involvement in these ventures, to grant the members of this Order the right of spiritual jurisdiction over all lands and islands discovered and those that are yet to be discovered by this Order of Christ beginning from Cape Bojador, Guinea, Nubia, Ethiopia up to the Eastern hemisphere (India). In this decision king Alfonso V said:

If we put into consideration the high expenses which the said Order of Christ has made and how they began and carried out the said conquests through their deep-rooted devotion in words and in the divine works, it is very reasonable to us that the said Order deserves to be granted spiritual powers over the conquered territories in overseas. Therefore we want to fulfill our pledge to the Almighty God, the Lord over the enemies, the Lord of victories, from whose hand we received the principality and this latest victory, and so we are willing and we authorize, as we are able to do in accordance with our rights, that the said Order of Jesus Christ through the said Prince and all the administrators who might come after him, might be given the whole spiritual powers and jurisdiction of those beaches, coasts and islands and all those conquered regions as well as yet to be conquered territories, beginning from Gazulla, Guinea, Nubia, Ethiopia and whatsoever other names they might be called in future. They are to be administered in the same manner, in which this spiritual power is being exercised in Tomar, and under the authority of the Grand prior of the said Order.²⁷⁵

This document ended with the authorization of the military Order of Christ to organise mission and appoint preachers and missionaries to be sent on mission to all the overseas territories under the authority of the king of Portugal. The king pleaded with the pope to recognise the concessions he made to Prince Henry and the military Order of Christ in this Royal document by means of appending his pontifical and Apostolic authority on it so as to upgrade it to a

²⁷⁴ Ibid; Beazley, *Prince Henry the Navigator*, pp. 303-304.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. Cf. ANTT- *Ordem de Cristo*, Cod. 235, Fl. 12v; Brasio, (M.M.A.), p. 275; Caetano de Sousa, *Provas da Historia da Casa Real Portuguesa*, p. 445.

status of a papal Bull with an international binding force that would be respected and obeyed by all other European Christian kings, princes, merchants and their representatives. In the words of the king, this document pleaded as follows:

And the said Order of Christ may provide for the subjugated peoples preachers and directors, who will administer the Church's sacraments unto them. And in order to make this arrangement easier for the approval of the Holy Father, I want the matter to be in itself honorable and pious, so that it should be given approval without much pleading, because it can justly be arranged and without harming one another. It is our pleasure however to inform the Holy Father of our arrangement and approval in advance, and humbly beg His Holiness, that He might grant all this to the said Order. And to guarantee the right of the said Order of Christ, we command that our letter containing our plan, approval, will, and decision be handed over to the said Prince. It was undersigned by us and stamped with our leaden seal, so that it will remain in perpetual memory and validity. Given in the city of Lisbon, on the 7th day of June. Gonçalo Anes issued it in the year 1454 after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.²⁷⁶

This Royal Brief was actually presented to pope Callixtus III in 1456 by king Alfonso V's chief legal procurator. The positive treatment and consideration of this Royal Brief by the pope gave birth to the issuance of the Bull "Inter Caetera" of 1456. In its importance, this Bull made two main decisions in the history of the Portuguese economic and political interests in Africa. In the first place, it unreservedly confirmed for the Portuguese Crown all the rights given to it by pope Nicholas V in 1452 and 1454 respectively. And secondly, it granted the new requests made by king Alfonso V and Prince Henry in the Royal Charter of 1454. And in the words of Frances Davenport, this Bull: "Conferred upon the Portuguese military Order of Christ, of which Prince Henry was governor, the spiritualities in all the lands acquired and yet to be acquired, from Capes Bojador and Nam through the whole of Guinea and beyond its southern shore as far as to the Indians."²⁷⁷

In the introduction to this Bull, pope Callixtus III saw it as an Apostolic duty to defend, protect as well as to uphold those grants lawfully made to the Christian kings and princes through the Apostolic authority, so that without any doubts they might possess everlasting validity. In pursuance of this intention, pope Callixtus III wrote:

Callixtus, bishop, servant of the servants of God. For an abiding memorial. Among other works, which, by the merciful dispensation of Providence, it is incumbent upon us to

²⁷⁶ Dom Afonso V, *Ibid*; BNL-Ms. 737 (F.G.), Fl. 20; Brasio, (M.M.A.), p. 276; Caetano de Sousa, *Provas da Historia da Casa Real Portugueza*, p. 446; (M.H.), XII, pp. 5-6.

²⁷⁷ Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 27.

accomplish, we are rendered deeply solicitous at heart with respect to this, that in all places and especially in those bordering upon the Saracens, divine worship may flourish to the praise and glory of Almighty God and the exalting of the Christian faith, and may obtain continual increase, and that by means of Apostolic protection we may establish those grants to kings and Princes, justly made by our predecessors the Roman Pontiffs, and based on legitimate grounds, so that through the removal of all doubts they may possess perpetual validity. Indeed a short while ago pope Nicholas V of happy memory, our predecessor, granted letters of the following tenor...²⁷⁸

What directly follows after this introduction is the insertion (word for word) of the entire content of the papal Bull “Romanus Pontifex” of Nicholas V. Such action of the pope here does not leave any one in doubts any longer to believe that in this Bull, he will toe the path of his predecessor in supporting the business monopoly of the Portuguese Crown in Africa. And having done that the pope proceeded to express the full wishes and expectations of king Alfonso V, which he requested the pope to fulfil in this Bull. These wishes as expressed by king Alfonso V included among others: to be granted the right forever to own Africa purportedly conquered with powerful hands and removed from the hands of the Saracens; to be granted an Apostolic confirmation of the content of the grants made to him and his kingdom in perpetuity by Nicholas V in 1454 to have an overall rights of possession, enslaving and control over Africa and Africans; and to grant ecclesiastical powers of jurisdiction in Guinea and other places yet to be discovered to the military Order of Christ, by whose financial support the discoveries in Africa had been made. All these Royal requests are stated in this Bull as follows:

Since, however, as has been reported to us on behalf of the aforesaid king Alfonso and Prince Henry, they are extremely eager that ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the said solitary islands, lands, harbours and places, situated in the ocean toward the southern shore in Guinea, which the said Prince withdrew with mailed hand from the hands of the Saracens, and conquered for the Christian religion, as is stated, may be granted forever by the Apostolic See to the aforesaid Order of Jesus Christ, by the support of whose revenues the said Prince is asserted to have made this conquest, and that the declaration, constitution, gift, grant, appropriation, decree, entreaty, exhortation, injunction, inhibition, mandate and will, and the letters of the said Nicholas V, our predecessor, and all and singular contained therein, may be confirmed. Therefore on the part of the said king and Prince Henry, we were humbly besought that we might be graciously pleased of our Apostolic good-will to add the support of the Apostolic confirmation to the declaration, constitution, gift, grant, appropriations, decree, entreaty, exhortation, injunction, inhibition, mandate and will, and to the said letters and what is contained

²⁷⁸ Callixtus III, “Inter Caetera,” ANTT- Coleção de Bulas, Gav. 7, maco. 13, No. 7; ASV. Reg. Vat. Vol. 464, Fls. 33v-34v; ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fl. 165; ANTT- Ordem de Cristo, Cod. 235 da Ordem de Cristo, Fls. 13r-13v. See the Latin copy of this Bull in Appendix A, No, 8 in this Book. Printed copies of this Bull are found in the following major works: Caetano de Sousa, *Provas da Historia Genealogica da Casa Real Portugueza*, pp. 446-453; Jordão, *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. I, pp. 36-37; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 28-30.

therein, in order to establish them more firmly, and to grant in perpetuity to the military Order aforesaid, ecclesiastical and all kinds of ordinary jurisdiction, both in the acquired possessions aforesaid and in the other islands, lands and places, which may hereafter be acquired by the said king and Prince or by their successors.²⁷⁹

Having done this, the pope turned to grant these tripartite requests of king Alfonso V and Prince Henry one after the other. In the first instance, he granted an Apostolic confirmation of the grants contained in Romanus Pontifex of Nicholas V in 1454, without excluding the part containing the empowerment of Prince Henry and the Crown in Portugal to force Black Africans into perpetual enslavement and to dispossess them of all their rights to liberty and to have material possessions. Instead, pope Callixtus III upheld such grants “all and singular” as authentic and proclaimed them to have a perpetual validity. This perpetual validation of these grants is seen, when he decreed as follows:

We, therefore longing that the religion of the said Order may be able in the Lord bear wholesome fruits in the said islands, lands and places, influenced by these supplications and considering as valid and acceptable the above mentioned declaration, constitution, gift, appropriation, decree, entreaty, exhortation, injunction, inhibition, mandate, will, letters and contents and everything done by virtue thereof, through our Apostolic authority and of certain knowledge, do confirm and approve them, all and singular, by the tenor of these presents, and supplying all defects, if there should be any therein, we decree that they remain perpetually valid.²⁸⁰

Furthermore, the pope granted the second request made by king Alfonso in the Royal Charter of 1454 which contained the wish of the king to compensate the military Order of Christ for its financial involvement in the expeditions made in the discoveries of the African Atlantic Coasts of Guinea. The intention to make this request was to empower this Order to make some economic gains in Guinea in compensation for their huge expenses incurred by sponsoring the Portuguese expeditions in West Africa. Just for the purpose of fulfilling this mundane objective, the pope co-operated with king Alfonso V and Prince Henry by covering this purely material interest with a spiritual mask of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, granted to a lay Order, which under normal circumstances was an exclusive reserve of the popes. The scope of this ecclesiastical power of jurisdiction granted to this lay Order under the headship of Prince Henry covers the entire regions of African Atlantic from Capes Bojador and Nam, throughout the regions of Guinea, stretching to the whole

²⁷⁹ Callixtus III, “Inter Caetera,” ANTT- Coleção de Bulas, Gav. 7, maco. 13, No. 7; Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 31.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.* Cf. *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, p. 36; Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 31.

of southern and eastern regions of Africa and to India. In granting this honours and favours to the military Order of Christ, the pope said:

And moreover, by the authority and with the knowledge aforesaid, we determine, ordain, and appoint forever that ecclesiastical and all ordinary jurisdiction, Lordship and power in ecclesiastical matters only in the said islands, villages, harbours, lands and places, acquired and to be acquired from Capes Bojador and Nam as far as through all Guinea, and past that southern shore, all the way to the Indians, the position, number, nature, appellations, designations, bounds and localities of which we wish to be considered as expressed by these presents, shall belong and pertain to the said military Order for all time.²⁸¹

Finally, the pope granted to the Prior Major of this military Order the power to collate ecclesiastical benefices as well as the power to pronounce ecclesiastical penalties of excommunication and interdict to defaulters in all the regions of West Africa and beyond, which the Portuguese have brought under their powers and possession. In the light of this, this document reads:

And in accordance with the tenor of these presents, by the authority and knowledge aforesaid, we grant and give them these, so that the Prior Major, for the time being, of the said military Order may and ought to collate and provide to all and singular ecclesiastical benefices, with or without cure of souls, and whether tenable by secular or by regulars of whatsoever orders, founded and instituted, or to be founded or instituted in the said islands, lands, places of whatever nature and value the benefices are or shall be, as often as they may fall vacant in the future. Also he may and ought to pronounce all ecclesiastical sentences, censures as well as penalties of excommunication, suspension, deprivation, interdict and other sentences whenever the necessity may arise and the nature of affairs and the course of circumstances may require. And all and singular other acts which in the places wherein the local ordinaries are held to possess ecclesiastical jurisdiction by law or custom, they are able or accustomed to perform, determine and execute. The Prior Major may and ought to perform, determine, order and execute in like manner and without any difference.²⁸²

Like every other papal Bull which contains such important grant comes to conclusion, Callixtus III ended this document with the threat of excommunication “*latae sententiae*” to be pronounced on all, who might attempt to default or infringe on any of the decisions, inhibitions and decrees granted to the Crown in Portugal in this Bull. This threat of excommunication on defaulters is seen when the pope authoritatively said:

²⁸¹ Ibid; ASV. Reg. Vat. Vol. 464, Fls. 33v-34v; Davenport, Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid; Davenport, European Treaties, pp. 31-32.

If it shall happen that anyone, by whatever authority, shall wittingly or unwittingly attempt anything in respect to these matters which is inconsistent with these provisions, it shall be null and void....let no one therefore infringe or with rash boldness contravene this our confirmation, approbation, constitution, completion, decree, statute, order, will, grant and gift. Should anyone presume to attempt this, be it known to him that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the thirteenth day of March in the year of the incarnation of our Lord, one thousand four hundred and fifty-five, in the first year of our pontificate.²⁸³

Summarily, this Bull is the first of its kind written after “*Romanus Pontifex*” which as we have seen above, supported and promoted greatly the business interests of the Portuguese in the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa, which was mainly based on slave economy. In our searchlight cast on the likely Apostolic documents that dealt with the issue of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans, observations made in the above treated Bull of pope Callixtus III showed that this Bull gave encouragement and support to the Portuguese in enslaving the Black natives of West Africa. In the light of the question, if pope Callixtus III knew what was going on during this period before throwing the full weight of his apostolic support behind this slave trade. Observations made herein showed that with the help of the copy of *Romanus Pontifex*, pope Callixtus III was in full possession of the knowledge of the enslavement of Black Africans conducted by the Portuguese under the command of Prince Henry and the Crown in Portugal. The proof of this fact is contained in this Bull, wherein the pope asserted that: “Through our Apostolic authority and of our certain knowledge of the letters aforesaid, do confirm and approve them all and singular, by the tenor of these presents, and supplying all defects, if there should be any therein, we decree that they remain perpetually valid.”²⁸⁴ What he decreed herein is a clear-cut demonstration of the fact that he did not go an inch away from the support and position of his predecessor pope Nicholas V in matters concerning Africa and Black Africans as far as the Atlantic slave trade was concerned. And with this comment, he demonstrated with this Bull that he fully supported the enslavement of Black Africans and the deprivation of all their intellectual and material rights as human beings to own properties and to have dominion over themselves. And by so doing, he failed to use his apostolic authority to redeem Black Africans condemned to perpetual enslavement by Nicholas V and the Royal Crown in Portugal.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. Its Latin text reads: “...illa omnia et singula auctoritate apostolica tenore presentium, ex certa scientia, confirmamus et approbamus, ac robori perpetue firmitatis subsistere decernimus, supplentes omnes defectus, si qui forsam intervenerint in eisdem.” Cf. *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, p. 36; Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 29.

4.3 Pope Sixtus IV and Enslavement of Black Africans

4.3.1 Brief Introduction

Pope Sixtus IV was born into the family of Leonardo della Rovere and Luchina Monleoni in Italy on July 21, 1414. His original name was Francesco della Rovere. As his surname shows, he came from the powerful Italian family of della Rovere, which greatly exercised unbridled influence over the renaissance papacy. And as a proof of this fact, this family produced two popes that ruled the Church in the period of the renaissance papacy. Francesco attended the Franciscan school in his home town and studied both philosophy and theology at the university of Pavia. He lectured in many universities in Italy and later joined the franciscan monastery where he rose to the rank of a minister general of his Order in 1464. In 1467, he was created a cardinal, and in the conclave that gathered to elect the successor of pope Paul II, he was elected as pope Sixtus IV on August 9, 1471 in Rome. As a real renaissance pope, he showed great interest in arts and allied himself with some of the famous artists and humanists of his time as their patron. His association with the artists and humanists helped him a lot to plan the rebuilding of the new city of Rome, construction of beautiful Churches and especially the Sistine Chapel in Rome. In general, his pontificate was marred by family politics, which greatly promoted nepotism, which was like a canker worm that ate deep into the fabrics of the renaissance papacy. It is on record that out of the twenty-three cardinals which were created by him, four were his nephews. His cardinal nephews included: Giuliano della Rovere, who later became pope Jullius II (*1443, pontificate 1471-1484), Girolamo Basso della Rovere, Domenico della Rovere and Raffaele Sansoni Riario. He died in Rome on August 12, 1484 at the age of 70 years.²⁸⁵

4.3.2 The Bull “Aeterni Regis” of Pope Sixtus IV and Enslavement of Black Africans

The Bull “Aeterni regis” was issued by pope Sixtus IV on June 21, 1481 as a continuation of the papal policy in the Portuguese political and economic enterprise in Africa. We recall that the Bulls of his predecessors Nicholas V and Callixtus III previously considered in this work, gave Portugal an overwhelming monopole control over the trade and peoples in Africa to the extent that other kingdoms and empires of Europe were excluded from entering into African Atlantic and the East (India) without express permission of the king of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator. Such a decision made by these popes

²⁸⁵ For further information on the papacy of pope Sixtus IV, see the following: Marthaler, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 13, p. 197; Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, Vol. 4.

mitigated against the economic interests of other leading Catholic kings of Europe of this century, especially king Ferdinand and Queen Isabela of Castile and Aragon (Spain). Their claim of having also a right in the African Atlantic was not completely laid to rest with the emergence of the Bulls of Nicholas V and Calixtus III. In their bid to pursue their economic interests in Africa, they attempted to sail into the Atlantic Waters of the king of Portugal in Africa. This gave rise to unending conflicts among both Catholic kingdoms which led to a huge loss of lives and properties. In a bid to settle these endless conflicts among them finally, they entered into a treaty of peace popularly known as the treaty of Alcaçovas of September 4, 1479. In this treaty of peace, both kingdoms agreed to respect each other's sovereignty by restraining from meddling up in the overseas territories of each kingdom. King Alfonso V ceded to king Ferdinand and Queen Isabela the exclusive right to own the Canary islands of the African Atlantic, while the king and Queen of Castile and Aragon (Spain) ceded to Portugal the regions of the islands of Cape Verde and Azores as well as the entire regions of the West African Guinea stretching down to South Africa, India and other territories yet to be discovered in these areas. The words of this accord reached by both Christian kingdoms are contained in article 8 of this document, which read as follows:

Moreover, the aforesaid king and queen of Castile, Aragon, Sicily etc., willed and resolved, in order that this peace be firm, stable and everlasting, and promised, henceforth and forever, that neither of themselves nor by another, publicly or secretly, or by their heirs and successors, will they disturb, trouble, or molest, in fact or in law, in court or out of court, the said king and Prince of Portugal or the future sovereigns of Portugal or their kingdoms, in their possession or quasi possession in all the trade, lands, barter in Guinea, with its gold mines, or in any other islands, coasts or lands discovered or to be discovered in future, found or to be found, or in the islands of Madeira, Porto Santo and Desserta, or in all the islands of the Azores, or the islands of Flores, as well as the islands of Cape Verde, or in all the islands hitherto discovered, or in all other islands which shall be found or acquired by conquest in the region from the Canary islands down toward Guinea. For whatever has been found or shall be found, acquired by conquest or discovered within the said limits, beyond what has already been found, occupied or discovered, belongs to the said king and Prince of Portugal and to their kingdoms, excepting only the Canary islands viz: Lançarote, Palma, Forteventura, Gomera, Ferro, Graciosa, Grand Canary, Teneriffe, and all the other Canary islands, acquired or to be acquired, which belong to the kingdoms of Castile.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶ Treaty of Alcaçovas of September 4, 1479, Document of ANTT- Gav. 17, maço 6, No. 16; Ruy de Pina, *Chronica do Rey Dom Affonso V*, 1790, in: Correa da Serra, *Collecção de Livros Ineditos de Historia Portugueza*, Tom. I, p. 206; A full Spanish, Portuguese and English versions of this text is found in Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 33-48.

This treaty was ratified by the kingdom of Spain on March 6, 1480 and by the kingdom of Portugal on September 8, 1479. Six months after this ratification, king Alfonso V of Portugal took immediate measures to implement this document in his territories by issuing a Royal letter to his captains and sailors with the title “Carta Regia sobre as Pazes com Castela” (Royal letter on the peace with Castile) on April 6, 1480, authorizing them to imprison as well as to throw into the sea all the captains of the ships and merchants of Spanish origin and those of other foreigners found sailing on the Atlantic Waters of West Africa without obtaining any permission and license from the king and Prince of Portugal.²⁸⁷ Even though such drastic measures were taken by the king of Portugal to secure his economic interests in Africa, it was very clear to him that such measures and the accord reached in this treaty of peace with the king and Queen of the Spanish kingdoms, were not enough to make these measures very binding on all persons within and outside of the aforesaid kingdoms. Therefore, to give such measures effective and international force binding on all persons, the weight of the papal authority was brought to bear on this treaty of 1479. This was done in fulfillment of the international and exclusive role of the medieval popes on whose shoulders it rested at the time as judge and arbitrator among Christian nations and kings, to intervene in moments of conflicts among Christian kings. And in this role of a peace broker, the decision of the pope as vicarius Christi on earth was taken to be final and possesses an international binding force, a violation of which was punished with excommunication and interdict, which was feared most among Christian kings and their subjects throughout the whole medieval Christendom. And therefore, it was in fulfillment of the role of the medieval pope as a peace broker among warring Christian nations and kingdoms that the Bull “Aeterni Regis” was issued in order to give this treaty of Alcaçovas an Apostolic and international binding force.

In the introductory part of this Bull, pope Sixtus IV confirmed his position as an arbitrator and the watchtower of the Apostolic See, whose duty among other things, was to make peace among Catholic kings quarreling with each other in the disputes of territorial boundaries. He acknowledged the fact that other popes before him also stayed in this same position and carried out related functions like this. In this regard, he commended his predecessors - popes Nicholas V and Calixtus III, who first wedged into this conflict between Castile and Portugal over the issue of ownership of the African Atlantic. And he upheld and confirmed the decision made by these popes which ceded the whole of Africa and India to the kings and princes of Portugal and to their

²⁸⁷ For details of this authorization of the king of Portugal as contained in this Document, See, ANTT- Livro das Pazes com Castela, Fl. 136; ANTT- Chancelaria de Dom Afonso V, Liv. 32, Fl. 63; Coelho, *Alguns Documentos da Torre do Tombo*, pp. 42-43.

successors as the rightful owners forever. All these are seen when the pope said in this document:

Since, through the Eternal King's clemency, whereby kings reign, we have been placed in the most lofty watchtower of the Apostolic See, we earnestly seek the stability, prosperity, peace and tranquility of all Catholic kings, under whose auspicious guidance Christ's faithful ones are cherished in justice and peace, and we fervently desire that sweet peace may thrive among them. Moreover, we graciously apply the strengthening power of apostolic confirmation to what we find to have been done with that object by our predecessors, the Roman popes, and others, in order that it may remain forever firm, unshaken and far removed from any risk of controversy.²⁸⁸

Having done this, Sixtus IV then inserted in this Bull word for word the contents of the Bulls of Nicholas V and that of Calixtus III issued in favor of the kings and princes of Portugal in order to protect their interests in Africa as well as the contents of the article 8 (quoted above) of the accord reached by the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal in the treaty of Alcaçovas. He not only confirmed them to be binding but also re-instated them as having an everlasting validity. In this confirmation the pope clearly stated:

We therefore, to whom the care of all the Lord's flock is committed by Heaven, and who, as we are bound, desire sweet peace and tranquility to flourish and endure forever between Christian princes and peoples, earnestly wishing that the letters of Nicholas and of Calixtus, our predecessors, and the article inserted above, and all and singular their contents, may remain stable and unimpaired forever, to the praise of the Divine Name and the lasting peace of the princes and peoples of each of the aforesaid realms.²⁸⁹

By the strength and evidence of the fact of these words, one is no longer left in an endless quest for evidence to proffer answer to the question of whether Sixtus IV supported the enslavement of Black Africans or not. From the above citation, it is crystal clear that pope Sixtus IV also toed the path of his predecessors Nicholas V and Calixtus III in supporting the enslavement of Black Africans and the dispossession of all their rights to property and to self-dominion as decreed by these popes with their various Bulls treated in the preceding chapter of this work. It was clear to him that the Bulls of his aforementioned predecessors authorized and supported this enslavement of Black Africans and he was in possession of the knowledge of their

²⁸⁸ Sixtus IV, "Aeterni Regis," Document of ANTT- Coleção de Bullas, maço, 26, No. 10; ASV, Reg. Vat. Vol. 610, Fls. 30v-39. See a Latin copy of this Bull in Appendix A, No, 9 in this Book. Printed copies of this Bull are found in: Jordão, Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae, pp. 47-52; Coelho, Alguns Documentos da Torre do Tombo, pp. 47-55; Brasio, (M.M.A.), Vol. 1, pp. 489-502; Davenport, European Treaties, pp. 49-55.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. Cf. Davenport, European Treaties, pp. 54-55.

dehumanization still going on at the time of issuing this Bull, and yet he decided to turn the other way and allowed them to be forcefully engaged in a continuous enslavement by the Portuguese kings and merchants. He justified his action by confessing that he was not compelled by any petition to make this confirmation with his present Apostolic writing, but rather that he made it with certain knowledge and liberality and was ready to supply any infirmity that could lead to the nullification of any part of the contents of the Bulls of his aforementioned predecessors. All these are seen when the pope unequivocally said:

of our own motion, not in compliance with any petition offered to us on this subject, but of our spontaneous liberality, foresight and certain knowledge, and from the plenitude of Apostolic power, considering the letters of Nicholas and of Calixtus, our predecessors, and the article aforesaid, as valid and acceptable, we do by the Apostolic authority and the tenor of these presents, approve and confirm them and everything contained in them and secure them by the protection of this present writing, decreeing that they, all and singular, ought to possess full authority and be observed forever.²⁹⁰

However, this Bull ended with the warning and threat of excommunication characteristic of such papal Bulls on all persons, who might venture to violate any part of the decrees and grants made in this Bull. This threat with the wrath of God as punishment on offenders of this decree is made clearly when the pope asserted:

Let no one, therefore infringe or with rash boldness contravene this our confirmation, approbation, reinforcement, regulation and mandate. Should anyone presume to do so, be it known to him that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. Given at Rome, at St Peter's on the twenty-first day of June, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord one thousand four hundred and eighty-one, in the tenth year of our pontificate.²⁹¹

With this Bull therefore, Sixtus IV went down into history lane as one of the popes of the Church that continued the support of the Portuguese economic and political interest in the West African Atlantic under the cover of mission to the pagan natives of this region that culminated in their enslavement and deprivation of their basic human rights to self-rule and to possess private belongings. The continuous slave razzias carried out by the Portuguese captains and merchants against the natives of this region and other heinous activities going on in the West African Atlantic during the papacy of Sixtus IV received the blessings and the protection of the Holy See under his pontificate. His

²⁹⁰ Sixtus IV, "Aeterni Regis," Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid. See also, Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 55.

failure to nullify the part of the *Romanus Pontifex* of Nicholas V that was presented to him which contained the wordings of the approval and legitimization of the Atlantic enslavement of Black Africans is an indication that he sanctioned the slave trade and justified the enslavement of Black Africans as a just slavery based on the arguments presented in the justification of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans as we saw in section two of this work. And with the approval of all that has been previously given to the kings of Portugal and their successors made in this Bull, Portugal continued to enjoy such papal support and protection in the African Atlantic and went ahead to claim the right of ownership over all the discovered and the undiscovered territories of the world until in 1492 when Christopher Columbus made his discovery of the so-called “New World” under the directives and support of the Spanish king and Queen. It was only at this period that the Portuguese claim to own the whole undiscovered world began to suffer setbacks especially with the authority of the grants made to king Ferdinand and Queen Isabela of the Spanish kingdoms of Castile and Aragon by one of their countrymen - pope Alexander VI (*1431, pontificate 1492-1503) in the series of Bulls which he issued in 1493, granting the Spanish kingdoms the right of ownership over the discovered “New World.”

4.4 The Alexandrian Bulls of 1493 and Enslavement of Black Africans

4.4.1 Brief Introduction

As we noted above, the desire and the hope of king Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to acquire a colony as well as to have free and direct business transaction in Africa was totally dashed to the mud with the authority of the Bull “*Romanus Pontifex*” of Nicholas V in 1454. But the good opportunity they had been looking for, in order to have a colony outside of their kingdoms came with the discovery of the “New World” by Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) in 1492. On return from his first voyage in 1492, Columbus made a promising report to the king and Queen of Spain, who sponsored his voyage to the New World. Gladdened with the joy of this report and the news of a huge profit that laid in store for their possession, the Spanish Crown was determined to do all things possible to secure authority and control over this newly discovered territory. But to arrive at this goal, there was a big obstacle on their way that must be removed. This obstacle is the clause contained in the grant made to Portugal in “*Romanus Pontifex*” which gave Portugal authority and right of ownership over all lands acquired and the ones yet to be discovered from Capes Boyador and Não as far as through all Guinea and beyond. This clause is made clearer when Nicholas V in “*Romanus Pontifex*” decreed:

And by force of those and of the present letters of faculty, the acquisitions already made, and what hereafter shall happen to be acquired, after they shall have been acquired, we do by the tenor of these presents, decree and declare have pertained, and forever of right do belong and pertain to the aforesaid king and to his successors and to the Prince, and that the right of conquest which in the course of these letters we declare to be extended from the capes of Boyador and of Nao, as far as through all Guinea, and beyond toward that southern shore, has belonged and pertained, and forever of right belongs and pertains to the said king Alfonso, his successors, and the Prince and not to any others.²⁹²

Ferdinand and Isabella were wise enough to observe that the authority and existence of this clause in “*Romanus Pontifex*” might warrant the king of Portugal to make claims over the newly discovered areas in the West Indies. And to prevent Portugal from making such claims as well as to avoid a clash of interest and the crisis that might accrue from this, the sovereigns of Spain were fast enough to approach the then occupant of the Holy See, pope Alexander VI to secure the right of ownership over the newly discovered Caribbean islands. Pope Alexander VI, being a Spaniard himself granted the request to confer the newly discovered lands on the Spanish Crowns with his two famous Bulls issued on May 3, and May 4, 1493, which almost deprived Portugal of nearly all privileges bestowed upon her by the Bulls of 1452 and 1454 issued by Nicholas V and by that of Sixtus IV in 1481.

Pope Alexander VI, also known as Rodrigo de Borgia was born in Spain on June 1, 1431. He was a nephew of pope Callixtus III, who endowed him with many bishoprics, abbeys and functions in the Church during his pontificate. He studied law in Bologna in 1455. At the age of 26, Rodrigo Borgia was appointed a cardinal by his uncle Callixtus III. On June 30, 1458, Callixtus III made him bishop of Valencia and vice chancellor of the Church under Callixtus III, Pius II (*1405, pontificate 1458-1464), Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII (*1432, pontificate 1484-1492). Like some historical authors such as August Franzen presented him, he was believed to have begotten children before being elected as pope Alexander VI on August 11, 1492. But despite his dissipated life both as cardinal and pope, M. Batllori is of the view that Alexander VI “can be credited with several achievements during his pontificate. He was better educated and more refined than Callixtus III, he entrusted the decoration of the main floor of the Vatican palace to Pinturicchio, restored the Castle Saint Angelo and provided a new building for the University of Rome.”²⁹³ As a pope, and at the same time a member of the Spanish Borgia family, he held strong ties with

²⁹² Nicholas V, “*Romanus Pontifex*,” *Ibid*.

²⁹³ Batllori, “Alexander VI, Pope,” in: Marthaler, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, pp. 259-261.

the Spanish sovereigns and greatly promoted their mission to the New World. He died on August 18, 1503 at the age of 72 years.²⁹⁴

Being a pope of the age of discovery, Alexander VI witnessed the struggle for ownership and control of the discovered New World between the two main European maritime powers at the time of discovery namely: Portugal and Spain. Owing to his strong ties with his homeland's sovereigns, he favoured the monarchs of his country in their claim of ownership over the newly discovered lands and decided the matter in their favour but to the detriment of Portugal. Writing on this strong ties with the Spanish sovereigns, Linden Vander noted as follows: "Alexander VI could refuse nothing to Ferdinand and Isabella, eager to give them evidence of his good will, he did not hesitate to comply entirely with requests relative to Columbus' discoveries without examining whether their claim menaced the rights of other sovereigns or not."²⁹⁵ The various favours and grants which he gave to the Spanish Royal Crown are contained in his two famous Bulls: "Eximiae Devotionis" of May 3, 1493 and "Inter Caetera" of May 4, 1493. In order to be more at home with the contents of these Bulls, let us briefly consider them one after the other.

4.4.2 The Bull "Eximiae Devotionis" of Pope Alexander VI in 1493

Eximiae Devotionis of May 3, was written by pope Alexander VI to thank Spain and her sovereigns for their various supports to the Catholic faith in Spain and served as a means of recognising the immense role of the Catholic Crown of Spain in the defence of the Catholic faith against militant Islamism in the Iberian Peninsula. This document bestowed much grants and privileges on the Spanish Crown, which were previously enjoyed by Portugal especially during the pontificates of Nicholas V, Callixtus III and Sixtus IV. In this Bull, pope Alexander VI extended such rights to the Spanish Crown over the discovered New World which was not under the dominion of any Christian king. In this apostolic letter, the pope said among other things:

Alexander, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to the illustrious sovereigns, our very dear son in Christ, Ferdinand, king, and our very dear daughter in Christ Isabella, Queen of Castile, Leon, Aragon and Granada... The sincerity and whole-hearted loyalty of your exalted attachment to ourselves and the Church of Rome deserve to have us grant in

²⁹⁴ For further readings on Alexander VI, see: Kelly John Norman, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Popes*, pp. 252-254; Franzen, *Kleine Geschichte*, pp. 236-242; Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, p. 61; Johann Burchard, ed. *At the Court of the Borgia: An Account of the Reign of Pope Alexander VI*, London 1963.

²⁹⁵ Vander, *Alexander VI and the Demarcation of the Maritime and Colonial Domains of Spain and Portugal 1493-1494*, in: *American Historical Review*, 22, October 1916, pp. 1-20.

your favour those things whereby daily, you may the better and more easily be enabled to the honour of Almighty God and the spread of Christian government as well as the exaltation of the Catholic faith to carry out your holy and praiseworthy purpose and the work already undertaken of making search for far-away and unknown countries and islands. For this very day of our own accord and certain knowledge, and out of the fullness of our Apostolic power, we have given, granted and assigned forever, as appears more fully in our letters drawn up therefore, to you and your heirs and successors, kings of Castile and Leon, all singular and remote and unknown mainlands and islands lying towards the Western parts and the ocean seas, that have been discovered or hereafter may be discovered by you or your envoys... and with them all their lordships, cities, castles, places, villages, rights, and jurisdictions, provided however these countries have not been in the actual temporal possession of any Christian lords.²⁹⁶

In emulation of the immunities and wholesome favours granted to Portugal by Nicholas V in Africa, this document gave unlimited favours to the Spanish monarchs in the New World. It also failed to recognise the favours and rights given to Portugal over non discovered lands. And in its failure to do this, it enlarged the faculty of the Spanish monarchs to have authority and rights not only in the lands under their acquisition but also the ones yet to be discovered and acquired by them. This fact is brought to light when Alexander VI authoritatively said:

But in as much as at another time the Apostolic See has granted diverse privileges, favours, liberties, immunities, exemptions, faculties, letters and inducts to certain kings of Portugal, who also by similar Apostolic grant and donation in their favour, have discovered and taken possession of islands in the regions of Africa, Guinea, and the gold mine, and elsewhere, with the desire to empower by our Apostolic authority, as also is right and fitting, you and your aforesaid heirs and successors with graces, prerogatives and favours of no less character; moved also thereto wholly of our similar accord, not at your instance nor the petition of anyone else in your favour, but of our own sole liberality and out of the same knowledge and fullness of Apostolic power, we do by tenor of these presents, as a gift of special favour, grant to you and your aforesaid heirs and successors, all and singular, the graces and privileges, exemptions, liberties, faculties, immunities, letters and inducts that have been thus granted to the king of Portugal, the terms whereof we wish to be understood as sufficiently expressed and inserted, as if they had been inserted word for word in these presents. Moreover, we extend similarly and enlarge these powers in all things and through all things to you and your aforesaid heirs and successors, to whom in the same manner and form we grant them forever.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Alexander VI, "Eximiae Devotionis," Document of the Archives of the Indies at Seville, Patronato, 1-1-1, No. 4; Document of ASV, Reg. Vat. Vol. 879, Fl. 234rv; Pereira, *De Indiarum Jure*, Vol. 1, p. 348; Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae, Vol. 1, pp. 272-273; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 67-70. See the Latin copy of this Bull in Appendix A, No. 10 in this Book.

²⁹⁷ Alexander VI, "Eximiae Devotionis." See also, Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 68-69.

Commenting on the contradictory character of this Bull to the already existing rights of Portugal, Richard Schultz, professor and winner of the “Age of Discovery Theme Prize” at Millersville University said as follows: “So eager was Alexander VI to please the Spanish monarchs, thus keeping their alliance strong that he issued Bulls that contradicted previous Bulls. These contradictory articles created conflict among the Spanish and the Portuguese concerning new lands and rights of possession.”²⁹⁸ With the authority of this document therefore, Portugal lost out in her claim of right of ownership over the new lands discovered by Columbus. And this matter raised a big problem between the kings of Portugal and Spain. The king of Portugal protested against the contradictory nature of this Bull. But all that this protest could bring to him was a line of demarcation drawn one hundred leagues west of any of the Azores or Cape Verde islands. This papal line of demarcation is contained in the second Bull of Alexander VI “*Inter Caetera*” of May 4, 1493.

4.4.3 The Bull “*Inter Caetera*” of Pope Alexander VI in 1493

The Bull “*Inter Caetera*” like its sister Bull “*Eximiae Devotionis*” of May 3, 1493 contained words of praise to the Spanish sovereigns - king Ferdinand and Queen Isabella and backed them up for their support of Christopher Columbus in his works of making new discoveries in the New World for the purposes of bringing the light of the Gospel to the natives of the discovered new islands and mainlands and bringing them into the Christian fold. This document has almost everything in common with the previous Bull “*Eximiae Devotionis*” in the sense that it contained word for word the grants made to the Spanish sovereigns in the said Bull. However, the Bull “*Inter Caetera*” is of great importance and highly favourable to Spain and her sovereigns. This importance lies in the fact that it did not merely grant to Spain the lands not yet under the control of a Christian king discovered by Columbus and his team of Conquistadors but also drew a line of demarcation on the disputed areas between Portugal and Spain. And with the help of this line of demarcation, Spain was granted an exclusive right to acquire territorial possessions and to transact trade business on all lands west of the demarcating line. In drawing this all-important papal line of demarcation in favour of the king and Queen of Spain, pope Alexander VI said:

And, in order that you may enter upon so great an undertaking with greater readiness and heartiness endowed with the benefit of our Apostolic favour, we, of our own accord, not at your instance nor the request of anyone else in your regard, but of our own sole largess and certain knowledge and out of the fullness of our Apostolic power, by the authority of Almighty God conferred upon us in the Blessed Peter and of the vicar-ship of Jesus

²⁹⁸ Schultz, *The Role of the Vatican in the Encounter*, in: Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, p. 31.

Christ, which we hold on earth, do by tenor of these presents, should any of the said islands have been found by your envoys and captains, give, grant and assign to you and your heirs and successors, kings of Castile and Leon, forever, together with all their dominions, cities, camps, places, and villages, and all rights, jurisdictions and appurtenances, all islands and mainlands found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered towards the west and south, by drawing and establishing a line from the Arctic pole, namely the north, to the Antarctic pole, namely the south, no matter whether the said mainlands and islands are found and to be found in the direction of India or towards any other quarter, the said line to be distant one hundred leagues towards the west and south from any of the islands commonly known as the Azores and Cape Verde. With this proviso however that none of the islands and mainland, found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered, beyond that said line towards the west and south, be in the actual possession of any Christian king or prince up to the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ just past from which the present year one thousand four hundred and ninety-three begins.²⁹⁹

This Bull also gave to the Spanish monarchs the authority and right of Patronage (*Patronato Real*) over all the islands and mainlands discovered and yet to be discovered in the New World. This right of patronage empowered the Spanish sovereigns and their successors to organise missionary work in the New World. It included also the right to appoint bishops and priests as missionaries for the evangelisation of the natives of the newly discovered islands and mainlands in the New World. The very words of the pope used to enact this right of patronage are made clearer when he said:

Moreover, we command you in virtue of holy obedience that, employing all due diligence in the premises, as you also promise, nor do we doubt your compliance therein in accordance with your loyalty and Royal greatness of spirit, you should appoint to the aforesaid mainlands and islands worthy, God-fearing, learned, skilled and experienced men, in order to instruct the aforesaid inhabitants and residents in the Catholic faith and train them in good morals.³⁰⁰

The closing part of this Bull contains the words of punishment with excommunication *latae sententiae* to be incurred *ipso facto* by any person or a group of individuals, who may dare to contravene the authority of the papal grants given to the Spanish Crown as contained in this Bull. In the light of this pronouncement, this document reads:

²⁹⁹ Alexander VI, "Inter Caetera," Document of the Archives of the Indies at Seville, *Patronato*, 1-1-1, No. 3; Document of ASV, Reg. Vat. Vol. 775, Fls. 42v-45v. See also a Latin copy of this Bull in Appendix A, No. 11 in this Book. Printed copies of this Bull are found in: Pereira, *De Indiarum Jure*, Vol. 1, p. 344; *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. 1, pp. 270-271; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 75-78.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.* Cf. Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 77.

Furthermore, under penalty of excommunication *latae sententiae* to be incurred *ipso facto*, should anyone thus contravene, we strictly forbid all persons of whatsoever rank, even imperial and royal, or of whatsoever estate, degree, order or condition, to dare, without your special permit or that of your aforesaid heirs and successors, to go for the purpose of trade or any other reason to the islands or mainlands, found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered, towards the west and south...Let no one, therefore infringe or with rash boldness contravene, this our recommendations, mercies, exhortation, requisition, gift, grant, assignment, provision, constitution, deputation, decree, mandate, prohibition and will. Should anyone presume to attempt this, be it known to him that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord one thousand four hundred and ninety-three, the fourth of May, and the first year of our pontificate.³⁰¹

And with this decree and prohibition, the Spanish Crown won the battle of rights of control waged against Portugal over the New World. Despite the fact that the papal line of demarcation, which gave unlimited rights to Spain to acquire territories in the New World was indefinite and the text very unclear so as to allow for a definite determination of its location, this papal line however, was fixed in such a way that all of Americas was assigned to the Spanish Crown and all of Africa stretching down to East India was granted to Portugal. But with Portugal's insistence to have a part in the New World, both Spanish and Portuguese monarchs however agreed to clarify this confusion made by the papal line of demarcation by drafting the famous "Treaty of Tordesillas" on June 7, 1494. In this Treaty, it was agreed by the two contesting Catholic kingdoms that the papal line of demarcation be moved up to 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands. According to this new agreement, the monarchs of Spain and Portugal decided that:

For the sake of peace and concord, and for the preservation of the relationship and love of the said king of Portugal and for the said king and queen of Castile, Aragon, etc, it being the pleasure of their Highnesses, they, their said representatives, acting in their name and by virtue of their powers herein described, covenanted and agreed that a boundary or straight line be determined and drawn north and south, from pole to pole, on the said ocean sea, from the Arctic to the Antarctic pole. This boundary line shall be drawn straight at a distance of three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape Verde islands...And all lands on the eastern side of the said bound shall belong to, and remain in the possession of, and pertain forever to the said king of Portugal and his successors. And all other lands on the western side of said bound shall belong to, and remain in the possession of, and pertain forever to the said king and queen of Castile, Leon etc., and their successors.³⁰²

³⁰¹ Alexander VI, "Inter Caetera," Cf. Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 77-78.

³⁰² Treaty of Tordesillas, ANTT- Gav. 17, maço, 2, No. 24; Coelho, *Alguns Documentos*, pp. 60-70; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 93-100.

With this new line of demarcation, the territory of Brazil being part of the New World, was ceded to the Portuguese Crown as her colony. Portugal took possession of Brazil through one of her explorers Pedro Álvares Cabral on April 22, 1500. In this way, the tension existing between Spain and Portugal was put to rest.

Summarily, in all these Bulls of Alexander VI written to compensate the Spanish monarchs, who were prevented by the authority of Nicholas V in his “*Romanus Pontifex*” from gaining a colony in Africa, it is interesting to note as follows: First and foremost, they were written with no intention of enslaving the inhabitants of the Caribbean islands and to dispossess them of their lands and other properties as *Romanus Pontifex* did with the Black Africans. This truth is informed by the fact that in these two Alexandrian Apostolic documents, there was a total absence of military tone and command characteristic of a Bull for a military conquest, which one easily notices in the Bulls of Nicholas V that mandated Portugal to brutally deal with the inhabitants of the Western Atlantic Coasts of Africa. Words of military command such as “invade them,” “conquer them,” “dispossess them of their land and habitations” and “reduce their persons to perpetual slavery” were completely lacking in these Alexandrian Bulls. Secondly, these two Bulls were silent on the issue of the enslavement of Black Africans. That implies that the fate of the Black Africans, who were being tied up with the ropes and chains of enslavement in the Bulls of his predecessors was for pope Alexander VI a matter of no interest or importance. One had expected him in this Bull to have nullified the approval of this enslavement of Black Africans as contained in the two Bulls of Nicholas V just as he did by curtailing the boundless territories and possessions granted to the kings of Portugal by the aforesaid Bulls of pope Nicholas V with the authority of his Alexandrian Bulls under discussion here. Failure to have done so could be interpreted in this context: that pope Alexander VI held this aspect of the two Bulls of his predecessor Nicholas V as something very sacrosanct and in effect, he approved of this enslavement of Black Africans as upheld by pope Nicholas V and allowed it to continue to have its dangerous tolls on the lives of millions of the enslaved Black Africans. Thirdly, these Alexandrian Bulls were purely written with the intention of conducting proper evangelization and conversion of the people through preaching and teaching, and not with the use of force as was the case with the Bulls of Nicholas V in Africa. This fact is validated by the choice of persons in the said Bull as recommended and authorised by pope Alexander VI to be sent as missionaries to the newly discovered islands and mainlands in the New World. Although the Spanish Conquistadors and representatives of the Spanish monarchs in the Spanish New world eventually turned inhabitants of these islands and mainlands into slaves, exposing them to all sorts of hard labours

and sufferings, it was however, not in the original intention of the pope as the documents clearly showed that the native inhabitants of the South and West Indies be humiliated in the manner they experienced it from the hands of the Spanish Christians. It was therefore as a result of this misuse of the authority of the pope in these documents for selfish gains and interests that brought about the enslavement of the native inhabitants of the New World. And it was in the bid of the Church's effort to liberate them from this enslavement that Black Africans were chosen as a replacement of the enslaved Indians and as such freighted as slaves into the Spanish New World to suffer in their place. And by so doing, the Alexandrian Bulls, which shared the discovered New Worlds - Africa and the Americas into two namely: between Spain and Portugal, are believed to have indirectly contributed to the Transatlantic slave trade in the sense that they opened the door wide as well as prepared the ground where this trade on humans was transacted in an unprecedented manner that was never known before and greatly affected the magnitude of this trade, its development and duration. If the pope in the said Bulls had stripped the Portuguese Crown of the right of enslavement of the Black Africans as he did curtail the Portuguese sphere of influence in the Spanish New World, the idea of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans would have been a different thing all together other than what it turned out to be for the next four centuries of the propagation of this enslavement by the various European and American enslaving nations. And their continued enslavement and suffering was a product of the failure of pope Alexander VI to have condemned this enslavement by the Portuguese Crown and her merchants. How did his successors react to this enslavement of Black Africans? The answer to this question will be unravelled in a brief consideration of the Bull of pope Leo X written with regard to the Portuguese enterprise in the West African Atlantic.

4.5 The Bull “Praecelsae Devotionis” of Pope Leo X in 1514

4. 5. 1 Brief Introduction

Pope Leo X was born into the influential family of de Medici on December 11, 1475. His original name was Giovanni de Medici. His father Lorenzo de Medici was an influential and powerful ruler of the Florentine republic and his mother Clarice Orsini came from another powerful Italian family of the Orsini, which gave two popes to the Church in the renaissance period. As a young man, Giovanni de Medici was greatly favoured by the nepotism that marked the renaissance papacy. Just at the tender age of 7 years, he received the tonsure and was adorned with ecclesiastical benefices. With the influence of his father and at his request, he was created a cardinal-deacon of Santa Maria in Dominica by one of his relatives - pope Innocent VIII (*1432, pontificate 1484-1492) on

March 8, 1489 at a very young age of 14 years. But he was only admitted into the College of cardinals two years later in 1491. He studied both philosophy and canon law in Pisa from 1489 to 1491. And on the first day of October 1511, pope Julius II (*1443, pontificate 1503-1513) appointed him papal legate to Bologna. In the conclave that met after the death of pope Julius II, Giovanni de Medici was favoured by the younger cardinals, who contributed immensely to his election in the conclave that lasted for 7 days. He was elected pope and successor of Julius II on March 9, 1513. After his election as pope, he received priestly ordination on March 15, 1513 and was consecrated bishop on March 17, 1513. Two days later, he was crowned and enthroned as pope Leo X on March 19, 1513 at the age of 37 years.

As pope, he reopened the fifth Lateran Council started by his predecessor Julius II to close the Council summoned in Pisa by a group of rebelling cardinals in 1512, who wanted to use the Council to clip the wings of the powerful pope Julius II. It was in order to offset this Council that Julius summoned the ecumenical Council in July 1511 at Lateran. This Council set to realize its objectives of securing and maintaining peace and unity of the Church, to continue the Crusade against the militant Muslim Turks as well as to effect reforms in the Church. The pontificate of Leo X pursued these objectives and saw to the end of the Pisa schism on March 16, 1517. Like every other renaissance popes, his papacy was marked with the promotion of family politics and economic interests, war with France and schism, especially Protestantism sparked-off by the German born Martin Luther (1483-1546), whose 41 out of his 95 Theses were refuted by the pope with the Bull 'Exsurge Domine' of June 15, 1520 and finally excommunicated him with another Bull "Decet Romanum Pontificem" of January 3, 1521. Pope Leo X died in Rome on the first day of December 1521 at the age of 46 years.³⁰³

4.5.2 Pope Leo X and Enslavement of Black Africans

Upon receiving the news of the political and economic victories of king Manuel I (*1469, reigned 1495-1521) of Portugal in both Morocco and Malacca in India, which was communicated to him by an embassy of obedience sent by king Manuel in the spring of 1514, pope Leo X was highly elated and praised the king for all the feats he has wrought in the fight against Muslim Turks and the profits he made in the trade transactions in India and Africa. By way of showing his support for this work, the pope donated a consecrated golden rose

³⁰³ For more details on pope Leo X and his pontificate, see the following works: Giovo, Pauli, *Vita Leonis X*, Florence 1548; Marthaler, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8, pp. 485-488; William Roscoe, *Life and Pontificate of Leo X*, Vol. 2, London 1853; Paul Strathern, *The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance*, Jonathan Cape 2003, p. 277ff.

to king Manuel I of Portugal and granted him the requests he proffered in order to secure his political and economic interests in both Africa and East Indies. It was therefore, in the bid to express his support for the Portuguese interests as well as to protect such interests that Leo X issued the Bull “*Praecelsae Devotionis*” on November 3, 1514, which renewed all the grants and concessions made to Portugal in Africa and India by his predecessors. According to Frances Davenport, the grants made to Portugal in this Bull included: “The lands and other property acquired from the infidels not only from Capes Bojador and Não to the Indies, but in any region whatsoever, even if then unknown.”³⁰⁴

In the introductory part of this Bull, the pope showered praises on king Manuel I and acknowledged his military feats in the war against Islam and for the spreading of the Christian faith in the infidels' territories. He revealed that it was in recognition of this effort of the king that this Bull was issued so as to secure all the concessions made to the kings of Portugal by his predecessors and to grant him new ones in order to encourage him and others, who might follow in his footsteps in this work he determined to carry out in Africa and India. All these are seen when the pope expressed:

Meditating fittingly in the inmost counsels of our heart upon the unwearied fervor of lofty devotion, the purity of blameless faith, the respect for the Holy Apostolic See, and the ardor of lofty virtues, whereby our very dear son in Christ, Emmanuel, the illustrious king of Portugal and of the Algarves, has made himself in manifold ways pleasing, serviceable and agreeable to us and to the said See, especially since in the light of experience we consider, and from manifest proofs every day clearly perceive, with what unremitting vigilance his sublimity and serenity, following the example of his predecessors, the kings of Portugal, has striven and ever more zealously strives for the most part in person and not without the greatest effort and expenses, in order that the barbarous hostility of the Moors and of other infidels to our Saviour and to the Christian name may not only be warded off from the territories of the faithful, but perishing in its own iniquity, may be entirely restrained and blotted out, and that the Christian religion may by peaceful means be advanced and promoted in all longed-for ways.³⁰⁵

Continuing, the pope affirmed that it was to enjoy an increased loyalty of the king of Portugal as well as to increase his devotion and dedication to the Holy See that the grants contained in this Bull were made to him as a sign of papal honor and reward to him. This is seen when the pope said:

³⁰⁴ Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 112.

³⁰⁵ Pope Leo X, “*Praecelsae Devotionis*,” Document of ANTT- *Coleção de Bullas*, maço 29, No. 6; ANTT- *Livro I dos Breves*, p. 153; See the Latin text of this Bull in Appendix A, No. 12 in this Book. Printed copies of this Bull are found in: *Provas da Historia Genealogica*, Vol. II, pp. 220-240; Rebello da Silva, *Corpo Diplomatico Portuguez*, Vol I, pp. 275-298; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp.115-117.

persuaded by these considerations and by many other legitimate reasons, we deem it fitting and expedient constantly to guard and protect those concessions which we have learned were granted by our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, to the aforesaid predecessors of the said king Emmanuel, and also to grant other and new privileges in order that then his Highness, fortified by the further munificence of the aforesaid Apostolic See, may not only be roused to greater zeal in fulfilling his promises, but having received a liberal and generous reward may induce and cause others more readily to undertake similar work, and that his devotion to us and to the aforesaid Holy See may be increased, and that in return for the labors which he sustains in serving the universal Church by exalting the Catholic and Apostolic faith, he may obtain suitable honors and rewards.³⁰⁶

Having done this, the pope now inserted word for word the two Bulls of pope Nicholas V, those of pope Callixtus III and pope Sixtus IV as well as the concessions made to the Portuguese king in the Treaty of Alcaçovas. He confirmed all the contents of these Bulls of his predecessors and whatever that followed thereupon as being established and acceptable. This confirmation is made manifest when the pope asserted:

We therefore, who passionately strive for the advantage and profit of the said king Emmanuel, since he is continually aiming at the growth and extension of the faith, of our own accord, and not at the instance of the said king Emmanuel or on account of any request offered by any other person in his behalf, but from our mere deliberation and out of our certain knowledge and from the plenitude of Apostolic power, approve and renew and confirm by the Apostolic authority and by the tenor of these presents, the aforesaid letters, all and singular, regarding their contents, all and singular and whatever has followed thereupon as established and acceptable, and supplying all and singular defects, both of law and of fact, if any should happen to occur in them; and we decree that they ought to be permanently valid.³⁰⁷

Going a step further, the pope renewed these concessions and privileges contained in the said Bulls of his predecessors. And like his aforesaid predecessors, he confirmed king Emmanuel I of Portugal and all his successors as the rightful owners of the new territories of pagans and other unbelievers found or to be found in future. Following in the footsteps of pope Nicholas V, he gave the Crown in Portugal the right to dispossess the infidels of their dominion and possessions, as well as the authority to appropriate these belongings and their persons for his personal use and those of future heirs to the Portuguese Royal throne and forbade any other Christian king and their subjects from meddling up in these rights and privileges granted to Portugal in

³⁰⁶ Pope Leo X, "Praeelsae Devotionis," Cf. Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 116.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

all her overseas acquired territories. This fact is clearly seen when the pope unmistakably commanded:

And for greater security and by virtue of the authority and in the terms mentioned above, we newly grant everything, all and singular, contained in the aforesaid letters, and all other empires, kingdoms, principalities, duchies, provinces, lands, cities, towns, forts, lordships, islands, harbors, seas, coasts, and all other property, real and personal, wherever existing, also all unfrequented places, recovered, discovered, found and acquired from the aforesaid infidels, by the said king Emmanuel and his predecessors, or in future to be recovered, acquired, discovered and found by the said king Emmanuel and his successors, both from Capes Bojador and Não to the Indies, and in any place or region whatsoever, even though per chance unknown to us at present; and we also extend and amplify the aforesaid letters and their contents, all and singular, to the aforesaid concessions and in virtue of holy obedience and under penalty of our wrath, by the authority and in the terms aforesaid, we inhibit all faithful Christians, even though adorned with imperial, Royal or any other rank, from presuming to hinder in any way the said king Emmanuel and his successors in respect to the aforesaid concessions, and from furnishing aid, counsel or favor to the said infidels.³⁰⁸

This Bull ended in the same manner like those of other popes with a pronouncement of the wrath of God and the punishment by excommunication on all those, who dare to tamper with the authority and the validity of the concessions made in this Bull. Pronouncing this wrath of God, the pope threatened as follows:

Let no man whomsoever therefore infringe or with rash boldness contravene this our approval, renewal, confirmation, completion, decree, grant, extension, amplification, inhibition and mandate. Should anyone presume to attempt this, be it known to him that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the third day of November, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord, 1514, in the second year of our pontificate.³⁰⁹

With this threat attached to this Bull and from the evidence of facts exhibited in this Apostolic document, it is no longer a secret that pope Leo X relied heavily on the bedrock of the tradition laid down by Nicholas V and other predecessors of his, in supporting the enslavement of Black Africans and the dispossession of their territories and private properties. We recall that it was during his pontificate that the decision was made by the Spanish king Ferdinand on January 22, 1510 for the opening of the gate of slavery for a shipment of 250 Black African captives as slaves into the Spanish New World during the Transatlantic slave trade to replace the dying population of the West

³⁰⁸ Pope Leo X, "Praeelsae Devotionis," Cf. Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 116-117.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.* Cf. Davenport, *European Treaties*, p. 117.

Indian folk.³¹⁰ And eight years later in his pontificate, precisely on August 18, 1518, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and king of Spain Charles V (1500-1558) in co-operation with the king of Portugal Manuel I (*1469, reigned 1495-1521) gave the license for a direct importation of 4,000 Black African captives as slaves into the Spanish New World for the same purpose of using them to replace the dying West Indian population, who were being worked to death at the sugar plantations and on the gold and silver mines by the Spanish Conquistadors.³¹¹ Funny enough, the very recipient of the above Bull written by Leo X was king Manuel I of Portugal who permitted this huge number of Black African slaves to be directly carried from his sphere of influence in West Africa to the Spanish king's colonial territory in the New World in respect of the papal right of Patronage granted to the two kings in the papal Bulls especially in the two Alexandrian Bulls which divided the discovered "New Worlds" of Africa and the Americas between the two kings of the Iberian maritime superpowers of the fifteenth century. It was exactly at a time, when the foundation-stone for a full take-off of the Transatlantic slave trade on a large international scale was being laid by the aforesaid kings that pope Leo X issued this Bull to king Manuel I of Portugal and yet he refused to comment specifically on the enslavement of Black Africans during this period. Instead, he permitted it and allowed the Black African captives to be carried as slaves into the Spanish Americas. He knew with certainty that Black Africans were forcefully abducted and made objects of the slave trade sanctioned by his aforesaid predecessors and he failed to distance himself from this tradition. Rather, he made their decision on the Black African continent more firmly, upheld and updated them and pronounced them all and singular including the enslavement and the baneful traffic on the native inhabitants of the West African Atlantic as deeds acceptable, honourable and bearing the full stamp of the Apostolic authority with an unending validity. Evidence of the fact that he was in possession of the knowledge of the Black African enslavement was clearly indicated in his Bull under consideration here when he said without mincing words:

Out of our certain knowledge and from the plenitude of Apostolic power, we approve and renew and confirm by the Apostolic authority and by the tenor of these presents, the aforesaid letters, all and singular, regarding their contents, all and singular and whatever has followed thereupon as established and acceptable, and supplying all and singular defects, both of law and of fact, if any should happen to occur in them; and we decree that they ought to be permanently valid.³¹²

³¹⁰ Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 64.

³¹¹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 98.

³¹² Pope Leo X, "Praecelsae Devotionis," *Ibid*; Davenport, *European Treaties*, pp. 116-117.

And by so doing, Leo X enshrined his name boldly in the sand of history as one of the popes of the Church, who used their apostolic authority to back up the Portuguese Crown in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade.

In summa, on the strength of the Bulls of all these popes (considered in this chapter), who ruled the Church after Nicholas V, the West African Atlantic became a victim of the papal arbitrary liberty to treat nations the way that suited them in favour of the Christian kings who dined and wined with them on the table of temporal power. With the authority of the foundational Bulls “Dum Diversas” and “Romanus Pontifex,” which established the Transatlantic slave trade, and those of the above mentioned Bulls, the innocent natives of West Africa were rated in the same manner with the Muslims as enemies of the Christendom and were treated as such. Their being treated in the same manner with the Muslims led to their forgetfulness in the mind of the medieval world during the Transatlantic slave trade. Echoing this truth, Milhou Alain said: “The violence brought about to bear on Black Africans by the Bull "Pontifex Romanus" of 1455, led to their being equated with Muslims and to the deprivation of all their rights. This led, together with the ongoing, habitually operated slavery to the fact that the Blacks for a long time were not included in the fight for justice.”³¹³ In the light of this citation, it is therefore not surprising that none of these popes, whose Apostolic writings found expression in this chapter showed that they had any milk of human sympathy for Black Africa and her sons and daughters in the sense that none of them dared to loosen the ropes on the legs and hands of those Black Africans tied with the chains of perpetual slavery pronounced by Nicholas V in his aforesaid two Bulls. And by so doing, these popes actively brought African sons and daughters on the centre stage of the Transatlantic slave trade.

But one thing that has always boggled my mind since examining the issue of forcing Black Africans into perpetual slavery is the question of where did the idea of punishing Black Africans with slavery in perpetuity ever come from and how did it enter into the minds of both pope Nicholas V and his fellow popes of the renaissance papacy, whose documents have been examined in this chapter of our work? Did this idea come from the blues, or was it a child of the brain of pope Nicholas V, who first invoked it in the history of papal Bulls of Crusades? The theme of the justification of slavery treated in section two of this work holds the answer to these mind-boggling questions in store for us. This idea of punishing Black Africans with perpetual enslavement as decreed by pope Nicholas V did neither come from the blues nor emanate from the mind

³¹³ Milhou, “Apostolische Schenkungen und die Rechte der Ungläubigen,” in: Venard, ed., *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 7, p. 564.

of pope Nicholas V. It was rather a product of a strong and unbreakable Catholic tradition and was borrowed from the “store of wealth” of the Catholic traditional teachings on the curse of Ham and his descendants and the association which this tradition since the patristic and medieval periods of Christianity made with the Black Africans, whom this tradition held to be the actual descendants of the accursed Ham, who should bear the brunt of the burden of perpetual enslavement. Therefore, when the renaissance popes were pronouncing perpetual enslavement for the Black Africans, they were not saying anything new. Rather they were making actual reference to this Catholic tradition of seeing Black Africans as an accursed race of Ham, whose enslavement was sanctioned by a Divine decree. They saw themselves in pronouncing this punishment with perpetual enslavement against Black Africans only as Divine instruments, through which this curse was to be brought into its fulfilment in their days as Pontiffs of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Other stereotypes and anti-Blacks sentiments upheld by the same Catholic traditional teachings on Black Africans since the post-biblical times, which might have influenced this decision of the renaissance popes against Black Africans in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries have been handled in details in the said section of this work.

Despite this fact, some papalists, theologians and historians have continued to claim even in the present time that the Church through her teaching authority had always stood behind peoples held under unjust enslavement wherever it existed and made efforts to set them free including the Black Africans. How true is this claim made in defence of the Church's Magisterium? Were the enslaved Black Africans among such people under the shelter of the Church's teaching authority? The historical answer to these questions will form the bedrock of discussion in the next chapter of this work.

5. The Church in Defence of Those under Unjust Enslavement

5.1 Brief Introduction

As we have seen above, “Romanus Pontifex” of Nicholas V and those of his immediate predecessors and successors dashed Africa as a favour to Portugal and granted her an exclusive right and power to exploit the Western Coasts of Africa as well as to reduce the Black natives of this part of Africa to slaves in perpetuity. What later turned out to be the fate of Africa and Black Africans in particular during the Transatlantic slave trade has its root in the papal authority contained in these Bulls. During the course of this slave trade that made Black

Africans its victims, the leadership of the Catholic Church did not of course come to an end. But as it were, the Church was led by her popes throughout this period. The question then is, did any one of them intervene in this evil traffic in slaves carried out by the Christians of Europe by way of speaking out in defence of the powerless and poor innocent Black Africans forcefully reduced to slave status? What role did the Church and her leadership really play during the Transatlantic slave trade so as to save the innocent Black African victims of this trade from its evil and inhuman consequences?

As it were, the Church of the many centuries of the Transatlantic slave trade was not silent on the issue of unjust slavery. And like some theologians and historians such as Joel Panzer had said, the Church has always condemned the slavery of peoples wherever it existed. But the question now is, was the enslavement of Black Africans also included in this effort of the Church to save those under unjust enslavement? Our goal in this section of our discussion will be therefore, to find out if any of the various Bulls of the popes written after Nicholas V and his immediate successors (that is from 1514 to the international abolition of slave trade in 1835) intervened in any way to stop this trade on Black Africans. This will help us a great deal to establish the veracity and (or) the falsity of the claim that the Church really supported the Transatlantic slave trade and profited heavily from it.

5.2 Did the Church condemn Enslavement of Black Africans?

Among the various theologians and major historians of the Church, who had stepped deep in defence of the Church against the accusations of involvement and support of the Transatlantic slave trade was an American Catholic priest Father Joel Panzer. In his book "The Popes and Slavery," Panzer argued that the Church has always condemned racial slavery wherever they existed. According to him: "The popes have condemned what is commonly known as slavery from its beginnings in the fifteenth century. This was accomplished through the moral teaching authority of the pope, known as the papal Magisterium."³¹⁴ One of the most frequently cited papal Bulls used to defend the Church in the accusations of involvement in the enslavement of Black Africans is "Sicut Dudum" of pope Eugene IV issued on January 13, 1435. Panzer used this Bull to claim that the Church has been very consistent in her condemnation of the enslavement of peoples. He argued that the Church's condemnation of the enslavement of native peoples has not ceased to flow, beginning from 1435 to 1890. With the publication of Sicut Dudum, Panzer maintained that: "It was in fact quite a long time ago, about five hundred and

³¹⁴ Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, pp. 2-3.

sixty years back with the issuance of “Sicut Dudum” that the Church through her papal Magisterium began its battle to condemn the unjust enslavement of free peoples.”³¹⁵ In order to establish the veracity or falsity of this claim, let us consider the said Bull of pope Eugene IV in details and see its contribution to the liberation of the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade.

5.3 The Bull “Sicut Dudum” of Pope Eugene IV in 1435

This Bull “Sicut Dudum” was addressed to one bishop Ferdinand, who was in charge of the bishopric See of Rubicon as well as to the Catholic faithful living on the Spanish Canary islands. The Canary islands involved here are the Spanish islands of Lanzarote and Fuerteventura, which are located south-West of Portugal and Northern part of Africa. The occasion that warranted the publication of this Bull was the reports made to the pope by this bishop and the Franciscan missionaries resident in their monastery in Seville concerning the attitude of the Portuguese Christian captains under the command of Prince Henry the Navigator, who were at this time enslaving the newly converted natives of the island of Lancarote and dispossessing them of their land and other material properties. Based on this report, pope Eugene IV wrote as follows:

...some called Lanzarote and other nearby islands, the inhabitants imitating the natural law alone and not having known previously any sect of Apostates or heretics, have a short time since been led into the orthodox Catholic faith with the aid of God’s mercy. Nevertheless, with the passage of time it has happened that in some of the said islands, some Christians (we speak of this with sorrow), with fictitious reasoning and seizing an opportunity, have approached said islands by ship and with armed forces, taken captive and even carried off to lands overseas very many persons of both sexes, taking advantage of their simplicity...they have deprived the natives of their property or turned it to their own use and have subjected some of the inhabitants of said islands to perpetual slavery, sold them to other persons and committed other various illicit and evil deeds against them.³¹⁶

The addressees of this document, whose enslavement pope Eugene IV tended to condemn with this document were not victims of the Transatlantic slave trade, rather they were newly converted Christians living on the Spanish island of Lancarote. This Bull was written in defence of the Catholic Church teaching that prohibited enslavement of Christians by their fellow Christians. So the

³¹⁵ Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. 9.

³¹⁶ Eugene IV, *Sicut Dudum*, in: Raynaldus, ed. *Baronius Annales Ecclesiastici*, Vol. 28, pp. 226-227; (M.H.), Vol. V, No, 129. English translation in: Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, pp. 75-78. See a Latin text of this Bull in Appendix B, No, 1 in this Book.

Portuguese Christians, who invaded the Christian natives of the said island and took them into captivity for enslavement were condemned by the pope in this Bull. This implies that the addressees of this Bull were nonetheless Black Africans. This point is informed by the fact that there were no Christian converts in West Africa at the time of the publication of this Bull. The very date of this Bull, its subjects and the perpetrators of the enslavement of the natives of the Canary islands as we can observe from the above citation, suggested that this Bull has nothing to do with the Transatlantic slave trade, which is the main subject of our discussion here. And there is no way it could be used to mean that it condemned the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans, which was at this time not in existence.

For the fact that it was even issued 19 years before “Romanus Pontifex and “Dum Diversas” of Nicholas V, which gave West Africa officially away as a gift to Portugal and supported wholly and entirely the Portuguese exploitation and enslavement of its native inhabitants, is also a pointer to the fact that it does not refer to the innocent Black victims of the Transatlantic slave trade as its subjects. It could be therefore, a condemnation of the enslavement of other peoples but not the Black African victims of the Atlantic slavery.

Moreover, as we already noted above, pope Eugene IV was the second pope after Martin V that gave authority to the kings of Portugal to make whatever claims of ownership over Africa as she may like. He also supported the mission of Portugal in West Africa and gave his blessings to the evils which Prince Henry the Navigator had been committing in West Africa during his papacy. For instance, his Bull “Illius Qui” of 1442 whose content has been treated in the preceding chapters above, sanctioned the slave raids conducted by Prince Henry and his military Order of Christ during which about 165 Black African captives were taken into Portugal in 1441. His decisions and grants made to Portugal in the said Bull of 1442 formed also the very ground upon which Nicholas V made the final draft of his grants of Africa to the kings of Portugal. Based on this, the Bull of Eugene IV “Sicut Dudum” that condemned the enslavement of the newly converted natives of Canary islands of Lancarote and Fuerteventura, does not fit at all into our consideration of the Bulls condemning the enslavement of Black Africans. Therefore, to use it in defence of the accusation that the Catholic Church supported enslavement of Black Africans is to say the least very illogical and unhistorical.

Other Bulls mentioned in connection with the enslavement of the inhabitants of the Canary islands were those of popes Pius II (*1405, pontificate 1458-1464) and Sixtus IV. These popes condemned the enslavement of Christians of the said Canary islands by their fellow Christians of European origin as an unjust slavery. Those Portuguese Christians, who were involved in the enslavement of their fellow Christians were threatened to be punished with the

sentence of excommunication *ipso facto*. However, there is no way popes like Pius II and especially pope Sixtus IV could have condemned the Transatlantic slave trade. Pope Pius II for instance, gave his support for the activities of the Portuguese in Africa in the Bull “*Dum tuam Singularem*”³¹⁷ which he issued on February 25, 1460. With this Bull written immediately after the demise of Prince Henry the Navigator and Grandmaster of the Order of Christ in 1460, Pius II transferred the right of the Grandmaster of this Order of Christ to king Alfonso V of Portugal, who took up the continuation of this slavery and gave it all the Royal support as demanded by Prince Henry the navigator and his enslaving military Order of Christ. We recall here that this military Order of Christ was responsible for all the military conquests, slave raids in West Africa and other successes recorded by Prince Henry the Navigator in both Africa and India. Also the said pope issued a letter to the titular bishop of Ruvo in Italy (bishop Rubeira), who was in-charge of the Portuguese Christians in West Africa on October 7, 1462. This letter was often quoted by papal loyalist historians such as Joel Panzer to support their argument that the Church condemned enslavement of Black Africans. For historians like Charles Boxer, Francis Maxwell and Thomas Hugh on the other hand, such arguments are very unfounded as far as the Transatlantic slave trade is concerned. Hugh argued that: “Pope Pius II threatened severe punishment to all, who should take new converts into slavery. But the pope did not condemn the slave trade as such, he only criticized the enslaving of those who had been converted, who of course were a tiny minority of those brought back to Portugal.”³¹⁸ For him still, to argue that the papacy of pope Pius II condemned the enslavement of Black Africans as even contained in the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* is very misleading. This is seen, when Hugh asserted in the following words: “So the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (1967, vol. 13, p. 264) is misleading when it claims that “the slave trade continued for four centuries, in spite of its condemnation by the papacy, beginning with Pius II on October 7, 1462.”³¹⁹ Following in the footsteps of Thomas Hugh on the claim that the aforesaid letter of pope Pius II condemned the enslavement of Black Africans, Charles Boxer argued as follows: “A papal Brief of October 7, 1462 is sometimes cited as evidence that the papacy condemned the African slave trade, but this document merely threatens with censures those who kidnapped, bought or sold Christian converts in the Canary islands. It neither states nor implies any condemnation

³¹⁷ For details of this Bull “*Dum tuam Singularem*,” of February 25, 1460. Cf. Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, ad Anno 1461, No. 132; *Bullarum Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. I, p. 39.

³¹⁸ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 72.

³¹⁹ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 72.

of enslaving pagans.³²⁰ Continuing in his defence of the above citation, Boxer asserted: “Similarly, various Briefs and Bulls cited by clerical Apologists as denouncing the Negro slave trade, turn out on examination to do nothing of the sort.”³²¹ And as a matter of fact, the aforesaid letter of Pius II consequently had nothing to do either with the denunciation of the Transatlantic slave trade or with the liberation of the enslaved Black Africans during this slave trade.

Pope Sixtus IV on his part should not in any way be brought into any discussion bothering on the condemnation of the enslavement of Black Africans in the sense that he massively supported the enslavement of Black Africans and re-confirmed the Bull “*Romanus Pontifex*” of Nicholas V as we saw above, which served as a ‘*Vade Mecum*’ in the hands of the Portuguese kings and Prince Henry in the enslavement of the victims (Black Africans) of the Transatlantic slave trade. It would be therefore out of place, if one uses his condemnation of the enslavement of Christian natives of the Canary islands (if at all he did so) to imply that he invariably condemned the enslavement of Black Africans.

5.4 The Bull “*Sublimis Deus*” of Pope Paul III in 1537

The papal Bull “*Sublimis Deus*” is another important document of the Church used to show the steadfastness of the Catholic Church in condemning enslavement of peoples. Joel Panzer included this Bull among the Bulls, which according to him, condemned the enslavement of Black Africans. We are to see in this Bull if his claims that it condemned enslavement of Black Africans are justified or not.

Pope Paul III otherwise known as Alessandro Farnese was born in Canino on February 29, 1468. He was educated at Rome under Pomponius Laetus, and later in Florence in the Medici house. He was created a cardinal by Alexander VI in 1493. In the conclave that ended on October 13, 1534, Alessandro Farnese was elected pope Paul III and he reigned from this time until November 10, 1549. As a pope, he strongly believed in the reform of the Church and was convinced that the Church could not be successfully reformed if the clergy itself was not reformed. In his bid to make reforms in the Church, he convoked the Council of Trient on March 15, 1545. He also began the Farnese palace, commissioned Michelangelo to construct St. Peter’s Basilica,

³²⁰ Boxer, *Christianization of Non-European Peoples in Africa, Asia and the Americas 1415-1825*, in: Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion 1440-1770*, p. 31.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

paint the last Judgement and the ceiling of the Sistine chapel. He died on November 10, 1549.³²²

This Bull “*Sublimus Deus*” was written on June 2, 1537 based on the pressures of the Dominican missionaries working in the Spanish colonies in the New World. The main brain behind the publication of this Bull was bishop Bartholomé de Las Casas (1484-1566). This bishop, as already noted in section two of this work was against the enslavement of the West Indians whom the Spaniards considered as slaves based on the Aristotelian concept of natural slavery. Through his consistent defence of the illegality of their enslavement, he was able to obtain on their behalf a papal condemnation of their enslavement. Following his argumentation, which dwelt on the humanity of the said Indians, pope Paul III condemned the evil in their enslavement as something unheard of before and brought about by Satan the enemy of the human race. According to him:

...seeing this and envying it, the enemy of the human race, who always opposes all good men so that the race may perish, has thought up a way unheard of before, by which he might impede the saving word of God from being preached to the nations. He has stirred up some of his allies who, desiring to satisfy their own avarice are presuming to assert far and wide that the Indians of the West and South who have come to our notice in these times be reduced to our service like brute animals under the pretext that they are lacking the Catholic faith. And they reduce them to slavery, treating them with afflictions they would scarcely use with brute animals.³²³

This document went further to confirm that the Indians are rational human beings and as a result of this, they are capable of receiving the Christian faith. By reason of this fact, the pope condemned their enslavement as an unjust treatment and so liberated them from the clutches of their unjust Spanish oppressors. In doing this, the pope decreed:

We... who seek with all our strength to bring into the same flock those outside the sheepfold, noting that the Indians themselves indeed are true men and are not only capable of the Christian faith, but also as has been made known to us, promptly hasten to the faith, and wishing to provide suitable remedies for them by our Apostolic

³²² For further readings on pope Paul III, see the following: Marthaler, ed. *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 11, pp. 21-23; Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, pp. 11-12; Edwards W. Hayden, *Paul III oder die geistliche Gegenreformation*, Leipzig 1933; Pierre Janelle, *The Catholic Reformation*, Milwaukee 1949; Leopold von Ranke, *Die römische Päpste in den letzten Vier Jahrhundert*, Wien 1934, pp. 150-168.

³²³ Paul III, “*Sublimis Deus*,” Document of *Archivo Secreto Vaticano (ASV)*, A.A.Arm. XXXVII, Vol. 15, Fl. 145rv. See the Latin text of this Bull in Appendix B, No. 2 in this Book. English translation in: Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, pp.79-81. Printed copies of this Bull are found in: *Las Casas en Mexico, Historia y obras desconocidas*, pp. 310-311; Waddingius, *Annales Minorum seu trium Ordinum a St. Francisco Institutorum*, Vol. XVI, pp. 1516-1540.

authority decree and declare by these present letters that the same Indians and all other peoples - even though they are outside the "faith" have not been deprived or should not be deprived of their liberty or their possessions. Rather they are to be able to use and enjoy this liberty and this ownership of property freely and licitly and are not to be reduced to slavery, and that whatever happens to the contrary is to be considered null and void and as having no force of law.³²⁴

With these words, the Indians regained their freedom as human beings and their lot fell on Black Africans at the suggestion of this same bishop Bartolomé de Las Casas, who presented the Black African race as a better race, whose enslavement by the rest of the world could easily be justified on grounds of the myth of a cursed race and other traditional negative teachings of the Catholic Church about Black Africans. And as one can see above, this papal Bull made mention of "the same Indians and all other peoples" under enslavement. Those, who are referred to in this phrase are unknown. One cannot say with exactitude that they included the enslaved Black Africans. To intend to think so, would contradict the views and the goal of bishop Las Casas, who suggested to the pope and the Spanish royal authorities that Black Africans should be used as slaves in place of the native Indians of the Caribbean islands. The mere mentioning of Black Africans to the pope as a better replacement for the enslaved Indians and the failure of the pope here to question the *raison d'être* of such a suggestion is a clear indication of the fact that the said pope adjudged in this Bull the enslavement of Black Africans as a just slavery. And there is no gainsaying in stating the fact that he was probably convinced like his predecessors were, that Black Africans were under a divine curse, which placed a punishment with perpetual enslavement upon them as the true descendants of their accursed progenitor Ham. This was a well-known entrenched traditional teaching of the Church about Black Africans whose origin goes back to the patristic period and continued to be held as a sound teaching in the Church throughout the medieval times. And the modern times especially in the period of the Transatlantic slave trade became a period of putting this traditional teaching of the Church into practice with the Black Africans. This could be the reason why, pope Paul III did not consider it necessary to mention the enslaved Black Africans in this Bull, who were already labouring under the Transatlantic slavery at the time of issuing this Bull. As a matter of fact, it is clear that there is no mention of the enslaved Black Africans in this document, talk-less of a condemnation of their enslavement. This idea won the support of Charles Boxer, when he said: "But neither the papacy itself nor the Crowns of Castile and Portugal drew any such inference from it, nor was the validity of the earlier pro Portuguese Bulls of 1452-1456 in any way impugned thereby. Not only so,

³²⁴ Ibid.

but for centuries, the stipends of the bishops and the ecclesiastical establishments of Angola were financed from the proceeds of the slave trade.”³²⁵

Moreover, at the time of the publication of this document in 1537, the enslavement of Black Africans had already attained an international status following the king of Spain’s opening of the international slave route to the New World since the past 27 years, precisely in 1510. Could it then be that pope Paul III was unaware of this international slave trade going on at this period that made him never to utter a word of condemnation against it, or should one understand it that he was like other people of his age, who had much problem to recognise and admit the full humanity of these Black Africans based on the numerous traditional Catholic teachings that were anti-Blacks oriented? Whichever way one might understand it, the reality remains that Paul III had not Black Africans in mind while writing this Bull. As a result of this, it is much unfounded for some clerical and papal Apologists such as Joel Panzer etc. to use this document to demonstrate the consistent efforts of the Church in battling against enslavement of peoples including Black Africans. And at this juncture, I make bold to say that if the said Bull qualifies to serve such a purpose as claimed by Panzer, the enslaved innocent Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade were not within the reach of its dream and services. Other Apostolic letters of Paul III against slavery such as “Pastorale Officium”³²⁶ of May 29, 1537, “Altitudo Divini Consulii”³²⁷ of June 1537 and his Motu Proprio “Cupientes Judaeos”³²⁸ of March 21, 1542 were all addressed to the same Indians of West and South Indies, whose enslavement he considered to be an unjust slavery. In all these documents, Paul III restated and reconfirmed their rationality, humanity and capability to receive the Christian

³²⁵ Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 31. Cf. Boxer, *Portuguese Society in the Tropics*, pp. 131-133.

³²⁶ Paul III, “Pastorale Officium,” Document of ASV, A.A.Arm. XXXVII, 15, Fl. 145v; Coleccion de Bulas, Vol. 1. English version in: Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, pp. 84-85. This document was issued a month earlier than “Sublimis Deus” and contained the harsh punishment with excommunication *laetae sententiae* which made the Spanish Conquistadors working in the New World to complain to the then Spanish king and emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. With the pressures mounted on Paul III by emperor Charles V to remove those censures, the pope succumbed to this pressure and repealed these censures. That is why there was no trace of the punishment with excommunication found in the Bull *Sublimis Deus* issued a month later. The document containing this withdrawal of all ecclesiastical censures in the Bull “Pastorales Officium” by pope Paul III is the Apostolic letter titled “Non Indecens Videtur” of June 19, 1538. A copy of this Apostolic letter is found in *Archivo Secreto Vaticano*, A.A.Arm. XLI, Vol 10, Fl. 246rv.

³²⁷ Paul III, “Altitudo Divini Consulii,” in: Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. 24.

³²⁸ Paul III, “Cupientes Judaeos,” in: Guade, ed. *Bullarum Diplomatum et Privilegiorum Sanctorum* Vol. VI, pp. 336-337; Arthur Utz & Brigitta von Galen, eds. *Die katholische Sozialdoktrin*, Bd. II, pp. 1752-1756.

faith without the use of force or enslavement. They all added strength to the weight of his previous Bull “*Sublimis Deus*” of 1537 and contained the threat of punishment with excommunication *latae sententiae* for defaulters, who might attempt to further enslave the said Indians. With all this in mind therefore, Paul III succeeded to free his target group - Indians and failed to put the suffering Black Africans into any consideration, who were victims of a more dangerous evil practice of the slave trade. Whether this silence to comment on the evil of this slave trade was an omission or a tactful way of supporting the injustice perpetrated by some of his Christian subjects, remains elusive and wide open for debate.

5.5 The Bull “*Cum Sicuti*” of Pope Gregory XIV in 1591

This is another important document used by some historians to show the consistent effort of the Church to liberate those unjustly enslaved by others. This Bull “*Cum Sicuti*” was issued to the bishop of Manila in the Philippines on April 18, 1591. The purpose of this Apostolic letter of pope Gregory XIV (*1535, pontificate 1590-1591) was first and foremost to help those Spaniards, who were greatly troubled by their conscience as a result of the untold injustices they committed against the Indians of West and South who were resident in the Philippines. The Bull “*Cum Sicuti*” was therefore issued to help such Spaniards to make restitution to the Indians for all their goods and possessions unjustly and forcefully taken away by the Spanish Christians. In stating this intention, pope Gregory XIV wrote: “...when the Philippines were first converted, the Indians were very fierce and many took up arms against them because of the great danger to their own lives. Much harm was done to the Indians in such a conflict. Now there are many who realize that the deprivation of the Indians was wrong, and who wish to make restitution.”³²⁹ The second intention for issuing this Bull was to add strength to the anti-slavery law of king Philip II (*1527, reigned 1554-1598) of Spain. In this anti-slavery law, the king decreed that no slaves should be made of Indians any more by the Spaniards either by just or unjust wars. To make this law more forceful, the pope decreed:

We, in order that the Indians may come to or return to Christian doctrine and their own homes and possessions freely, and securely and without any fear of servitude as befits what is in harmony with reason and justice, decree in virtue of holy obedience and under penalty of excommunication that if at the publication of these letters, anyone have or detain such Indian slaves, they must give up all craft and deceit, set the slaves completely

³²⁹ Gregory XIV, “*Cum Sicuti*,” *ASV, Sec. Brevis, Vol. 178; Coleccion de Bulas, Vol. 2, p. 108; Panzer, Popes and Slavery, p. 86. See a Latin text of this Bull in Appendix B, No, 3 in this Book.*

free and in the future neither make nor retain slaves in any way according to the edict and mandate of said king Philip.³³⁰

From the words of this document, there is no evidence to show either directly or indirectly that it made any reference to Africa and those Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade. Maintaining absolute silence on the burning issue of the enslavement of Black Africans going on at the time of the publication of this Bull is an indubitable proof that pope Gregory XIV supported the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans and approved of its continuation as a just enslavement. It would be therefore unfounded and unfair to include his Bull as a papal document, whose goal was to condemn the enslavement of Black Africans and to free them from their unjust oppressors. Instead, this document is better taken as part of the consistent engagement of the Church initiated by pope Paul III's "Sublimis Deus" and "Pastorale Officium" to liberate Western Indians from the unjust treatment and the debilitating effects of slavery.

5.6 The Bull "Commissum Nobis" of Pope Urban VIII in 1639

The Bull "Commissum Nobis" of Urban VIII (*1568, pontificate 1623-1644) was issued on April 22, 1639 as part of the consistent effort of the Church to fight enslavement of the West Indians. The publication of this Bull was occasioned by the pressures and the journeys made by the Spanish Jesuits to Rome to protest against the enslavement of many Brazilian Indians by the Bandirantes of São Paulo. It was addressed to the Collector General of debts for the Apostolic Camera in Portugal. The words of this document were directed against all those, who, despite the penalty of excommunication with *latae sententiae* of the previous Bulls of other popes were still reducing the Indians of the West Indies to the evil practices of slavery. It was as a result of the continued existence of the unjust enslavement of Indians that this Bull was issued. This intention is obviously noticed, when Urban VIII said:

Since we have reason to know that the same causes which prompted the letters of our predecessor Paul III continued to exist, we ourselves, following the footsteps of Paul III our predecessor and wishing to repress the work of impious men who should induce said Indians to accept faith in Christ by all the means of Christian charity and gentleness but who deter them from it by their inhuman acts.³³¹

³³⁰ Ibid; Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. 88.

³³¹ Urban VIII, "Commissum Nobis," in: *Coleccion de Bulas*, Vol. 2, pp. 109-110. See a Latin text of this Bull in Appendix B, No, 4 in this Book. Printed copies of this Bull are found in the

Inspired by the spirit of Paul III, Urban VIII therefore, set out to condemn any form of unjust practice which depicts slavery carried out against Indians wherever they lived. He considered the use of force and enslavement in the conversion of Indians to the Christian faith as evil and antithetical to mission. And as an alternative to that he directed that works of charity and good examples are better means of conversion than enslavement. His goal was to see Indians live freely as Christians without being burdened by their fellow Spanish and Portuguese Christians. To achieve this, Urban VIII commanded the Collector General in Portugal to carry out his intention expressed in the words of this document to their last letters. This is noticed when Urban VIII commanded:

We entrust to you the duty and command you by these present letters that either by yourself or through another or through others that you assist with efficacious defences of all the Indians both in Paraguay and the provinces of Brazil and along the River Plate, as well as all other Indians living in any other regions and places of the West and South: that you severely prohibit anyone from reducing to slavery, selling, buying, exchanging, giving away, separating from wives and children, despoiling of their property, taking away to other places, depriving of liberty in any way and keeping in servitude said Indians.³³²

This document like the others that preceded it, was equally silent on the issue of Black Africans under enslavement during the Transatlantic slave trade. It went contrary to the expression of the papal obligation to speak against injustice committed in the name of spreading the Christian faith. It also failed short of the papal obligation to show concern for the salvation of all people including Black Africans as stated in the introductory part of this document which partly reads: "The ministry of the highest Apostolic Office entrusted to us by the Lord, demands that the salvation of no one be outside our concern, not only the salvation of the Christian faithful but also the salvation of those who still exist outside the bosom of the Church in the darkness of native superstition."³³³ That this same obligation of his office which led Urban VIII to write this letter in favour of the Indians did not also compel him to issue a Bull in condemnation of the same evil practices going on along the Atlantic Coasts of West Africa, raised a question mark in his office as the pope of the universal Church. He could not however claim ignorance of the existence of this evil traffic in slaves as well as the fact that Black Africans were singled out even in Brazil to serve as slaves in place of the Indians, whom he set out to liberate with this apostolic letter. By so doing, he left many rooms open for critics of

following works: Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, pp. 89-91; Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae, Vol. II, pp. 53-54; Utz, *Die katholische Sozialdoktrin*, Bd. I, pp. 382-386.

³³² Ibid. Cf. Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, pp. 90-91.

³³³ Ibid. See also, Panzer, *Ibid*, p. 89.

the Church to include him on the list of those, who were in the position and office to set Black Africans free from the Transatlantic slavery but chose to go the way of silence like most of his predecessors did. His silence is an indication that he accepted the traditional anti-Blacks teachings of the Church since the patristic and medieval periods, which justified their enslavement as a Divine act based on the myth of an accursed race of Ham.

5.7 The Bull “*Immensa Pastorum*” of Pope Benedict XIV in 1741

The papal Bull “*Immensa Pastorum*” of Benedict XIV (*1675, pontificate 1740-1758) was issued on December 20, 1741. Like others before it, this Bull is a demonstration of the Church’s determination to fight the evil of the unjust enslavement of Indians. It was addressed to the bishops of Brazil and other regions of the West Indies and America subject to king John of Portugal. Its publication was occasioned by the reports sent to the pope probably by the missionaries working in Brazil on the issue of the continued sufferings of Indians in Brazil despite the prohibitions made in the past, that no one should treat them with hatred or unjustly deprive them of their possessions. In this report, it was clear to the pope that the Indians were still reduced to slavery and forced to flee to the mountains, where they lived under harsh conditions of life in order to escape their untimely death in the hands of the Portuguese Christians. Benedict XIV therefore wrote to decry this evil still existing among those he described as “members of the true faith” and expressed regrets that such evils were still being propagated by them. In his own words, the pope sorrowfully said:

We have received written notice, not without most grave sorrow to our fatherly soul, that after so much advice of Apostolic providence given by our predecessors the Roman Pontiffs, after the publication of many constitutions, saying that help, aid and protection should be given to those who lack faith, and that neither injuries nor the scourge, nor chains, nor servitude, nor death should be inflicted on them, and all this under the gravest penalties and censures of the Church, there are still found especially in the regions of Brazil, members of the true faith, who completely oblivious, as it were, of the charity poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, presume to deal with the unfortunate Indians who dwell in the harsh mountain regions of the same Brazil, whether North or South or in other deserted regions...by reducing them to slavery, or selling them to others as if they were property.³³⁴

³³⁴ Benedict XIV, “*Immensa Pastorum*,” in: Benedict XIV Bullarium, Vol. I, pp. 99-102. English version in: Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, pp. 92-96. See a Latin copy of this Bull in Appendix B, No. 5 in this Book. Printed copies of this Bull are found in the following works: *Ius Pontificum de Propaganda Fide* Vol. III, No. XVIII, pp. 45-47; Utz, *Die katholische Sozialdoktrin*, pp. 388-396.

The pope urged the bishops of Brazil to see to the end of this evil practice by putting up a strong defence for the lives and property of the Indians. He did this so as to protect the Christian faith from being hated as well as to save the names and dignity of these bishops and their office from the shame of this evil practices being carried out even before their very eyes. In these words the pope exhorted the bishops:

And so we ask and exhort you, Brothers, that in this matter you permit no lack in the vigilance, solicitude and work due your ministry, to the detriment of your names and dignity, rather burning with the ardent zeal of priestly charity, join your efforts to the rulers of the regions so that priests and laity bring helps to these Indians and lead them to the Catholic faith.³³⁵

From all these efforts made by Benedict XIV to save the lives of those under the threat of slavery, it is conspicuously noticeable that he did not mention a word of his fatherly concern about Black Africans, who in greater numbers were labouring under the same evil of slavery like the Indians in the very same Portuguese Brazilian colony. “*Immensa Pastorum*” therefore is clearly a continuation of the traditions of teaching and condemnation of the enslavement of Indians as initiated by pope Paul III and Urban VIII. It shows an unbroken chain of the Church’s support for a complete liberation of Indians from any form of servitude. The failure to mention Black Africans or to condemn their enslavement in this Bull is a clear indication that pope Benedict XIV accepted their enslavement as a just slavery. Otherwise, what prevented him from including millions of enslaved Black Africans in Brazil as among those who should enjoy protection and aid of the Church as he indicated in his Bull with the following wordings?: “That help, aid and protection should be given to those who lack faith, and that neither injuries nor the scourge, nor chains, nor servitude, nor death should be inflicted on them.”³³⁶ Where lies the sincerity of these words of the pope in this citation if he considered Black Africans as those unworthy to be given such aid and protection by the pope himself? That he was aware that the Black Africans, who made up a greater percentage of slaves in the Portuguese colony of Brazil were inflicted with pains, injuries, death and chains of slavery and did neither utter a word to condemn their condition of life and status in Brazil nor lift a hand of help to liberate them from the evil of slavery is to say the least, a great injustice done to the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slavery and a clear indication that the Catholic Church under his papacy was very choosy and selective in

³³⁵ Ibid; Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. 93.

³³⁶ Benedict XIV, *Ibid*.

determining those, who were to enjoy from her duty to give protection to peoples labouring under great injustice and unjust enslavement.

Put together therefore, these papal Bulls, which have been subjects of our consideration in this section of our work were issued after the Bulls of pope Nicholas V, which laid the foundation upon which the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans was established. As we have seen in their various contexts and contents, none of them was concerned with the condemnation of the enslavement of Black Africans begun by the Roman Pontiffs of the renaissance papacy. All the popes, whose apostolic constitutions have been examined in this chapter were silent on the enslavement of Black Africans. Expressing his disappointment in this attitude of the Church towards Black Africans in chains, Francis Maxwell, historian and member of the “Anti-Slavery Society for the protection of Human Rights” wrote as follows: “It is noticeable that not one of the series of papal Briefs makes any reference to the enslavement of the Negroes in West Africa nor to the Transatlantic trade in Negro slaves.”³³⁷ The same feelings of disappointment over this attitude of the Church towards Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade was also expressed by Charles Boxer when he wrote: “When the Church did bring itself belatedly to denounce the enslavement of “civilised” races such as the Japanese and Chinese, it never explicitly nor implicitly extended such condemnation to the Blacks of Africa.”³³⁸ From 1537 to 1838 (that means, for over 300 years), the Catholic Church through her popes and motivated by Christians of European origin defended assiduously the freedom and liberty of the Indians who were unjustly enslaved in the same period when Black Africans were being enslaved. But she did not show any remarkable interest and concern for the victims of the Transatlantic slave trade, who were chained hands and legs and treated like animals by the Christian slave masters from Europe and America. Like Christian Delacampagne rightly puts it: “One is interested in the free Indians but not for the Black Africans in chains.”³³⁹ Through her consistent efforts for the liberation of Indians, the enslaved Indians were timely saved from the devastating consequences of slavery. But what of Black Africans under the same unjust enslavement? Why was their own case different? From the many historical evidences of the Church’s defence of the enslaved Indians shown in the above Apostolic letters, the Church can today boast of her assistance rendered to them and at the same time be proud of her liberating act during their enslavement. But the question is, in her supposed effort to save Black Africans in chains of slavery, could she also boast of any apostolic

³³⁷ Maxwell, *Slavery*, p. 73.

³³⁸ Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, pp. 31- 32.

³³⁹ Delacampagne, *Sklaverei*, p. 200. This citation reads in German thus: “Man interessiert sich für den freien Indianer, nicht für den Schwarzen in Ketten.”

constitution written specifically in defence of the chained Black Africans? If yes, when was that written? The answer to these questions will showcase itself in the next chapter of this work.

6. Papal Bulls Condemning the Enslavement of Black Africans

6.1 When did the Church Condemn the Enslavement of Black Africans?

The Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans which began in 1444 with the capture and the shipment of 265 Black African natives to Portugal is the longest lasting enslavement of peoples in the history of slavery. Among the reasons for this long duration of African enslavement is the complete lack of interest by the leadership of the Catholic Church to engage herself in the affairs of the powerless and innocent victims of this enslavement. This attitude of the Church was caused by her traditional teaching on slavery and the slave trade as well as her interpretation of the curse of Ham as a curse of slavery laid down upon Black Africans by the patriarch Noah. Many theologians and historians such as Francis Maxwell, John Noonan, Laennec Hurbon, Charles Boxer etc., are of the opinion that the condemnation of the Transatlantic slave trade from the side of the Magisterium of the Church was greatly delayed as a result of the Church's teaching and position on the issue of the slave trade and slavery. According to these historians, the Church was afraid to speak out in condemnation of the evil of this enslavement because, she did not want to break away from the continuity of her doctrines on the subject of slavery as an institution. According to John T. Noonan: "It was not until 1890 that the Church condemned the institution of slavery. Only in 1890 did pope Leo XIII attack the institution of slavery itself, noting that slavery was incompatible with the brotherhood that unites all men."³⁴⁰ In the same manner, Laennec Hurbon agreed with Noonan that slavery is one of the areas of life, where the Church changed its moral teaching to suite the times, but that this time never came until in the last century. According to Hurbon: "No pope before 1890 condemned slavery. One can search in vain through the interventions of the Holy See - those of Pius V, Urban VIII and Benedict XIV for any condemnation of the actual principle of slavery."³⁴¹ On his own part, Francis Maxwell is of the view that the Church maintained her constant teaching on the

³⁴⁰ John Noonan, "Development in Moral Doctrine," *Theological Studies*, 54(1993), pp. 662-675.

³⁴¹ Hurbon, *The Church And Afro-American Slavery 1492-1992*, p. 372.

issue of slavery up till the twentieth century and only changed it with the issuance of the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the modern world popularly known as “*Gaudium et Spes*.” Thus in his own words, Maxwell remarked: “As is well known, the common teaching on slavery was officially corrected by the Second Vatican Council in 1965.”³⁴² This correction according to him is contained in the Apostolic Constitution of the Church popularly known as “*Gaudium et Spes*.” In the 27th number of this Constitution, this document affirmed that:

whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torture inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself, whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children... all these things and others like them are criminal. They poison human society, dishonour the Creator, and do more harm to those who practise them than those who suffer the injury.³⁴³

During this long period of traditional teaching on the issue of slavery, the Church has supported slavery and the slave trade itself, on the condition that those involved are justly acquired namely: as prisoners of a just war, that they are non-Christians as well as debtors. In other words, the Church, represented by her teaching Office made a difference between just and unjust slavery and slave trade. Black African enslavement was considered in the attitude of the Holy Office of the Church as a just slavery. This position became clearly evident in 1686, when the Holy Office was confronted with the justice of the Negro slave markets in West Africa. In a publication of some guidance for Catholics engaged in Negro slave trade during the papacy of pope Innocent XI (*1611, pontificate 1676-1689), the Holy Office instructed such slave traders to discriminate between Blacks, who have been unjustly enslaved and others, who have been justly enslaved. Even though the Holy Office forbade capture of harmless and innocent natives of Ethiopia by the use of force and fraud, and advised Christian slave traders not to buy such slaves, she did not however outrightly condemn the traffic in humans.³⁴⁴

The Catholic Church did not change this position even in 1866 when Reverend William Massaia (1809-1889)³⁴⁵ who was the Vicar Apostolic of the Gala tribe

³⁴² Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 11.

³⁴³ Flannery, ed. Document of the Vatican Council II, “*Gaudium et Spes*,” Nos. 27 & 29. Cf. Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 12.

³⁴⁴ Instructions of *Sacra Congregationis Sancta Officii* concerning the participation of Catholics in the Slave Trade on March 20, 1686, in: *Collectanea Sacra Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, Vol. I, No. 230, pp. 76-77.

³⁴⁵ Reverend Father William Massaia was an Italian born Capuchin. He was born on June 8, 1809 in Piemonte in Northern Italy. He was appointed the Vicar Apostolic to the Galla missions in

in Ethiopia approached the Holy Office in Rome with the same problem of the legitimacy of the participation of Catholics in the slave trade. The Holy Office replied that slavery itself is not contrary to natural and divine law, ipso facto Catholics could engage themselves in the slave trade. In the words of the guidance provided by this Holy Office, the Church said among other things:

Slavery itself, considered as such in its essential nature is not at all contrary to the natural and divine law, and there can be several just titles of slavery and these are referred to by approved theologians and commentators of the sacred canons... From this, it follows that it is not contrary to the natural and divine law for a slave to be sold, bought, exchanged or donated, provided that in this sale, purchase, exchange or gift, the due conditions are strictly observed which the approved authors likewise describe and explain. Among these conditions, the most important ones are that the purchaser should carefully examine whether the slave who is put up for sale has been justly or unjustly deprived of his liberty, and that the vendor should do nothing which might endanger the life, virtue or Catholic faith of the slave.³⁴⁶

Very surprising to many historians is also the change of attitude noticed in the teaching of pope Paul III, who wrote the most fundamental Apostolic letter in condemnation of the enslavement of Indians. Contrary to his earlier teaching and the views of some theologians and highly placed Vatican office holders such as the German born Josef Metzler and professor of Church history at the Pontifical Urban University Rome, pope Paul III supported the above teaching of the Church in the later period of his pontificate which holds that slavery in itself is not an evil thing. Metzler for instance, held the view that despite the opposition from the Spanish king (Emperor Charles V) that forced Paul III to

Ethiopia by pope Gregory XVI in 1846. When this Galla missions later became a diocese, William Massaia was appointed its first bishop.

³⁴⁶ Instructions of the Holy Office on the reply to the letter of the Vicar Apostolic of the Galla tribe in Ethiopia on the issue of the participation of Catholics in the slave trade, dated June 20, 1866. Original copy of this Guideline is found in the *Collectanea Sacra Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, Anno, 1866, No. 1293, p. 719. English translation in: Maxwell, *The Church and Slavery*, p. 79. The above citation reads in Latin thus: “Etsi Romani Pontifices nihil intentatum reliquerint quo servitutem ubique gentium abolerent, iisdemque praecipae acceptum referri debeat quod iam a pluribus saeculis nulli apud plurimas christianorum gentes servi habeantur; tamen servitus ipsa per se et absolute considerata iuri naturali et divino minime repugnat, pluresque adesse possunt iusti servitutis tituli quos videre est apud probatos theologos sacrorumque canonum interpretes. Dominium enim illud, quod domino in servum competit non aliud esse intelligitur quam ius perpetuum de servi operis in proprium commodum disponendi, quas quidem homini ab homine praestari fas est. inde autem consequitur iuri naturali et divino non repugnare quod servus vendatur, ematur, commutetur, donetur, modo in hac venditione, emptione, commutatione, donatione, debtae conditiones accurate serventur quas itidem probati auctores late persequuntur et explicant. Quas inter conditiones illa praecipuum sibi vindicat locum, ut emptor diligenter examinet, num servus qui venum exponitur iuste an iniuste liberate sua privatus fuerit, et venditor nihil committat, quo servi ad alium possessorem transferendi vita, honestas, aut catholica fides in discrimen adducatur.”

withdraw his hard stand on slavery of the Indians, he never however recanted his condemnation of slavery as an evil venture. This view of Josef Metzler is contained in the Preface to a Book titled “*Caeli Novi et Terra Nova*” (the new heaven and the new earth) published by the *Archivo Secreto Vaticano* and the *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* in commemoration of the *Sala Sixtina della Biblioteca Vaticana* in 1992. Writing in his capacity as the Prefect of the Vatican Secret Archives (1984-1995), Metzler praised the efforts of the popes especially Paul III in condemning the enslavement of the Indians of Latin America. According to him:

The popes condemned any kind of slavery with unrelenting harshness, which the Spanish conquest and its entourage encumbered the Christian evangelization until today... All, who nevertheless enslaved the Indians were threatened by pope Paul III with severe ecclesiastical penalties. Although he had to withdraw this threat due to the pressure from the Spanish government, but he did not however withdraw his condemnation of slavery.³⁴⁷

However, the truth of the matter here is that Metzler as an insider of the Vatican Secret Archives is not fair with historical truth in the above pronouncement made by him. The undeniable historical truth remains that pope Paul III used his Holy Office in 1548 to proclaim that slavery together with the traffic in slaves is legal and that anyone can take part in it despite his status in the civil society as well as in the ecclesiastical Order. This proclamation, which legalized the slave trade and prolonged the duration of the Transatlantic slave trade is contained in Paul III's *Motu Proprio* “*Confirmatio Statutorum Populi Romani super Restitutione Servorum in Urbe*” of November 9, 1548. The papal decree contained in this document was brought about by the scarcity of slaves in the city of Rome caused by Paul III's earlier *Motu Proprio* “*Statutorum Almae Urbis Romae*”³⁴⁸ of June 28, 1535. In this earlier document of 1535, he renewed the ancient practice of the magistrates (*Conservatori*) to emancipate slaves who fled to the city of Rome (*Capitol*) and appealed for their liberty. On account of the renewal of this privilege of the magistrates to emancipate slaves, slaves became very scarce in the city of Rome after some years, and as a result of this, the normal works which they used to perform in Rome were left unattended. In order to stop this scarcity and the problems it caused in the economic life of the city of Rome, the magistrates protested to Paul III in 1544 and petitioned him to abolish this custom in Rome. Paul III hearkened to their petition and abolished this custom in Rome

³⁴⁷ Josef Metzler, “*Evangelisierung und vatikanisches Archiv*,” in: Vazquez, ed. *Caeli Novi et Terra Nova*, p. 26.

³⁴⁸ Pope Paul III, *Motu Proprio*, “*Statutorum Almae Urbis Romae* of June 28, 1535, in: *Liber Sextus Bullarium*, 18(B)- 19 (A). Cf. Maxwell, *The Church and Slavery*, p. 74.

as well as gave approval to the buying and selling of human beings in 1548. In this document of 1548, which approved of the traffic in humans, Paul III in his apostolic authority said in unmistakable terms:

By reason of our Pastoral Office, we gladly attend to the troubles (due to the lack of slaves) of individual Christians as far as we can with God's help, and having regard to the fact that the effect of a multitude of slaves is that inherited estates are enriched, agricultural property is better looked after and cities are extended... we decree that each and every person of either sex, whether Roman or non-Roman, whether secular or clerical, and no matter of what dignity, status, degree, order or condition they be, may freely and lawfully buy and sell publicly any slaves whatsoever of either sex, and make contracts about them as is accustomed to be done in other places, and publicly hold them as slaves and make use of their work, and compel them to do the work assigned to them. And with Apostolic authority, by the tenor of these present documents, we enact and decree in perpetuity that slaves who flee to the Capitol and appeal for their liberty shall in no wise be freed from the bondage of their servitude....³⁴⁹

With the words of this *Motu proprio* of 1548, Paul III approved of the legality of both slavery and the slave trade. This teaching added much force to the Transatlantic slave trade and made many Christians of Europe to take more active part in this traffic in slaves. It also threw some light on the reason why some popes and high ranking office holders in the Church had to engage themselves legitimately in the buying and selling of fellow human beings. According to the historian and author Thomas Hugh, when the Catholic king Ferdinand of Spain conquered and enslaved the city of Malaga in 1487: "A third of the captives were sent to Africa in exchange for Christian prisoners held there, a third (over 4,000) were sold by the Spanish Crown to help pay for the cost of the war, and a third were distributed throughout Christendom as presents - a hundred went to pope Innocent VIII, fifty girls were sent to Isabella the Queen of Naples and 30 to Leonova, the Queen of Portugal."³⁵⁰ Going a little further to show the weight of this teaching of the Church on slavery and the slave trade and how deeply it led the Church to involve herself in the slave trade, Hugh alleged that: "There is a record of a Consistory held outside Rome in February 1488, at which pope Innocent VIII (*1432, pontificate 1484-1492) distributed his share of captives as presents to the assembled clergy."³⁵¹ Corroborating this accusation, David B. Davis confirmed that: "In 1488, pope Innocent VIII accepted a gift of one hundred Moors from king Ferdinand of Spain and distributed them among the cardinals and

³⁴⁹ Pope Paul III, *Motu Proprio* of November 9, 1548, "Confirmatio Statutorum Populi Romani super Restitutione Servorum in Urbe", in: *Liber Sextus Bullarum*, Vol. 19(B), p. VI. English translation in: Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 75.

³⁵⁰ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 83.

³⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp. 83-84.

nobility.”³⁵² In the same year also, king John II (*1455, reigned 1481-1495) of Portugal told the same pope Innocent VIII that: “The profits from the slave trade were helping to finance the wars against Islam in North Africa.”³⁵³

Furthermore, the same weight of the Church’s position on slave trade led the Bishop of Algarve in 1446 to go down into the annals of history as the only prince of the Church who sent out a caravel to West Africa for slave kidnapping and capturing. This fact was corroborated by M. Saunders when he said: “In 1446, the Bishop of the Algarve fitted out a caravel for the slave trade.”³⁵⁴ This Bishop of the Algarve was not alone in the involvement of the Church’s highly placed clerics in the slave trade. Thus according to Thomas Hugh: “Other spiritual potentates were shareholders in voyages made in Africa. The cardinal Infante Enrique, brother of king Philip III of Spain was through his secretariat a formidable trader in slaves to Buenos Aires during the early 17th century. Both the Jesuits and their traditional enemies were much involved.”³⁵⁵

Also Francis Maxwell made an exposition of the papal politics on the issue of slavery and the slave trade in the Papal States. In his exposition, he recorded that the popes kept the institution of slavery and the slave trade alive for many centuries with their practice of keeping slaves in the Papal States for the papal Galleys. According to him: “There are records which show that from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries some of the popes were personally involved in the purchase and use of Galley-slaves for the Pontifical squadron in the almost continuous warfare with Saracens or Turks.”³⁵⁶ Maxwell further revealed that pope Urban VIII, who condemned Indian enslavement in his Bull “*Commissum Nobis*” of 1639 did not only encourage the slave trade and slavery but was also deeply involved in the traffic in slaves during his Pontificate. His participation in the slave trade is evident in his Fleet policy in the Papal States. Maxwell maintained that in his Fleet policy, Urban VIII commanded his Treasurer General Monsignor Durazzi in 1629 to buy 40 slaves for the maintenance of the papal Fleets in the Papal States.³⁵⁷ Also in his *Motu Proprio* of January 31, 1629, Urban VIII ordered that the private slaves which some officials of his government kept for hiring be bought rather than using them as rented slaves.³⁵⁸ In another *Motu Proprio* of March 10, 1629, which

³⁵² Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, pp. 100-101. Cf. Martin, “Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren,” p. 49.

³⁵³ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 83.

³⁵⁴ Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 149.

³⁵⁵ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, pp. 298-299.

³⁵⁶ Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 76.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ Bertolotti, *La Schiavitù in Roma, Dal Secolo XVI al XIX*, pp. 20-22. Cf. Priesching, *Die Verurteilung der Sklaverei unter Gregor XVI.*, in: *Saeculum*, 59/1 (2008), p. 151.

dealt on the subject of war captives, who were held as slaves for the papal states, Urban VIII followed the rule which stated that a certain percentage of the war booty should be given to the Commander-in-chief of the papal army. To carry out this obligation, Urban VIII directed his Commander-in-chief Carlo Barberini to receive the money equivalent of these captured men. This order was effected by Monsignor Durazzo, who paid Carlo Barberini a total sum of 300 scudi as money-equivalent for the 17 captured men as his own share of the booty. These men were condemned to the Galleys as Galley-slaves for the papal Naval Fleet.³⁵⁹

Pope Innocent X (*1574, pontificate 1644-1655) did also involve himself not only in the slave trade but also in the practice of maintaining the institution of slavery in the Papal States. During his pontificate, he informed his Treasurer General Monsignor Lorenzo Raggi in a letter of July 8, 1645, that he had directed the General of the papal Naval Fleet Prince Nicolo Ludovisi (1610-1664) to purchase 100 Turkish slaves to serve as Galley-slaves for the papal squadron.³⁶⁰ This letter was meant to serve as a notification for the release of the money to the aforesaid General for the purchase of the said Turkish slaves. In like manner, pope Alexander VII (*1599, pontificate 1655-1667) gave approval for the purchase of 600 slaves for the Pontifical Galleys in 1661.³⁶¹

Furthermore, it was also on record that pope Innocent XI (*1611, papacy 1676-1689) furnished the papal Naval Fleets in the Papal States with slaves during his pontificate. Slaves who served in the papal Galleys as rowers were not even allowed to regain their freedom unless a stipulated amount of money was paid for their freedom. Even the aged and sick ones among them could not be set free unless, they pay a certain amount of money for their manumission. For instance, in a letter issued by the aforesaid pope on February 1, 1687, it was stipulated that such slaves seeking manumission should pay as follows: "Ali Grosso, scudi 350, Ameth di Mameth di Sali, scudi 200, Salemme, scudi 120, che in tutto sono scudi 2025."³⁶² This practice of keeping slaves in the Papal States in Rome and using them for the maintenance of the papal Naval Fleets as rowers continued up to the papacy of pope Benedict XIV (*1675, pontificate 1740-1758), who condemned the enslavement of the Indians in 1741. It is interesting to note that pope Benedict XIV, who wrote the Bull "Immensa

³⁵⁹ Ibid. Cf. Priesching, *Die Verurteilung der Sklaverei unter Gregor XVI.*, p. 151.

³⁶⁰ Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 77. See the complete Italian original of this letter in: Bertolotti, *La Schiavitù in Roma*, p. 22.

³⁶¹ Maxwell, *Ibid.* See the many Letters issued by pope Alexander VII for the purchase of slaves for the papal Fleet, in: Bertolotti, *La Schiavitù in Roma*, pp. 23-26.

³⁶² Innocent XI, Letter dated Feb. 1, 1687, in: Bertolotti, *La Schiavitù in Roma*, p. 29. The Citation reads in English thus: "Ali the Great, scudi 350, Ameth, scudi 200, Salemme, scudi 120, which sums up to 2,025 scudi." Cf. Priesching, *Die Verurteilung der Sklaverei unter Gregor XVI.*, p. 152.

Pastorum” wherein he condemned those buying and keeping Indians as slaves was himself involved in the buying and selling of the Galley-slaves meant for the Papal States. There are verifiable historical records which showed that Benedict XIV did not only buy slaves for the papal Fleets but also had to sell some of his Galley-slaves to those, who were in need of their services. For instance, about 165 Turkish slaves in the possession of the papacy were sold to the Malteser Order at the directives of pope Benedict XIV in 1758. This Malteser Order had to pay for these papal slaves a total sum of 6,230 Italian scudi.³⁶³ The traditional practice of using Galley-slaves in the Papal States continued uninterruptedly right up to the first half of the nineteenth century until it was finally abolished in 1831. These statistics are pointer to the fact that the papacy under the aforementioned popes grossly involved itself in both the slave trade and slavery itself. And this involvement speaks volumes on why the Church was very reluctant in speaking out against the evil of the enslavement of Black Africans and waited for such a long time before she could muster the courage to condemn it.

Over and above all these, the effect of the Catholic position on the issue of the slave trade was also felt in the means with which this traffic in slaves of West African origin were carried out. It is on record that all the Portuguese’s Transatlantic slave-ships, which carried Black Africans from the West African Atlantic to their land of enslavement in Brazil and in the Spanish Americas were Catholic, in the sense that they bore Catholic names and those of the Saints of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. For instance, many of these Transatlantic slave ships bore either the names of the Blessed Virgin Mary like “Our Lady of Misericordia” or those of the Saints such as St. Anthony of Padua, St. Michaels (São Miguels), St George and St. James. Some even bore the name of Jesus such as “The Good Jesus” (Bom Jesus) etc. Thus writing on this, Thomas Hugh affirmed that: “Out of the 43 ships which carried slaves under the flag of the company of Grão-Para and Maranhão, all had the names of saints except for two, Delfin and Africana.”³⁶⁴ On board of these slave ships bearing Catholic holy names were undeniably also monks and priests, who blessed and sprinkled the slave-ships with holy water before embarkation and closed their eyes in the face of the inhuman sufferings of the Black African slaves.³⁶⁵

With this kind of attitude on the issue of slavery and the slave trade, it then took the Holy Roman Catholic Church quite a long time to change her position in defence of the Black African slaves. This prevented her from intervening in

³⁶³ Priesching, *Von Menschenfänger, und Menschenfischern*, p. 178.

³⁶⁴ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 305.

³⁶⁵ Freyer, *Weltgeschichte Europas*, Vol. II, p. 786. Cf. Kreppele, *Die Trennung von Staat und Kirche in Portugal*, pp. 10-11.

the plight of the oppressed and helpless Black Africans throughout the long duration of this slave trade. That means, a condemnation of the Transatlantic slavery would mean going contrary to the position of the Catholic Church on slavery and to the Roman civil law upon which this teaching was based. It would also be tantamount to abolishing the use of slaves in the Papal States upon which the popes heavily relied for the maintenance and upkeep of their Naval Fleets. This fear of breaking away from her traditional teachings and practices was among the reasons, why the condemnation of the enslavement of Black Africans only came in the nineteenth century after the abolition of the slave trade and slavery itself must have been effected by the international community. This condemnation did not come earlier before 1839, when pope Gregory XVI denounced the slave trade as an inhuman practice and decreed that the Black African-victims of this trade should not be treated like animals any longer. Based on this fact therefore, the position of Joel Panzer is very misleading if he would like us to believe that this condemnation took place many centuries before 1839. According to him: “The slave trade was condemned in 1435. And over the course of the next three and a half centuries, the Church’s teaching remained consistently opposed to the enslavement of these peoples and was applied to various parts of the world as was deemed necessary.”³⁶⁶ This assertion of course, does not represent a historical reality as it is, in so far as the actual attitude of the Church toward the slave trade and the institution of slavery itself was concerned. However, the good-news is that after all said and done, the Church condemned the traffic in slaves of Black African extraction but only at a time, when it became too late to have done so. This condemnation did not of course take place before the pontificate of popes Pius VII and Gregory XVI respectively in the first half of the nineteenth century. In order to be more at home with this condemnation of the Black African enslavement, let us have a look at the very papal documents that contained this denunciation and condemnation of the Transatlantic slave trade.

6.2 The Letter “Inter Tot ac Tantas” of Pope Pius VII in 1814

Throughout the long duration of the papal support and approval of the Transatlantic slave trade, that is from 1444 to the time, when the government of the Great Britain passed a law that prohibited the slave trade in all its colonies in the New World precisely in 1807, there was no trace of the Church’s intervention to put an end to this inhuman traffic in slaves of Black African origin. It is very astonishing to note that there was no single Apostolic writing issued by the Holy Office of the Church in Rome to condemn the

³⁶⁶ Panzer, *The Popes And Slavery*, pp. 64-65.

enslavement of Black Africans, who were made victims of this inhuman trade. The only positive effort of the Church made in connection with the prohibition of this enslavement came many years after the abolition of the slave trade must have been effected in some of the enslaving nations of Europe and in their various colonies in the New World. Such efforts as earlier remarked, did not come before the pontificates of popes Pius VII and Gregory XVI. The effort made by pope Pius VII (*1742, pontificate 1800-1823)³⁶⁷ towards the condemnation of the trading on Black Africans was documented in the two personal letters he wrote to the kings of France and Portugal in 1814 and 1823 respectively. In the letter addressed to king Louis XVIII (*1755, reigned 1814-1824) of France titled “*Inter tot ac tantas*” which was issued on September 20, 1814, the pope reacted to the pressure from the then British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh (1769-1822)³⁶⁸ who pleaded with the said pope to support the effort and determination of the British government to secure an international abolition of the slave trade at the Congress of Vienna 1814-1815. The pope was assured by Lord Castlereagh that in return for his support, the British government will push for the restoration of the Papal States back to the Church at the Congress of Vienna, which were forcefully conscripted by the Napoleon army in 1808. It was for this reason that the pope was motivated to join in the campaign for the condemnation of the slave trade. Confirming this fact, an English author and historian William G. Clarence-Smith asserted: “The trauma of the French Revolution made the Church intensely suspicious of liberty. However, pope Pius VII, needing British backing for the return of the Papal States, condemned the slave trade in the letters to the kings of France and

³⁶⁷ Pope Pius VII was born in Cesena on August 14, 1742 and was given the name Barnaba Niccolo Maria Chiaramonti. In 1756, he entered the Benedictine Order in Cesena and became a priest monk on September 21, 1765. On completion of his studies in both philosophy and theology, he taught at the Benedictine colleges in both Parma and Rome. As a young priest, he made a quick career in the Church with the help of his relative pope Pius VI (*1717, pontificate 1775-1779), who appointed him an abbot of his monastery in 1776. In 1782 he was again appointed bishop of Tivoli and was later created a cardinal-priest and titular bishop of the Basilica of St. Callistus in Imola. His election as pope took place at the Conclave that met to elect the successor of pope Pius VI in Venice on November 30, 1799. After series of stalemates, he was chosen as a compromise candidate on March 14, 1800 and he chose the papal name pope Pius VII. He died on August 20, 1823 at the age of 81 years.

³⁶⁸ Lord Castlereagh was the British Foreign Secretary from 1812 to 1822. He represented his country at the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) and signed a lot of treaties for Great Britain. At the European Congress of Vienna in 1814, he pushed greatly for the support of the members of this Congress in the task of suppressing and condemning the Transatlantic slave trade. His effort to achieve this goal was resisted by the major beneficiaries of the slave trade - France, Spain and Portugal. However he succeeded in securing an international condemnation of the slave trade from the member-states of this Congress in the Treaty of February 8, 1815, where the slave trade was declared as a trade that was repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality, and was finally condemned as a scourge, which had so long desolated Africa, degraded Europe and afflicted humanity.

Portugal in 1814 and 1823 respectively. His delegates also signed the Congress of Vienna declaration of 1815.”³⁶⁹

The letter “*Inter tot ac tantas*” was therefore, a “political child” born out of the great need of the pope to recover the lost Papal States through the help of the British government. With this letter, which was personally addressed to the king of France shortly before the convention of the Congress of Vienna in 1814, the pope pleaded with the king of France to join in the campaign to abolish the shameful and inhuman traffic in Black African captives. The introductory part of this letter contained papal acknowledgement of the sufferings and inhuman conditions which the slave trade had brought to bear on Black Africans. It also acknowledged the contribution of the king of France in world peace and progress. And with this in mind, pope Pius VII asked the king of France to implore the same effort in the region of West Africa so as to root out the inhuman slave trade in the French colonies in overseas. This request is made clearer, when the pope wrote:

Among all the worries that we bear as a result of the Chair of St. Peter which we occupy, we also claim a share in the fate of the unfortunate nation of Africans, whom we want to liberate from their miserable state, so that brighter and purer peace can be restored on earth, and that misfortune, if possible, be averted by the human race. In the same way that we are moved with pity to the core, so do you also, dear son in Christ, because we know about your fear of God and human love, with which you care about the welfare of France. In the same way, we do not doubt the fact that you will employ all your powers to work for the good and well-being of all nations.³⁷⁰

Continuing, pope Pius VII expressed hope that his plea will receive a favourable consideration from the king of France and win his support in the effort to lessen the sufferings and the inhuman treatment of the Black African race in the slave trade, which according to him was condemned by the Christian faith as an abominable act that reduced Black Africans to a level below the human status. He decried the inhuman activities of the slave traders, who buy and sell Black Africans as if they were animals and force them to work under inhuman conditions that quickly lead them to untimely death. Decrying this miserable condition of the enslaved Black Africans, the pope said:

Therefore we trust that you will have a sympathetic ear and open mind in order to support and facilitate our efforts to relieve Africans of their fate. In order to carry out

³⁶⁹ Clarence-Smith, *Islam and The Abolition of Slavery*, p. 226.

³⁷⁰ Pope Pius VII, “*Inter Tot ac Tantas*” of September 20, 1814, in: *Iuris Pontificii De Propaganda Fide*, Vol. 1V, No. XLIV, pp. 524-525. Cf. Palermo, ed. *Africa Pontificia*, Vol. I, 1490-1980, No. 94, pp. 131-132. See a Latin copy of this letter in Appendix B, No. 6 in this Book.

such an undertaking which our Christian religion urged us to do, and itself condemns and abhors those disgraceful trade, which is being operated as if it were not dealing with humans, but with mere creatures which they buy, sell, and condemn to a miserable life with the hardest working conditions that easily lead them to death.³⁷¹

The pope further reminded the king of France to consider abolition of the slave trade as one of the greatest duties of the Christian faith and he acknowledged the efforts of Cardinal Ercole Consalvi (1757-1824) who was the papal Secretary of States from 1800 to 1823, and those of Bartolommeo cardinal Pacca (1756-1844), who, led by wisdom and piety had joined in the mission for the abolition of the slave trade. He regretted the fact that the evil of the slave trade was being perpetrated by highly respected and civilized Europeans and went on to condemn the slave trade as a barbarous act that dehumanizes the humanity of Black Africans. This denunciation was made when the pope wrote:

Therefore, one of the highest goods, which is allotted to the most Holy Religion in the world is that a large part or all of the slavery be abolished, and that the burden of all those under its yoke is relieved. So it happened that the highest bishops, distinguished by wisdom no less than piety, agreed to turn against the practice of the barbaric practice of slavery. And this kind of slavery is the worse and more miserable, since the humanity of Africans, despite the high reputation of European civilization is being so grossly oppressed and degraded.³⁷²

This letter ended with the clarion call of the pope to the king of France to follow the examples of the government of Great Britain which had given up the profits in this evil trade on humans and strictly prohibited its further practice in all its colonies in overseas. Pius VII reminded the king of France the urgent need to act now as the government of Great Britain has done by prohibiting the traffic in humans both in his country and in all his overseas territories, because doing so will not only bring about honour to him but also will boldly write his name on the sand of history. This clarion call of the pope is made clearly when he wrote:

Therefore it was in an intelligent manner and to the praise of England that this shameful and despicable slave trade in the British colonies was eventually abandoned and forbidden in the strongest terms. Therefore act, my dear son in Christ, in the sense of piety, which is inherent in the blood of the Bourbons: put aside and restrain the shameful lust of these slave dealers, who are committing crime against humanity and justice: uproot radically the infamous slave trade, this persistent cause of wars, strife and nefarious deeds of all kind, wherever it is in your power. The faster you do this, the more you will make yourself worthy of the religion and merit an unforgettable honor to your

³⁷¹ Pope Pius VII, "Inter Tot ac Tantas," Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid.

name in the eyes of the entire human race. In this respect, we send you our Apostolic blessing, dear son in Christ. Given in Rome, at Santa Maria Maggiore, under the sealed-ring of the fisherman, on September 20, 1814, in the 15th year of our pontificate.³⁷³

Despite the fact that this document is not a papal Bull and did not arise from the personal disposition and will of pope Pius VII to condemn the enslavement of Black Africans, but rather as a personal letter of appeal addressed to the king of France, prompted by the British government's determination to achieve an international condemnation and abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade, this letter however, made a huge contribution towards the international condemnation of the Transatlantic slave in 1815. This fact is seen in the truth that it gave a robust support to the voice of Lord Castlereagh and other representatives of the British government in pushing forcefully for the international condemnation and repression of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans at the European Congress of Vienna in 1815. As a proof of this fact, the European major powers, which gathered at the Congress of Vienna were able to declare unanimously that:

the commerce, known by the name "the slave trade," has been considered by just and enlightened men of all ages as repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality; that the particular circumstances from which this commerce has originated and the difficulty of abruptly arresting its progress, may have concealed to a certain extent, what was odious in its continuance, but that at length the public voice in all civilized countries calls aloud for its prompt suppression; that since the character and the details of this traffic have been better known and the evils of every kind which attend it, completely developed, several European governments have virtually come to the resolution of putting a stop to it, and that successively all the powers possessing colonies in different parts of the world have acknowledged, either by legislative Acts or by Treaties, or other formal engagements the duty and necessity of abolishing it. That by a separate Article of the late Treaty of Paris, Great Britain and France engaged to unite their efforts at the Congress of Vienna to induce all the powers of Christendom to proclaim the universal and definitive abolition of the slave trade. That the Plenipotentiaries assembled at this Congress cannot do greater credit to their mission, better fulfil their duty and manifest the principles which actuate their august Sovereigns, than by endeavouring to carry this engagement into effect, and by proclaiming in the name of their Sovereigns, their wish of putting an end to a scourge, which has so long desolated Africa, degraded Europe and afflicted humanity.³⁷⁴

With the papal appeal contained in this letter therefore, the efforts of the government of Great Britain to uproot the evil of the traffic in human beings of Black African origin recorded a major feat on the international scene. Even

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ "Declaration of the Powers on the Abolition of the Slave Trade" of February 8, 1815, Act No. XV, in: Hansard, *The Parliamentary Debates*, pp. 200-201.

though this international declaration was not forcefully binding on the major European nations that made it and as such did not achieve the expected goal of abolishing the slave trade, it however, succeeded in bringing about an international awareness on the sordid nature of this traffic on Black African slaves among the European nations that signed the 1815 Vienna Congress declaration. This little progress recorded at the aforesaid Congress did not however discourage the government of Great Britain in her determination to root out completely the evil of this slave trade. Instead, it spurred her on to forge ahead in her effort to purge the Western world of the evil and shame of the slave trade and to save the unfortunate Black Africans from its debilitating and inhuman sufferings that had been their lot since 1444.

This effort of the British government to combat the evil of the slave trade was seen again in 1823, when she pressured the papacy to send a strongly worded letter to the Catholic monarchs of Spain and Portugal after all their diplomatic means and treaties failed to yield the needed results.³⁷⁵ Let us now briefly view the content of this papal letter of 1823.

³⁷⁵ Even though Great Britain had been a premier enslaving nation as far as the Transatlantic slave trade was concerned, her turning up to be a land of the Crusade for the abolition of the slave trade makes one to ask the question: What exactly motivated the British government to attack the very trade which gave her a lot of benefits leading to her industrial revolution? There were many factors which range from political to economic interests that led the British government to engage herself vigorously more than any other European nation in the fight to end the Transatlantic slave trade. Politically, Britain experienced lots of losses in her overseas colonies resulting from many slave revolts. For example, the slave revolt that occurred in Saint-Dominique (present day Haiti) in 1791, which later metamorphosed into a struggle for self-determination and independence, taught Great Britain a hard lesson. The British invasion of this island of Haiti and her attempt to subdue this island was brutally resisted and crushed by Haiti's militia Front known as the "Black Jacobins." This victory over Great Britain led this island to gain independence in 1804. The same resistance was met by Great Britain in the British colony of Jamaica, where she was resisted by the Maroons or the Warrior Communities of Escaped Slaves. The Maroon wars led by a woman fighter called Nany of the Maroons brought about a Treaty of compromise between the Maroons and the British Government. In 1831, another slave revolt broke out in Jamaica. About 20, 000 slaves revolted against repression and suppression by the British colonists and planters. This revolt, even though was horrifically crushed by the British colonists, forced the British government to pass a bill against slavery in 1833 in all her overseas colonies. This slave bill was passed into law in 1838 with the payment of 20 million pounds as compensation to the planters for the losses in lives and in properties which they incurred during the aforesaid slave revolts.

Economically, the shift in economic production from slave labour to capital labour contributed a great deal to the efforts of Great Britain to end the Transatlantic slave trade. With the help of the capital accruing from the slave trade, Britain was able to establish metal industries for production, which initiated capital investment. This manner of production was more effective and profit oriented than the slave labour system. With this new system of production, Goods were produced massively and new markets were opened in the overseas colonies. Also other avenues of commerce with local productions were created. For instance, in West Africa, which was the epicentre of the slave trade, British products were exchanged for palm oil and palm kernels. Such markets both in West Africa and other British colonies in the New World were consuming over

6.3 The Letter “Etsi Perspecta” of Pope Pius VII in 1823

At a time, when other European enslaving nations were joining hands with the British government to abolish the slave trade by enacting as well as enforcing laws that prohibited the slave trade in their various overseas colonies, the Catholic kings of Spain and Portugal were still busy making fortunes from the profits accruing from this evil trade. And as a result of this, both monarchs refused to enforce the laws prohibiting this shameful human traffic in their major overseas colonies in Cuba and Brazil. The efforts of the government of Great Britain to clip the wings of both monarchs from promoting this evil enterprise through the use of diplomatic ties and treaties with the hope of engaging them in the combat against the slave trade proved very abortive. As a result of this failure, Britain therefore, decided to use the papacy to reach out to the aforesaid monarchs so that through papal intervention, they will be compelled to join other European nations in the race for the abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade. While recalling the hindrance posed by the aforesaid Catholic monarchs to the determination of the British government to abolish the slave trade, an author and historian Jeremy Watt affirmed that: “The Catholic monarchs of Spain and Portugal had repeatedly refused or ignored Britain's many attempts to gain their cooperation. The colonies of both governments were too reliant upon slave labour from the trade to concede to any serious prohibitions. After several treaties failed to incite collaboration

37% of British exports at the end of the 18th century. As a result of this economic breakthrough, more profits were made from the industrial local production in Britain than from the slave trade, and this became more attractive to investors, who were more interested to invest in capitalism and commerce than in the slave business.

Over and above all these, Britain was motivated in her efforts to fight against the slave trade with the intention of outmanoeuvring her foreign competitors such as France, Holland, Spain and Portugal, who depended more on the slave economy and profited more from it than the Great Britain. France, for instance was getting from its colonies in Haiti alone, almost two-thirds of its annual earnings from her overseas colonies. As a result of rivalries existing between France and Great Britain, Britain was aware that the abolition of the slave trade would bring great weakening to the political and economic strengths of her arch-rival France. It was therefore in the bid to kill this source of economic profit of the French government, that Britain fought tooth and nail to stifle this interest via the abolition of this Transatlantic slave trade. In 1806, the British government passed an Act forbidding its subjects from participating in the slave trade with France and its allies. This Act was enacted as a patriotic measure against the French interests. This slave Act of 1806 in Britain gave a major blow to the Transatlantic slave trade and prepared a solid ground for the 1807 abolition Act that proscribed the Transatlantic slave trade as an illegal trade on the international scene. In effect, therefore, the British international campaign for the abolition of the slave trade through the Royal Navy was presented as a moral Crusade against the evil of the slave trade, but fundamentally, it was a campaign directed against the economic interests of its foreign competitors in the slave trade, who had not discovered an alternative means of wealth other than the slave economy upon which their economic earnings heavily depended.

from either Spain or Portugal to cut their ties to the slave trade early in the century, Britain turned to the papacy in search of support for their mission.³⁷⁶ The fruit of this initiative taken by the British government to approach the reigning pope Pius VII is the birth of this papal letter “*Etsi Perspecta*” of March 15, 1823.

This papal letter was addressed to king John VI (*1767, reigned 1816-1826) of Portugal. The introductory part of this papal letter depicted an attitude of indisposition on the part of the pope due to the fact that the pope was no longer certain, if the king of Portugal would obey him on the issue of the demand for abolition as well as to act positively on the content and demands of his letter. This uncertainty was as a result of the change in the climate of relationship in the nineteenth century that used to exist between the papacy and the aforementioned Catholic monarchies in the past. That is why pope Pius VII began this letter by appealing not to the obedience or allegiance of the king to the authority of the pope, but rather hinged this appeal on the responsibility of religion and the care for humanity, which the papal office reposed on him. It was therefore from this background that the pope wrote as follows:

Even if the proven virtues of your Majesty hardly seem to deserve our exhortations and encouragements, we are nevertheless compelled by reasons of religion and humanity to demand your utmost attention and responsibility to make a request in this matter. The more readily we undertake this task of piety and patience towards your majesty, the more deeply we are convinced, that this will be all the better for you, not only because you'll be doing this on account of your virtue, but also because it will bring benefit and honor to you and to all your people living outside of your kingdom.³⁷⁷

The main body of this papal letter began with an expression of utter regret on the part of the papacy's knowledge of the continued propagation of the traffic in humans of Black African origin in the colonies under the authority of the king of Portugal irrespective of the declaration that outlawed this trade made by the major powers of European nations at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the Congress of Verona in 1822 respectively. The pope regretted the utter failure and nonchalant attitude of the king of Portugal in complying with the efforts of other European countries to bring an end to the evil of the slave trade in his colonies. He further lamented the inhuman treatment meted out on the slaves by the slave dealers, who, led by material gains were blinded to see the wounds they inflicted on humanity and Christian religion through the

³⁷⁶ Watt, *The Incongruous Bull: “The In Supremo Apostolatus,”* 2006, pp. 9-10.

³⁷⁷ Pope Pius VII, “*Etsi Perspecta*,” of March 15, 1823, in: *Iuris Pontificii De Propaganda Fide*, Vol. 1V, No. CXIII, p. 633. Cf. Palermo, *Africa Pontificia*, Vol. I, 1490-1980, No. 98, pp. 132-133. See a Latin copy of this papal letter in Appendix B, No. 7 in this Book.

propagation of the Transatlantic slave trade. All these are made clearer when the pope sadly wrote:

To our great sorrow, we have learned that the slave trade, which we thought has been uprooted by reason of the great humanity and wisdom of the Christian Ruler, is still being operated even stronger than before, in some of your areas of influence. Even though your Majesty has held several meetings with several European rulers which were geared towards improving the terrible fate of the slaves, and even enacted criminal laws with which this trade was banned, we have learned that the healing sanctions of these laws have not been effectively applied in all your areas of influence. Also the miserable manner in which these heartless slave traders deal with the slaves is against the humanity of all, and this cannot diminish our sorrow for them. After we heard this deeply moving information, and we, like our predecessors, who were distinguished by wisdom, no less than piety, had advised before, how we can eradicate this shameful human traffic, which is contrary to religion and humanity. We stand by this with the care of our pontificate and paternal love.³⁷⁸

Having launched his complaints, the pope now passionately appealed to the king of Portugal to ensure that the Transatlantic slave trade is prohibited in his colonies by enacting laws and enforcing them with sanctions imposed on all defaulters. By so doing, Pius VII expressed optimism that the baneful traffic in humans will be eradicated and wiped out from the face of the earth. He also reminded the king that by hearkening to this plea as well as fulfilling the demands made thereof, he will be writing his name boldly on a platter of gold and win much respect and honour for himself and his entire kingdom in the eyes of all people. With all this in mind, the pope pleaded:

Therefore we appeal to your Majesty, whose great zeal is well known to us, with this paternal task. Moved in the innermost of our hearts, may we ask your Majesty in his unique wisdom to assign to all in the Royal Council with the tasks of impacting the penalties and sanctions imposed by the Royal laws and to ensure that they are strictly observed in all the areas within your control, so that the slave trade will be eradicated with highest regard and honor to religion and humanity. Nothing will be more honorable for your majestic virtue than this great task, nothing is more promoting to you than your piety and patience, and nothing will bring you more affection among your subjects outside of your country than this great task. With great hope we turn to your Majesty, that you devote yourself more zealously to this great task, to which you let yourself be inspired at your own initiative, and out of your obedience to us and to the Holy See. Therefore, act, my dear son in Christ, let yourself be guided by your innate piety and virtues, fight wisely against the shameful lust of the slave traders, who submit all their justice and humanity only to vain profits. Be convinced that the active undertaking of this task, which leads to the desired goal, is especially pleasing to God and to Our self, and will bring the highest glory to you. For you, dear son, we ask the Lord's continual prosperity and happiness, we assure you of our special fatherly love and give you the

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

Apostolic blessing for good luck. Given in Rome, at Sancta Maria Maggiore, with the sealed ring of the fisherman, on 15th March, 1823, in the 24th year of our pontificate.³⁷⁹

With the two letters considered above, pope Pius VII cooperated with the government of Great Britain and other European major powers to blot out the Transatlantic slave trade. Even though he acted behind the scenes and was dragged into making this condemnation of the slave trade by the British government, his efforts however, are praiseworthy. One expected him to have come out boldly to take the front seat in the battle for the abolition of the slave trade by issuing a strongly worded papal Bull that would have been internationally publicized, rather than issuing personal letters, whose contents were mere appeals and only known to their recipients. In the absence of such papal Bull, his contribution to the liberation of the Black Africans from the slave trade remained only a drop of water that fell on a very hot stone. There is no historical indication that king John VI of Portugal ever took this papal appeal to heart as a result of the fact that the prohibited traffic in humans continued to boom in his major overseas territory of Brazil. And this accounts to the reason why Brazil was the last of the Portuguese territories that abolished the slave trade only in 1888.

However, the British government did not relent in moving ahead with the abolition movement on the international level. She again in 1839 got the support of the papacy to compel the king of Portugal to turn away from his propagation of the traffic in humans and join the race for the international abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade. This effort of the British government led the papacy to issue a papal Bull for the first time that at last condemned the Transatlantic slave trade during the papacy of pope Gregory XVI (*1765, pontificate 1831-1846).

6.4 Pope Gregory XVI and the Enslavement of Black Africans

Bartolomeo Alberto Cappellari was born in Venice on September 18, 1765. He was the son of Giovanni Capellari, a lawyer of noble birth. He entered the monastery of San Michele di Murano in 1793 and took Murano as his religious name. In 1787, he was ordained a priest and became professor of science and philosophy in 1790. In 1805, he was made the abbot of the monastery of San Gregorio on the Caelian Hill. He was created a cardinal on March 13, 1826 and from this date, he became the Prefect of the Congregation for the propagation of faith until 1831. And in the conclave that was held in 1831, he emerged as the new pope of the Catholic Church and chose the papal name Gregory XVI.

³⁷⁹ Pope Pius VII, "Etsi Perspecta," Ibid.

He died on June 1, 1846. Gregory XVI was the second pope of the Church that showed fatherly concern for the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade by at least mentioning the Black Africans in his Apostolic writing that condemned the enslavement of Indians, Black Africans and other peoples of the world under enslavement. The condemnation he made of the slave trade is contained in his Bull “In Supremo Apostolatus” of December 3, 1839.³⁸⁰

6.5 “In Supremo Apostolatus” of 1839 and Black Africans

The Bull “In Supremo Apostolatus” is the greatest boost, which the British government received from the papacy in her quest for the abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade. In emulation of the example made by the former British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh during the pontificate of pope Pius VII as we saw above, Lord Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865), who also held the position of the British Foreign Secretary from 1830-1841 began a move to seek aid from pope Gregory XVI for the eradication of the Transatlantic slave trade in 1838. Lord Palmerston was highly dissatisfied with the recalcitrant attitude of the Catholic monarchs of Spain and Portugal towards the clarion call for the abolition of the slave trade. Rather than diminishing in propensity, the slave trade and the importation of Black African slaves from Africa into the overseas colonies of Spain and Portugal in Cuba and Brazil continued to increase in intensity despite the determined efforts of the British government to get rid of this baneful trade on humans. Disturbed by this unfortunate development, Lord Palmerston first and foremost sought the help of the then American Ambassador to England Andrew Stevenson (1784-1857) to gain assistance from American government to convene a worldwide conference for the abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade. Stevenson, being a slave-holder from the state of Virginia was for this obvious reason not impressed by this proposal. He however, forwarded the proposal to John Forsyth (1780-1841) who was the American Secretary of State from 1836-1841. Forsyth did not show much enthusiasm with regard to this request and as such did not give Lord Palmerston the expected support he was demanding from him. Faced with this difficulty, Lord Palmerston then turned to the papacy through the British Consul at Florence Thomas Aubin, who held this position from 1832-1844. Thomas Aubin presented the letter to the papacy through the papal Secretary of State cardinal Luigi Lambruschini (1776-1854), which bore the

³⁸⁰ For further readings on Gregory XVI, see the following works: A. Simon, “Gregory XVI, Pope,” in: Marthaler, ed. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 6, pp. 505-511; Joseph Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit, 1800-1939*, München 1939; Kenneth Latourette, *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age*, Vol. 5, New York 1958; Nicholas Wiseman, *Recollections of the Last Four Popes and of Rome in their Times*, London 1858.

request of the British government to issue a declaration for the worldwide condemnation of the slave trade. Upon receiving this letter, pope Gregory XVI discussed the request of the British government with the cardinals in-charge of the Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, who bought the idea of making a formal papal denunciation of the evil traffic in human beings. This resolution of the pope and the granting of the request of the British government led to the writing of this Bull on December 3, 1839.

The Bull “*In Supremo Apostolatus*” is therefore, one of the apostolic letters of the Holy See written in demonstration of the Church’s efforts to fight against enslavement of peoples and to alleviate the sufferings of many people held under the yoke of servitude. While other apostolic letters of the Holy See written since Paul III’s “*Sublimus Deus*” in 1537 dwelt wholly and entirely on the condemnation of the enslavement and liberation of the Indians of West and South Indies, “*In Supremo Apostolatus*” focused attention not only on the Indians but also on the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade. This inclusion of the Black Africans in a papal Bull condemning the slave trade, is something new in the history of the papal Bulls dealing on the enslavement of peoples. Assenting to the veracity of this view, Jeremy Watt wrote in affirmation thus: “None of the previous Pontiffs had dealt with the issue of slave trading in Africa or the idea of slave trading in general. Before Pius VII, papal sanctions had risen to protect converted Indians from enslavement, but no quarter was given to unconverted heathens.”³⁸¹ Its significance however, lies in the fact that it contained a few lines, which for the first time recognized the humanity of Black Africans, whose humanity was made a subject of caricature by the anti-Blacks ideologies that dominated the medieval and modern Christian Europe and America especially during the Transatlantic slave trade.

But surprisingly enough, the introductory part of this document reveals that the primary intention of the pope in this document was not first and foremost to set free the enslaved Black Africans from the shackles of the Transatlantic slave trade but rather to prevent the Christian faithful of Europe from taking any further part in the inhuman traffic in slaves. This is clearly noticed when Gregory XVI said: “We consider it to belong to our pastoral solicitude to avert the faithful from the inhuman trade in Negroes and all other groups of humans.”³⁸² Another surprising revelation in this introductory part of the document is the pope's re-affirmation of the unchanging position and the

³⁸¹ Watt, *The Incongruous Bull: “In Supremo Apostolatus,”* p. 15.

³⁸² Gregory XVI, “*In Supremo Apostolatus*,” Document of Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide (APF), Fondo Brevi, Vol. 4, Fls. 317r-320r; *Litterae Apostolicae: Acta Gregorii Papae XVI*, Vol. II, pp. 387-389; *Constitutio Gregorii PP. XVI: Collectanea Sacra Congregatione de Propaganda Fide*, Vol. I, No. 891, pp. 503-505. See original Latin text of this Bull in Appendix B, No. 8 in this Book. English translation in: Panzer, *Popes and Slavery*, pp. 97-102.

teaching of the Catholic Church on the institution of slavery itself and the relation of slaves to their masters. In this relationship, pope Gregory XVI re-emphasized the traditional teaching of the Church on slavery as an institution from the time of St. Paul and the patristic fathers right up to the medieval and modern periods of the existence of the Church in human history as we noted on the theme of justification of slavery in section two of this work. In the relationship between slaves and their masters as Gregory XVI viewed it, absolute obedience is judged as an obligation on the side of the slaves, and in which the masters in return should treat their slaves with kindness and Christian charity. This manner of argument presented by the pope in this document offered many critics of the Church the materials to argue that the pope was indeed in support of the institution of slavery and did not condemn it in this document. This stand of pope Gregory XVI was expressed when he said:

Inspired by Divine spirit, the Apostles indeed urged slaves to obey their masters according to the flesh as though obeying Christ, and to do the will of God from their heart. However, the Apostles ordered the masters to act well towards their slaves, to give them what was just and equitable and to refrain from threats, knowing that the Lord in heaven, with whom there is no partiality in respect to persons is indeed Lord of the slaves and of themselves.³⁸³

Irrespective of his position on the institution of slavery itself, pope Gregory XVI however, regretted the attitude of many Christian faithful who, blinded by the desire of sordid gains were still in possession of slaves despite the many centuries of papal condemnation of the Indian enslavement. And with a heavy heart, he wrote: "But we still say it with sorrow, that there were to be found subsequently among the faithful some, who shamefully blinded by the desire of sordid gains in lonely and distant countries, did not hesitate to reduce to slavery Indians, Blacks and other unfortunate peoples, or else by instituting or expanding the trade in those who had been made slaves by others, aided the crime of others."³⁸⁴

The main body of this document expresses the untiring effort of Gregory XVI to remove the guilt and shame of the slave trade from the Christians nations, who perpetrated this evil in the traffic of fellow human beings and profited much from it. In this document, the pope recalled and reaffirmed the efforts of the previous Roman Pontiffs to battle with the enslavement of the Indians beginning from pope Paul III in 1537 to pope Benedict XIV in 1741. And inspired by the works of these Pontiffs, who did not care to include the

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. Cf. Panzer, *Popes and Slavery*, pp. 98-99.

condemnation of the enslavement of Black Africans in their various Bulls on the issue of enslavement, Gregory XVI condemned the traffic in slaves and ordered that no one in the future should reduce the Indians and Blacks and other such peoples to slavery or dare to dispossess them of their property. Thus in his own words the pope said:

The slave trade, although it has been somewhat diminished, is still carried on by numerous Christians. Therefore desiring to remove such a great shame from all Christian peoples and having fully reflected on the whole question, having taken the advice of many of our venerable Brothers the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and walking in the footsteps of our predecessors, we, by Apostolic Authority warn and exhort strongly in the Lord faithful Christians of every condition that no one in the future dare to bother unjustly, despoil of their possession, or reduce to slavery Indians, Blacks or other such peoples.³⁸⁵

Furthermore, the pope forbade the Western Christians not only to take part in the slave trade but also never to aid anyone, who participates in it. He recognised the humanity of Black Africans, which was previously denied and neglected by most of the medieval and early modern Western Christian writers, ethnologists and scientists etc., who reduced the dignity of Black Africans to those of brute animals and viewed them as mere commodities and tools of human labour. He also condemned the means of reducing the Black Africans to slaves through war sanctioned by the “Romanus Pontifex” of Nicholas V and regretted the many dissensions in the regions of West Africa caused through incessant slave raids. Such dissensions were brought about by the Portuguese, who were in the habit of instigating the various communities in West Africa and supplying them with weapons to engage in war with one another, so as to generate enough slaves for supply to the New World. By using this ploy to generate slaves, enmity and perpetual conflict among the various West African communities became the talk of the day and lasted throughout the period of the Transatlantic slave trade. In acknowledging these facts, the Holy Father therefore, warned and at the same time forbade Western Christians to engage themselves any longer in such ploys unworthy of their Christian names. In the light of this the pope warned:

Nor are they to lend aid and favour to those who give themselves up to these practices, or exercise that inhuman traffic by which the Blacks, as if they were not humans but rather mere animals, having been brought into slavery in no matter what way, are without any distinction and contrary to the rights of justice and humanity, bought, sold and sometimes given over to the hardest labour, to which is added the fact that in the hope of gain, proposed by the first owners of the Blacks for this same trade, and dissensions

³⁸⁵ Ibid. Cf. Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. 101.

and almost perpetual conflicts have been arisen in those regions. We then, by apostolic authority condemn all such practices as absolutely unworthy of the Christian Name.³⁸⁶

In recognition of the fact that there are among the Church hierarchy those, who will object to this new position of the Church on Black African enslavement, “In Supremo Apostolatus” ended with a warning to such men among the clergy and the laity who may teach anything contrary to the condemnation of the enslavement of Black Africans as contained in this document. To avoid such opposition, the pope warned: “By the same authority, we prohibit and strictly forbid any ecclesiastic or lay person from presuming to defend as permissible this trade in Blacks under no matter what pretext, or excuse, or privately publishing or teaching in any manner whatsoever in public or privately, opinions contrary to what we have set forth in these Apostolic letters.”³⁸⁷

But quite unlike “Dum Diversas” and Romanus Pontifex” of pope Nicholas V through which the Church approved of the enslavement of Black Africans and attached the penalty of excommunication against those, who would violate the grants and decisions contained in them, this document of Gregory XVI lacks the penalty of excommunication as punishment for those, who might infringe on the instructions contained in it. The existence of this serious lack in this document decreases its force to prevent the Christians of Europe and America from further participation in the Transatlantic slave trade. Some historians like Francis Maxwell however, have tried to explain this lack from the point of view of the fact that this document was written at a time, when the Transatlantic slave trade must have come to an end. And as a result of this, Gregory XVI did not see any need more to include the punishment with excommunication *laetae sententiae* in it. Others, such as Jeremy Watt argued that this lack of pronouncement of penalty for defaulters in this Bull was as a result of the pope's lack of interest in matters that went against his strict conservative position. This was expressed when he said: “Gregory XVI's authorship of the Bull In Supremo Apostolatus was clearly a result of Britain's African slave trade abolition movement. However, Gregory XVI had for his entire adult life stood against the kind of radical change that slave trade abolition represented.”³⁸⁸ Going a step further, Watt assumed that: “Gregory XVI's prescience of the African slave trade throughout his life and his silence on the issue of abolition before the British petition, seem to indicate that before authoring In Supremo

³⁸⁶ Ibid; Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, pp. 101-102.

³⁸⁷ Ibid; Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, p. 102.

³⁸⁸ Watt, *The Incongruous Bull: “In Supremo Apostolatus,”* p. 32.

Apostolatus, he was at the very least apathetic towards the trade's continuation."³⁸⁹

Other shortcomings of this Bull are seen, when the pope used it to add to the list of a long chain of papal denunciation of enslavement beginning from the papacy of pope Eugene IV in the fifteenth century down to the pontificate of pope Pius VII in the nineteenth century. Pope Gregory XVI boasted with the works of the popes of these centuries to accord praise to the Catholic Church and the papacy in particular for engaging herself in a constant fight against the enslavement of peoples. But anyone, who followed the considerations we made in the previous chapters in this section of this work will certainly notice that pope Gregory XVI was not saying the whole truth about the Church's support, approval and silence on the issue of the enslavement of Black Africans since its inception in 1444. That was why he omitted the inclusion of especially the two Bulls of his predecessor Nicholas V "Dum Diversas" of 1452 and "Romanus Pontifex" of 1454 and those of other popes of the renaissance papacy that ruled the Church before him, which firmly established and explicitly approved of the inhuman and baneful traffic in human beings of Black African origin. Sweeping almost a century of uninterrupted flow of papal Bulls under the carpet, which not only supported the Transatlantic slave trade but also perpetuated the Black African enslavement from the fifteenth century down to the pontificate of pope Leo X in the sixteenth century is indeed a big oversight. Little wonder then, did Jeremy Watt argue in favour of this fact in the following words: "However, its argument for long-standing Catholic support for abolition was invalid. Familiarizing the aberrant support of the papacy to historical Catholicism, In Supremo Apostolatus used a pot-pourri of sources and distorted their significance to remould past Catholic silence and approval of the slave trade."³⁹⁰ Continuing, Watt rightly pointed out that: "Beyond In Supremo's misuse of anti-slave trade sources in Catholic history, the Bull also omitted mention of past papal commendations of the African slave trade."³⁹¹

Nevertheless, the Bull "In Supremo Apostolatus" has gone into the annals of history as the first apostolic letter of the Church that took a bold step to feel concerned with the Black victims of the Transatlantic slave trade by at least condemning their treatment and sufferings during this trade as something evil and inhuman. According to an author and historian William Gervase Clarence-Smith: "Pope Gregory XVI's landmark ruling in 1839, that methods of enslavement in Africa were unjust, was the first public Catholic rejection of the slave trade."³⁹² Its importance, however, rested on the ground that it ended the

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 13.

³⁹¹ Ibid, p. 15.

³⁹² Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, p. 226.

many centuries of the Church's negligence and silence to speak out against the evils of the traffic in slaves of Black African origin, which was begun by the Portuguese kings, Prince Henry the Navigator and his military Order of Christ in 1444 and officially supported by pope Nicholas V in 1452. If one is to judge its significance from the point of view of the date of its publication in 1839, it means then that it took the Church and her popes good 387 years to correct the bad impression created by the publication of "Dum Diversas" and "Romanus Pontifex" of Nicholas V in 1452 and 1454 respectively, which called the evils of the Transatlantic slave trade into being and legitimized the use of forceful capture via military slave raids of West African villages organized by the kings of Portugal, Prince Henry the Navigator and members of his military Order of Christ as a legitimate means of acquiring Black African captives as objects of economic transactions. In the like manner, if one is to judge its significance from the time, when the Church took up her moral obligation to fight against unjust enslavement of peoples, which began with the publication of "Sublimis Deus" of Paul III in 1537, then the papal Bull "In Supremo Apostolatus" tells a lot about the attitude of the leadership of Catholic Church towards the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade. That means, with its publication, it took the Church a good 302 years to break her long silence over the unjust enslavement and complete exploitation of the Black African race in order to condemn this slave trade as inhuman and unworthy of the Christian name.

Furthermore, we are to recall that this document of the Church was issued after an international condemnation and prohibition of the slave trade took place at the European Congresses held in Vienna in 1814 and in Aachen in 1818 at the initiative of the British government, which brought about the abolition of the slave trade in Holland and in France in 1818 and further led to the British government enactment of laws that abolished both slavery and the slave trade in all her overseas colonies in the New World with the Slave Act of 1833. These historical facts and figures are very important to show us the belatedness of the Church in the fight to end the slave trade and the enslavement of Black Africans. If these facts and figures are anything to rely on, then one is wont to say that the condemnation and the subsequent abolition of the slave trade in all the enslaving nations of Europe forced the Church to break her long silence on the issue of Black African enslavement through the publication of this epoch making Apostolic letter of pope Gregory XVI. Despite this belatedness of this apostolic letter and its other shortcomings, this document went down into the annals of history as a turning point in the age long position of the Catholic Church on the issue of the slave trade and the Transatlantic enslavement Black Africans. To that effect, one could rightly say that pope Gregory XVI was bold enough to take the bull by the horns in breaking away from the traditional

teaching of the Church on the issue of the slave trade but not on the institution of slavery itself. This fact alone speaks volumes for this disapproval of the teachings of other popes before him on the issue of the Transatlantic slave trade and serves as the greatest achievement of this Apostolic document.

Other Bulls written since then in connection with the enslavement of Black Africans and worthy of mention in this work are the Bulls of pope Leo XIII, which were published in the later part of the nineteenth century. These Bulls are: "In Plurimis"³⁹³ of May 5, 1888 which was issued to the bishops of Brazil. It encouraged them to end the slavery still going on in their country, and "Catholica Ecclesiae"³⁹⁴ of the same Pope Leo XIII of November 20, 1890. This was issued to the bishops of the whole world, urging them to help eradicate slavery in Africa through the evangelization of the people of Africa. These Bulls are very important to help one get acquainted with the face of slavery in Africa after the international abolition of the slave trade and the activities of the Church to eradicate slavery in Africa through grass-root evangelization. However, judging the time of their publication, they fall outside of the scope of our consideration of the activities of the Church during the long period of the Transatlantic slave trade.

7. Resume of the Church's Position on the Enslavement of Black Africans

7.1 Stating what is at Stake

Chapters one to six above served as a long historic journey undertaken to know the exact role played by the Catholic Church and her leadership in the build-up to the establishment of the Transatlantic slave trade and her alleged involvement and approval of the enslavement of Black Africans. Having established the fact of the origin of the institution of this trade through the papal support and grants given to the kings of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator and their successors for the purpose of mission and the continuation of the Crusade against Islam, this inquiry shifted base to examine the important mission of the Church and her leadership to liberate and defend those labouring under the yoke of unjust enslavement. The result was that the Church and her leadership, starting from the papacy of pope Eugene IV to that of pope

³⁹³ Pope Leo XIII, The Bull, "In Plurimis," in: Acta Leonis XIII, III, pp. 69-84; Carlen, The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903, pp. 159-167.

³⁹⁴ Pope Leo XIII, The Bull, "Catholicae Ecclesiae," in: Acta Leonis XIII, IV, pp. 112-116; See also, Carlen, Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903, pp. 233-235.

Gregory XVI really undertook the duty of defending peoples under the grinding grips of slavery from 1435 until the international condemnation and consequent abolition of Transatlantic slave trade in 1807.

But in this fight against unjust enslavement of peoples undertaken by the Catholic Church and her leadership for over 350 years, it was crystal clear that no other race or peoples of the world under the yoke of slavery ever enjoyed the protection of the Church like the Indians of the West Indies did. Almost 100 percent of the papal Bulls written in defence of unjust enslavement of peoples were all written in their favour. And this fact accounted for their timely liberation from the hands of the Spanish enslavers in 1537 by pope Paul III. All other popes, who occupied the Petrine Office thereafter continued to fight against the enslavement of the Indians with profound commitment and unceasing condemnation of their enslavement by the Spaniards.

But in all this fight to liberate peoples under the yoke of slavery, the doors of mercy and justice were closed behind the Black Africans, who, together with the Indians were held under the yoke of unjust slavery. None of the barrels of the papal Bulls issued in condemnation of the treatment meted out to peoples under unjust enslavement ever mentioned anything about them, talk-less of including them among those, who should be liberated from the shackles and chains of slavery. This noticed apparent negligence in the attitude of the leadership of the Church towards the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade forces one to raise the question: Why were the popes completely silent on the issue of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans? Has the Church's doctrine of a just war theory any justification in the enslavement of Black Africans? Why did pope Gregory XVI, who eventually condemned the slave trade for the first time in 1839 raise the impression of stepping into the footsteps of the many popes in the past that condemned unjust enslavement of peoples including Black Africans, whereas in reality, historical facts prove the contrary to be the case? What reasons could account for this attitude of the Church towards the Black Africans that looked up to the Church for help in the face of their anguish and unjust enslavement, humiliation and sufferings but received only the bitter cup of indifference, neglect and utter silence from the Catholic kings of Spain and Portugal as well as the leadership of the Church in Rome? This part of our work has the goal of summarising the findings made in this long section that deals with the very kernel of this academic work.

7.2 The Church's Silence over Black African Enslavement

The attitude of silence and indifference taken by the Church and her leadership on the issue of the enslavement of Black Africans depended mainly on a five-fold factor namely: first and foremost on her position on slavery in general as an institution. Secondly, on her position on the just title of slavery based on the theory of a just war. Thirdly, on the accumulation of her long standing interpretation of the curse of Ham as a curse of perpetual enslavement inherited by Black Africans. Fourthly, on her teaching on the symbolism of Blackness as a metaphor for the Devil, evil, sin and moral debasement in both early and medieval times. Fifthly, on her politics and tradition of keeping slaves as Galley-slaves for the papal Naval Army in the Papal States. These themes have been elaborately handled in the preceding section of this work. But suffice it to mention at this juncture that it is not out place to re-instate the points herein in a nut shell in the context of the attitude of neglect and silence which the Church maintained towards the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade.

7.3 The Church's Acceptance of Slavery as a Divine Institution

The Church's acceptance of the institution of slavery as a positive good is founded on two main pillars namely: the Pauline teaching on slavery and the servant of God title of Jesus Christ found in (Isaiah 53: 1-2). These themes were given appropriate attention in the first chapter of section two of this work. The teachings contained therein made the Church to accept slavery and preached to the enslaved to accept their condition of life as a way of emulating Christ, who, though was God but had to empty Himself by taking up the form of a slave and became obedient even unto death (Phil. 2: 6-11). This position made the Church not to find ways of eliminating slavery, but rather led her to make effort to give it a humanitarian face by preaching to both masters and slaves using Pauline language, to remain in the status, in which they were before God called them to the faith in Christ (1 Cor. 7: 17-24) and to fulfil their duties and obligations to one another (Col. 3: 22-24; Eph. 6: 5-8; Col. 4:1; Eph. 6: 9, etc.).³⁹⁵ The implication of this, is that slavery was accepted as an institution willed by God and as a necessary part of the social order of things in the human society.

³⁹⁵ For a detailed account of the teaching of St. Paul on Slavery, see, chapter one of section II of this work.

Also influenced by the teachings of the early Church fathers, who taught that slavery is a consequent for both the original sin of Adam and Eve as well as the personal sin of an individual, the Church still taught that all men are born free and are created in the image and likeness of God and as such are equal before God. Even though she believed in the equality of all men before God, she still maintained that slavery does not nullify this revealed truth. The bondage of the enslaved was then understood as only a bodily bondage, which did not affect the condition of their souls. And by reason of this fact, the enslaved are outwardly bondsmen but inwardly freemen. In her acceptance of slavery as a positive good in the society, the Church made efforts to introduce justice into the institution of slavery by differentiating between just and an unjust means of acquiring slaves. And this justice in the institution of slavery has to be determined by means of a just title of slavery.

7.4 The Theme of a Just Title of Enslavement

Confronted with the problem posed by the institution of slavery in the society, the Church made effort to sanitize the institution of slavery by introducing the use of just means to entitlement in the acquisition of slaves. That means, even though slavery is permitted, only the just means of acquiring slaves determines the justice of the claim of ownership over slaves. This theme of the justice of slavery led the Church to accept three main conditions for enslavement namely: (a) Just war theory, whereby those captured during wars were enslaved rather than being imprisoned or killed by their captors. (b) Slavery by debt, whereby one freely gives himself up for enslavement as a result of debt incurred. (c) Finally, the faith of the enslaved, whereby it was allowed to enslave peoples of other religions such as pagans, Jews, Muslims and other unbelievers. It was based on these conditions that both the Portuguese and Spanish Conquistadors claimed justification for their enslavement of the peoples of India of the West Indies and the Black Africans in the fifteenth century respectively.

But in the inquiry conducted by the theologians of the school of Salamanca in Spain on the theme of the Spanish claim of just title over the Indians and their colonisation, these conditions for a just enslavement were found to be lacking in the Spanish mass enslavement of the Indians of the West and South Indies. Through the efforts made by Las Casas and other Spanish theologians of the sixteenth century, their enslavement was condemned by the Church in 1537 as an unjust and illegal slavery. Pope Paul III, whose Bull “*Sublimis Deus*” condemned Indian enslavement as an unjust slavery based his argument firstly, on the fact that the enslaved Indians are Christians or intending to become one. Their continued reduction to slavery will hinder their conversion to Christianity

as well as the practice of the Catholic faith. Their enslavement therefore, contradicted the Christian rule that forbids Christians from enslaving their fellow Christians. Secondly, against the backdrop of the Spanish Conquistadors conception that the Indians are pagans, salvages and barbarous peoples, and therefore, are incapable of attaining the Christian faith unless they are forcefully led into it, the pope argued on the contrary and maintained that the Indians are reasonable human beings, who are in possession of a human soul capable of attaining salvation and conversion by peaceful means. He condemned the use of force against them as an unjust means of conversion to the Christian faith and forbade any type of violation of their human right to self-dominion and private possessions. And by so doing, he liberated them from the enslaving hands of the Spanish Conquistadors as well as corrected the idea of using mission as a means of enslaving the Indian folks.

All the papal Bulls written from this period onward as we saw in chapter five of this section III, upheld this judgement of "Sublimis Deus" and were geared towards attacking those Spanish Christians, who, despite the condemnation of this slavery as an unjust enslavement went ahead to force the Indians into enslavement for their own selfish interests. These papal documents unfortunately, did not attack the institution of slavery itself, but only condemned the abuse of the conditions accepted by the Church for a just enslavement. Their major concern was to denounce illegal slavery and unjust dispossession of private properties and the rights of the enslaved Indians, but never to condemn or forbid the institution of slavery itself.³⁹⁶

But in the case of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans, the same argument was neither employed by pope Paul III nor by his successors to condemn their enslavement. The extensive and loving hands of the Church to liberate those in chains of unjust slavery was cut short when it became the turn of the enslaved Black Africans. Why was this noticed difference made in the Church's fight against the slavery of Indians and that of Black Africans? The reason for this difference is to be located in the very Bulls (the 2 Bulls issued by pope Alexander VI and those of pope Nicholas V) used to establish the right of patronage given to the Spanish and Portuguese kings that gave them the title of ownership over the Indians and Black Africans respectively. The Alexandrian Bulls are missionary Bulls and legitimated the right of patronage of the Spaniards over the Indian folk. But on the other hand, the two Bulls of Nicholas V are purely colonial and commercial Bulls cast in a mode of a Crusade Bull against Islam, pagans and other enemies of the Christian Faith in Africa. Alexandrian Bulls had no intention of war and the use of force on the native Indians and did not decree such a measure – a strong point which pope

³⁹⁶ Hochgeschwender, *Wahrheit, Einheit, Ordnung*, p. 147.

Paul III defended in 1537 while liberating the Indians from enslavement. But those of pope Nicholas V were designed to imbibe war and the use of force against Black Africans and accounted for the none inclusion of their enslavement in the liberating mission undertaken by pope Paul III in his aforesaid Bull. Alexandrian Bulls did not authorize the enslavement of Indians. They were rather enslaved by the Spanish king and his Conquistadors based on the Aristotelian theory of natural slavery. But in a brutal demonstration of papal power and authority, the Bulls of Nicholas V on the other hand expressly and formally authorized the enslavement of Black Africans based on certain knowledge (such as barbarism, paganism, Black Africans unknown to the Europeans etc.) and anti-Blacks traditions of the Church as contained in the Royal Charter of 1443 presented to him by king Alfonso V of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator upon which he wrote his aforesaid Bulls that legitimated the enslavement of Black Africans.

Furthermore, in the Bull of 1537 which set the tone for the Church's defence of unjust slavery, Paul III condemned the enslavement of Indians based on the fact that they were human beings and capable of receiving the Christian faith without the use of force against them. But he failed to extend such explanation to the Black Africans. His silence on the hot issue of the humanity of Black Africans is ipso facto his rejection of their humanity pure and simple. Also his failure to adjudge them as those capable of receiving the Christian faith without the use of force is a clear indication that he considered them to be inferior to the Indians and as such supported their enslavement as a means of converting them to the Christian faith. And by so doing, he continued to toe the path of the tradition established by pope Nicholas V with his aforesaid Bulls that authorized conversion of Black African natives via the organ of war and perpetual enslavement. This tradition followed by the popes herein was guided and energized by the principle that was in vogue in the Western Christianity in the early days of the Portuguese commercial quest for gold and other products in West Africa. We recall that the Portuguese palace chronicler Gomes Azurara justified the first set of human cargoes that arrived Lisbon in 1444 as slaves on the principle that it is better for Black Africans to be slaves among Christians in Europe than to be free in their own lands. This idea was given official approval by pope Nicholas V in his aforesaid two Bulls wherein he praised the king of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator for kidnapping innocent Black Africans and auctioning them as slaves in Portugal and selling them to other European nations of his days. All other popes that led the Church after him kept this policy. Even the very man Las Casas, who argued in favour of the liberation of the Indians employed this policy against Black Africans by suggesting to the king of Spain and pope Paul III that Black Africans should be compelled to replace the suffering Indians as slaves of the mines and sugar

plantations in the New World.³⁹⁷ This idea of using this policy to relieve the misery of Indians and replacing them with those of Black Africans was kept alive by other Spanish theologians up to the 1580s. For instance, in a report (Informe) presented by the Audiencia (local Court) of Santa Fé in 1581, a very “pathetic image of the suffering Indians was presented to the king of Spain and successor of emperor Charles V king Philip II (*1527, reigned 1556-1598) with a plea made to the king to permit the purchase of Black African slaves rather than Indians.”³⁹⁸

What baffles one's mind here is the manner in which the various popes of the Church and other European theologians, who argued against the Indian enslavement and condemned it as an unjust and illegal slavery, now turned around in the case of Black African enslavement and became strong defenders and supporters of their enslavement. For instance, the Spaniard Francisco de Vitoria, who was a leading and an influential theologian of the school of Salamanca and an ardent opposer of the Indian enslavement, justified Black African enslavement on the grounds of the aforesaid policy and the just war theory. According to him: “Provided the source of the Portuguese acquisition of Black African slaves is just, that means, by the use of the just war theory, then it is justified to hold Black Africans as slaves.”³⁹⁹ Continuing, De Vitoria maintained that: “If they are treated humanely, it is better for them to be slaves among Christians than free in their own lands, for it is the greatest good fortune to become Christian.”⁴⁰⁰ And forgetting all he knew (as a jurist) about the just means of acquiring slaves, De Vitoria advised his fellow Dominican friar Bernadino de Viqué not to bother about the just means of acquiring Black African slaves as follows: “I do not see why one should be so scrupulous over this matter, for the Portuguese are not obliged to discover the justice of the wars between barbarians. It is enough that a man is a slave in fact or in law, and I will buy him without a qualm.”⁴⁰¹ This apparent discrimination made between the Indian and the Black African races here in the opinion of David B. Davis “led quite naturally to a view that Negroes were born to be slaves and were

³⁹⁷ Las Casas, *Historia de Las Indias*, p. 177. Cf. Padgen, *The Fall of Natural Man*, p. 32.

³⁹⁸ This reports reads in Spanish language thus: “Que podia Santa Majestad... comprar los Negros de Cabo Verdo muy baratos y embiarlos en las Indias.” Cf. AGI, Audiencia, Santa Fé 1, Ramo 1, No. 28, in: Padgen, *The Fall of Natural Man*, p. 205. Cf. Ela, *Gott Befreit*, Bd. 30, pp. 75-76.

³⁹⁹ Vitoria, *Carta de Fray Francisco de Vitoria al Padre Fray Bernadino de Viqué acerca de los Esclavos que trafican los Portugueses y sobre el Proceder de Escribanos*, *Bibliotheca Universitaria Serville (BUS)*, MS 333-166-1, Fl. Xvr-v, printed in: Beltrain de Heredia, ed. *Coléccion de Dictámenes Inéditos*, in: *Ciencia Tomista*, 43 (1931), pp. 169-180, here p.174. Cf. Pagden, *The Fall Of Natural Man*, pp. 32-33.

⁴⁰⁰ Vitoria, *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ Vitoria, *Carta al Padre Fray Bernardino de Viqué*; Pagden, *The Fall Of Natural Man*, p. 33.

inherently inferior to both Indians and Whites.”⁴⁰² Other major reasons for the Church's attitude of neglect towards the enslavement of Black Africans are to be found in the following themes below.

7.5 Just War Theory and Black African Enslavement

The use of just war theory in the enslavement of peoples is among the manifold reasons for the papal attitude of neglect towards the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade. The papal permission granted to the kings of Portugal to conquer and to enslave the Black Africans in the various papal Bulls of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries found its *raison d'être* in this just war theory. Papal justification for the use of the just war theory as a just title for enslavement made the popes to develop an attitude of complacency in speaking out in condemnation of the Transatlantic slave trade. We recall that in the various papal Crusade Bulls granted to the kings of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator, the papacy saw the use of war against the West African inhabitants in these Bulls as a just war. This justification was predicated upon the fact that the inhabitants of West Africa at that point in time were pagans. She did not care to differentiate between the Muslim Moors and the Black natives of the West African Atlantic. Instead, the Black Africans of this region, who were non-Muslims but worshippers of traditional religion were included among the enemies of the Christian faith and as such, were treated like the Muslims as among those, whom it was justified to fight against and be dispossessed of their rights to self-dominion, territories and private possessions. This mistake of identifying all West African inhabitants with the Muslims greatly affected the entire papal politics and disposition towards the Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade and made the popes to develop cold-feet in defending them during their enslavement by the Portuguese and other European enslaving nations. This point explains why the popes ignored the set down rules for the use of the just war theory in invading non-Christian territories and peoples of other religious inclinations. According to the rules set down by the Church's own theologians in the history of the Crusades as a just war, it was specified that a just war could be carried out for the following reasons: (a) Against unbelievers occupying the territories that formerly belonged to the Christians for the purpose of regaining such territories back to their original owners. (b) Against unbelievers living in the territories that were formerly under the jurisdiction of the Roman Emperor. (c) Against unbelievers who are hindering the progress of missionary activities of

⁴⁰² Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 171.

the Christians. (d) The just war has to be declared by a legitimate authority with good intention, and in this case, by the pope.

If one applies these conditions in the papal Crusade Bulls of the fifteenth century issued against the inhabitants of the West African Atlantic, one notices with much ease that all these conditions were completely lacking, just like they did in the Spanish enslavement of the Indians, except in one area, namely: that this Crusade was declared by the pope. But the question here is, does this point alone justify the use of Crusades against Black Africans as a just war? The answer is NO. This answer simply hinges on the fact that Black Africans did neither belong to any Western Christian king before, nor did they occupy any territories that formerly belonged to the Christians or under the jurisdiction of the defunct Holy Roman Empire. Similarly, they did neither engage themselves in any war against the Christians nor posed any threat to Christians so as to hinder any Christian missionary activities in their region. That means that the ordering of the use of military force (Crusade) by the renaissance popes of the fifteenth century to make wars against them for the purpose of mission and conversion, does not hold any meaningful water in its content and as such was not justified. This violation herein was only meant to serve the interests of both the renaissance popes and those of the Crown in Portugal. On the part of the renaissance popes, the granting of the Crusade Bulls against Africans was part of the political efforts to realise the papal ambition of extending a universal juridical authority over the whole world, and this time around, over the entire African territories already discovered, and those yet to be discovered by the Portuguese discoverers. As long as this papal ambition was kept alive by the kings of Portugal, whatever the Portuguese were then doing in West Africa and how they were doing it, was nevertheless a matter of no concern to the papacy. This fact goes to prove correct the view of the historian M. C. de Witte, who held that there was no known recorded politics or religious policy of the papacy in the African missions outside of the war against Islam. According to him: "In the history of the Portuguese expansion in Africa, there was no policy persistently pursued by the papacy, not even a religious policy. The role of Rome was confined to intervene whenever the papacy was asked to do so by the Portuguese for the plausible reason that was already known to it."⁴⁰³ This plausible reason known to the papacy was none other than the fact of the loss of her right of interference in the Portuguese overseas missions that resulted from the granting of the *Padroado Real* to the kings of Portugal and their successors in perpetuity in all their foreign territories in Africa, Brazil and India.

⁴⁰³ De Witte, *Les Bulles Pontificales et L'Expansion Portugaise au XV. Siècle*, in: *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 7, p. 556.

And on the part of the Portuguese Crown, these Crusade Bulls were meant to serve a purely politically and economically motivated plan of the kings and princes of Portugal to enrich themselves and to extend their political kingdom into West Africa. The right of Patronage contained in these Bulls officially recognized the kings of Portugal and their successors as the true patrons of the Church in their overseas territories. This recognition gave the kings of Portugal the legal status of judging what is right or wrong for the natives living in their overseas territories without making any reference to the popes.

Also hiding under the brick-walls of mission to the pagans stimulated by the early medieval Christianity's Motto, which states that “extra Ecclesiam nulla salus,” the renaissance popes in issuing the Crusade Bulls to the Portuguese against the Black Africans disregarded the instructions given by both Thomas Aquinas and other Spanish theologians such as cardinal Thomas de vio Cajetan, Francisco de Vitoria, et al., on the topic of the justice of the use of war to invade pagans and their territories. As we saw in the first chapter of this section of our work, these theologians forbade the use of war to invade pagan peoples, who, due to no fault of their own have not come to accept the Christian faith. And by reason of this fact, they disallowed the use of just war theory to dispossess them of their freedom of self-dominion and private possessions.⁴⁰⁴ This negligence to hearken to these instructions made the renaissance popes to declare wars against the innocent native inhabitants of West Africa especially in the two Bulls of pope Nicholas V issued in 1452 and 1454 respectively. The massive kidnapping via slave razzias coupled with the capture and auctioning of the innocent natives of West Africa as slaves by Prince Henry the Navigator and the Portuguese military Order of Christ, which resulted from these Bulls, was not only tolerated but also found approval and blessing of the popes especially pope Nicholas V and other popes of the renaissance papacy, who praised the Prince and his cohorts for this kind of feat.⁴⁰⁵ This capture and auctioning of Black African natives as slaves was presented to the popes by Prince Henry the Navigator as a proof of the Black African souls he has won for salvation and for the Christian faith. This implies that the use of war as a legitimate means of acquiring Black African slaves was at the same time approved by the leadership of the Catholic Church as mission to convert as well as to save their souls from damnation. This point accounted for the silence of the popes and their failure to mention the enslaved Black Africans in their

⁴⁰⁴ For the references made to Aquinas and other Spanish theologians, see: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II, iiae, q. x. Art. 8; Thomas de vio Cajetan, *Commentary on Summa theologica*, in: Priesching, *Von Menschenfänger und Menschenfischem*, pp. 122-123; Francisco de Vitoria, *Relectio de Indis*, No. II, in: Scott, *The Classics of International Law*, p. 9.

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. The Bull, “*Romanus Pontifex*” of Nicholas V in chapter three of this section.

numerous Bulls that condemned the enslavement of the Indians of the West Indies.

Moreover, the fact that Black Africans were pagans made the popes to develop a very complacent attitude towards their enslavement and allowed them to be continuously enslaved by the Portuguese and other European enslaving nations. This attitude of the popes on this point is justified by the fact that the enslavement of pagans by the Christians fulfilled one of the conditions laid down by the Church for a just enslavement. The Church under this condition, approved the enslavement of pagans by Christians, but on the contrary, disapproved the enslavement of Christians by pagans. The enslavement of Black Africans was therefore, considered as part of the mission to convert them to Christianity so as to save their souls from damnation in hell fire. To achieve this goal of saving their souls from damnation in the context of “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*,” the Portuguese missionaries, who were at the behest of the Portuguese colonizers and enslavers were commanded to baptise the Black African captives before their shipment as slaves to Portugal. But very ironical in this manner of thought is that baptism for the Black Africans or their conversion to Christianity was never conceived by the leadership of the Church as a guarantee for their liberation from the chains of slavery. Even those of the Black African slaves, who received Christian baptism and *ipso facto* became Christians before their embarkation to Portugal and finally to the New World remained slaves all the time in their land of enslavement. That means, the logic of enslaving them for the purpose of making them Christians as contained in the reports made by Prince Henry the Navigator to the popes and in the Bulls of pope Nicholas V, did not redeem them from their condition of slavery.⁴⁰⁶

Over and above all these, the Church did not shift her position on the topic of what she considered a just enslavement of Black Africans even when it became clear that the very grounds (just war theory) upon which her justification of this enslavement rested, did no longer apply to the enslaved Black Africans in the sense that there were no more Crusades being carried out by the Portuguese on the West African Atlantic. This point is corroborated by the fact that after the initial attempts to use wars and razzias to generate slaves in West Africa became counter-productive and landed the Portuguese into a huge loss in personnel and material goods in 1445, Prince Henry the Navigator and the Portuguese Crown decided to stop the use of wars against Black Africans in the regions of Senegambia and entered into a peaceful negotiations with them in 1448. The peaceful pact signed by captain Gomes Pirés as the chief negotiator of the Portuguese king and with the local chiefs of this region and the assurance of

⁴⁰⁶ Cf. the Report contained in the Bull “*Romanus Pontifex*” of Pope Nicholas V in 1452 in chapter five of this section.

the Portuguese that they were there for a peaceful settlement and trade transactions, led to the permission granted to the Portuguese to construct a trade fortress on the Gulf of Arguin (modern day Mauritania) in 1448. And it was from this fortress that the Portuguese exercised their monopoly control over the trade on African products. This happened four good years before ever pope Nicholas V authored his first Crusade Bull “*Dum Diversas*” in 1452, and six good years to his authoring of his second Crusade Bull “*Romanus Pontifex*” against West Africans in 1454, which called the Transatlantic slave trade into being under the mask of mission and the fight against Islam in Africa. The issuing of the aforesaid Bulls of Nicholas V did no longer serve its religiously intended purpose in the hands of Prince Henry the Navigator but only served to secure the trade monopoly granted to Portugal in West Africa.

But the question now is, having dropped the idea of Crusade against the pagan nations of West Africa, how then did the Prince and his men succeed in generating slaves for their economic enterprise in Africa? The answer to this all important question is not far-fetched. Having dropped the idea of directly involving his men in a direct war against the natives of the regions of West Africa, Prince Henry the Navigator and his men changed tactics by introducing participation in tribal wars with the various tribes of the West African regions by proxy. That means, the tactic of inciting the various tribes and their kings to engage in unending wars against each other was employed. The Portuguese sailors and captains, who settled at their fortresses in Arguin, in Elmina (Ghana) and in Luanda (Congo) would then be supporting some selected local chiefs of a tribe by supplying them with ammunitions so as to generate war captives from both warring camps. These captives were then given to the Portuguese as war prisoners in exchange for the weapons received from the Portuguese. And this was their so called just war against unbelievers in West Africa. But in all truth, there was no such wars waged by the Portuguese Conquistadors either during or after the Pontificate of pope Nicholas V against the true enemies of Christians – the Muslims as approved by the Church in her just war theory. This tactic worked out perfectly well for the Portuguese and greatly promoted their profits from the slave trade. And this was the very point that was emphasized and denounced by pope Gregory XVI in his Bull “*In Supremo Apostolatus*” of 1839, wherein he condemned the behaviours of those inciting perpetual conflicts and dissensions among the various regions of West Africa. And with this in mind, he sternly warned the Portuguese and all others deploying such tactics to cause wars among the West African peoples to desist from such evil acts.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. The Bull “*In Supremo Apostolatus*” of pope Gregory XVI of 1839 in chapter six of this section III.

The fact of this point herein is an indication that the enslavement of Black Africans under the cover of the just war theory was not only unjust but also illegal. And this was the position of some theologians such as the Portuguese born Dominican friar, historian, cartographer and Naval pilot Fernando de Oliveira (1507-1581), who maintained that: "There was no justice in the African slave trade by reason of the fact that the war among African monarchs incited by the European enslavers to generate slaves for themselves is not a just war."⁴⁰⁸ This position of De Oliveira herein is a confirmation of the fact that there is no way such wars incited and financed by the Portuguese could pass the test of a just war theory because, they were neither fought by Christians against pagans or Muslims for the purpose of regaining pagan territories that formerly belonged to the Christians nor for the conversion of the pagan peoples of West Africa. Instead, they were fought for the purpose of generating slaves for the Portuguese as well as to spread the Black African war prisoners as slaves in all the Portuguese business centres and colonies in Brazil, São Tome and in the Spanish New World.

Unfortunately, the popes of the Church continued to tolerate these tactics of the Portuguese in generating slaves for their economic aggrandizement for centuries and regarded it as part of the fulfilment of the conditions for a just title of slavery. When at last confronted with the troubled conscience of Catholic slave holders and traders about the legitimacy and justice of such slave markets in West Africa, the Church through her Holy Office in 1686 under the papacy of pope Innocent XI (*1611, pontificate 1676-1689) did not condemn this method of enslaving Black Africans but only advised them to examine in the first place, whether the enslaved were justly or unjustly deprived of their liberty or not. Secondly, they were advised to treat their slaves humanely and avoid anything that might endanger the life, virtue or the Catholic faith of their slaves.⁴⁰⁹ And 180 years thereafter, precisely in 1866, the Church continued to maintain the same position on the legitimacy and justice of the enslavement of Black Africans, when Reverend Massaia as Vicar Apostolic of the Gala tribe in Ethiopia confronted the Holy Office once more with the question of the legitimacy of participation of Catholics in the Negro slave trade. The answer given to him in the Guideline drafted by the Holy Office on the subject of the Negro slave trade was that slavery is not contrary to both natural and divine laws, and that provided the condition for the just title of slavery is observed, there is nothing evil in the traffic in the Negro slaves. The Holy Office further advised like in the one of 1686, that Christian slave buyers themselves should

⁴⁰⁸ De Oliveira, *Art of War at Sea*, p. 25; Boxer, *Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 33.

⁴⁰⁹ See the Instructions of the Holy Office on the subject of the Legitimacy of the Negro Slave Markets in West Africa, in: *Collectanea Sacra Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, Vol. 1, No. 230, anno 1686, pp. 76-77.

examine whether the slaves were justly deprived of their liberty or not and that everything endangering the Catholic faith of the enslaved should be avoided.⁴¹⁰ That means, the Catholic Church from the period of the pontificate of pope Innocent XI in 1676 to the pontificate of pope Pius IX (*1792, pontificate 1846-1878) in 1866 at least acknowledged the truth that there were many converted Catholics in West Africa who were enslaved and yet their being Christians was not enough reason to protect them from being further enslaved by their fellow Christians of European and American origin. This fact contradicted the Church's rule which prohibited enslavement of Christians by their fellow Christians - a point which led pope Paul III to condemn the enslavement of converted Indians in 1537. This manner of approach to the fate of the Black African slaves accounted for the laissez-faire attitude and negligence developed by the popes towards them throughout the long period of their enslavement. What else could account for this manner of selective justice exhibited by the leadership of the Church other than their strong belief in the myth of Black Africans as the accursed descendants of Ham.

7.6 Curse of Ham as a Curse of Slavery on Black Africans

Apart from the emphasis laid on just title of slavery as a part of the criteria which accounted for the laissez-faire attitude of the Church towards the enslavement of Black Africans, there is also a very cogent reason why the Church chose to stand aloof to the fate of millions of helpless Black African sons and daughters who were being grilled by the evil traffic on humans. This reason is the fact of the Church's belief in the myth that Black Africans are an accursed race of Ham. The twin-factor of blackness and slavery as deduced by the early and medieval Christian Church fathers as a consequence for the curse of Noah on his son Ham as we saw in the section two of this work, played a very significant role in the attitude of the Church and her leadership towards the Black African race during the Transatlantic slave trade. There is no other factor that adversely militated against the fate of the Black Africans and helped to decide their condition of perpetual enslavement even as converted Christians among the circles of the medieval Christian theologians and philosophers than the fact of their being conceived as the direct descendants of the accursed race of Ham. The undeniable proof of their being descended from the lineage of the accursed Ham among the European Christians and the leadership of the Church of the early, medieval and modern Catholicism is the fact of their black

⁴¹⁰ Instructions of the Holy Office in Reply to the letter of the Vicar Apostolic of the Galla Tribe in Ethiopia on the Legitimacy of Participation of Catholics in the Negro Slave Trade, dated June, 20, 1866, in: *Collectanea Sacra Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, anno 1866, No. 1239, p. 719.

skin color. This color, together with perpetual enslavement was interpreted as a punishment that resulted from the curse, which was placed upon their progenitor Ham.

At the period of the Portuguese discoveries made along West African Atlantic Coasts in the fifteenth century, this myth of a cursed race was already a household knowledge and made its rounds among the Portuguese and the entire Christian West. It was kept alive by the early patristic authors and medieval Christian writers and was later on taken up by the Western theologians, pseudo-scientists, ethnographers, anatomists and anthropologists. The impact of this myth of a cursed race continued to affect Black Africans adversely not only during the period of the Transatlantic slave trade but thereafter, and up to the time of the convocation of the First Vatican Council in 1870, when pope Pius IX was requested to release Black Africans from the alleged curse placed over them by the patriarch Noah. His acceptance of this request and the formulation of the prayers for the conversion of the "wretched Ethiopians" in the interiors of Africa was a clear indication of the deep-rooted conviction of the leadership of the Church in the erroneous belief that Black Africans are really an accursed race, divinely placed under the yoke of perpetual enslavement. And with this strong conviction, their continued enslavement was seen as a fulfilment of a divine plan and as such, considered to be a just slavery by the Catholic Church.⁴¹¹

7.7 Black African Skin-Color as a Mark of their Enslavement

Coupled with the fact of the accursed condition of perpetual slavery placed on the Black Africans is the fact of the visible consequence of this curse on their physiological features especially their black skin-color, which they cannot hide from the sight of anyone and which unmistakably marked them out from the people of other races of mankind. As already established in section two of this work, the skin-color of the Black Africans was believed by the Western Christians of the early and medieval Christianity to have resulted from the curse of Ham, who was interpreted to be the forefather of Black Africans in the Bible. In a Portuguese Manuscript preserved at the Bibliotheca Geral da Universidade Coimbra, bearing the title "Explicação Porque Os Negros Negros" (explanation on why Negroes are black), the Portuguese, who enslaved West Africans explained the curse of Ham as the cause of the blackness of Black Africans. According to the explanation contained in the aforesaid

⁴¹¹ For a reference to the Prayer for the Conversion of the "Wretched Ethiopians," see, Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, October 2, 1873. The full content of this prayer received adequate attention in chapter three of section II of this work.

Manuscript: “Black Africans were blackened in their bodies because, they descended from Ham, the accursed son of Noah.”⁴¹² In the same manner, Western Christianity since the patristic times used this black skin-color to link the Black Africans with Ham the accursed son of Noah. In her interpretation of the blackness of the Black Africans, strong efforts were made to link Black Africans with the Devil based on their skin-color. And a good chunk of Christian literatures and works of arts from the patristic times up to the high medieval period presented the Devil in the image of the Black Africans and used this presentation to make them appear among Christians as descendants of the Devil to be hated, resented and rejected by all as a symbol for sin, sexual immorality, moral debasement and for everything evil.

The impact of the interpretation given to this black skin-color was so image damaging, derogatory and grievous that the Black Africans had to carry the mark of this interpretation wherever they were seen among Western Christians and as such, received the appropriate treatment of discrimination, derogation, resentment, rejection and enslavement. This treatment was not only witnessed at the time of their humiliating enslavement but also thereafter even in the modern times. Even though this curse was not mentioned in the papal Bulls that legitimated the enslavement of Black Africans, there are no doubts however in accepting the fact that this curse with a dual effect of slavery and blackness of the skin color of Black Africans really conditioned the leadership of the Church to have assumed the position of silence and indifference to the sufferings and injustices suffered by Black African slaves during the period of the Transatlantic slave trade. The French born sociologist and anthropologist Roger Bastides (1898-1974) is therefore right, when he observed that: “Christians of the medieval and modern periods believed that God punished Black Africans with a dark-skin. And with the Black-White symbolism, they invented causes for the malady, intended to justify in their own eyes a process of production based upon the exploitation of Negro labor.”⁴¹³

7.8 Papal Policy of Galley Slaves in the Papal States

Papal politics of employing the services of slaves also serves as one of the reasons why the popes developed cold feet to condemn the Transatlantic slave trade. This practice of using slaves as rowers for the papal Naval Fleets in the papal states began in the fifteenth century and from that point in time and up to the nineteenth century, the popes kept alive the tradition of employing the services of slaves especially Turkish slaves to maintain the papal squadron

⁴¹² “Explicação porque são os Negros negros,” MS, Cod. 491, Fl. 142, No. d.

⁴¹³ Roger Bastides, *Color, Racism and Christianity*, in: *Color and Race*, edited by John H. Franklin, Boston 1968, p. 36. See also, Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice*, p. 70.

especially in the various wars fought against the Saracens and the Turks. Those taken captives in the various wars fought against the Turks were condemned to the Galleys as slaves for the papal Naval Fleets. This need to maintain the papal army in the Papal States made many popes to involve themselves either directly or by proxy in the buying and selling of slaves for the papal Galleys. We recall in chapter six above that popes like Urban VIII, who wrote the Bull "Commissum nobis" of 1639 which condemned the enslavement of Indians gave permission for the purchase of 40 Turkish slaves for the papal Naval Fleets in 1629. His fellow pope Innocent X (*1574, pontificate 1644-1655) permitted the purchase of 100 Turkish slaves in 1645. Pope Alexander VII (*1599, pontificate 1655-1667) who succeeded him, went into the annals of history as the pope that bought the greatest number of slaves for the papal Naval Fleets. In 1661, he gave approval for the purchase of 600 slaves for the papal Galleys.⁴¹⁴ In the same token, pope Innocent XI (*1611, pontificate 1676-1689) purchased slaves used as Galley slaves in the Papal States during his papacy. Pope Benedict XIV (*1675, pontificate 1740-1758), who authored the Bull "Immensa Pastorum" of 1741 that condemned Spanish enslavement of the Indians also enmeshed himself in the evil of the buying and selling of fellow human beings. He went into the sand of history as a pope who sold out 165 Turkish slaves to the Malteser Order at the huge price of 6,230 Italian scudi in 1758.⁴¹⁵ These slaves were formerly slaves of the papal Galleys for many years. Her continued usage of slaves as Galley slaves in the Papal States did not give the Church any moral voice to condemn either the slave trade or the institution of slavery itself. And this affected her attitude towards the enslavement of Black Africans.

All these points mentioned above accounted for the reason why the popes supported the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade and refused to raise their voice either in condemnation of the evil of this enslavement or engaging themselves in a timely liberation of the victims of this evil traffic in human beings of Black African origin. Instead, the Church under the leadership of her popes continued to endure the atrocities committed by the kings of Portugal and their missionaries in West Africa under the disguise of spreading the light of the Christian Gospel in the African society, which as she believed, was still labouring under the darkness of paganism and so was in need of evangelization. How did the Portuguese missionaries fare in this regard? The answer to this question will come to the limelight in the considerations about to be made on the activities of the Portuguese missionaries in Africa in the next section of this work.

⁴¹⁴ Bertolotti, *La Schiavitu in Roma*, pp. 23-26; Maxwell, *The Church and Slavery*, p. 77.

⁴¹⁵ Priesching, *Von Menschenfängern und Menschenfischern*, p. 178.

IV. The Portuguese and the Evangelization of Africa

1. Portugal and the Mission to Evangelize Black Africans

1.1 Brief Introduction

All along in the chapters that preceded this last section of our work, we have been trying to pin down the very role of the Catholic Church during the Transatlantic slave trade. Our light of inquiry so far was focused on the authorities of the Catholic Church who at one point in time or the other, gave their support to the Portuguese religious and politico economic mission in Africa. This papal support to Portugal that linked the papacy with the Transatlantic slave trade is to be understood in the light of the giving of the right of Patronage (Padroado Real) which served in the hands of the Portuguese as a protection and the authority which they needed for their economic and religious mission in Africa. It would be therefore a great oversight and injustice to our topic if we do not also consider the nature of this Portuguese mission in Africa and the very role which this right of Patronage under which it was carried out, played in the hands of the Portuguese kings, princes and their missionaries in the organisation and execution of this mission in Africa. This will place us on a better footing to see how this right of Patronage later became so detrimental and crippling to the powers of the papacy to intervene in the face of the manifold reports of abuses perpetrated by the Portuguese missionaries and the various protests from non-Portuguese missionaries on the issue of the slave trade and mass exploitation of Black Africans going on under the cover of carrying out an evangelical mission to the African continent.

1.2 Padroado Real and its Implications in Overseas Mission

The origin of the emergence of Padroado Real in Portugal received much attention in chapter two of section three of this work and as such does not need to be treated again in this new section. But suffice it to say here that this Padroado Real or the Royal Patronage with the Holy See is the foundation of the unbreakable relationship that existed between the Holy See and the Royal Crown in Portugal witnessed throughout the medieval period. And this relationship was stretched into the whole period of renaissance and even thereafter. By reason of the fact of its meritorious advantage to the kings of

Portugal in the realisation of the Portuguese aims and goals in Africa, the kings of Portugal never ventured to toy with this papal power that protected them and their interests in their overseas territories especially in Africa and India. That was the reason why they ensured that each of the popes of the renaissance papacy carried out a systematic renewal of this papal protection and empowerment of the Portuguese Crown. It was based on this relationship that pope Eugene IV did not hesitate to bless the military conquest and politico-economic enterprise of Prince Henry the Navigator in Africa. This approval and blessing in the opinion of Alain Milhou was articulated in a number of Bulls. This is seen when he wrote: "After Henry the Navigator had realized that his African discoveries could lead him up to the Priest-king John, pope Eugene IV granted him in December 1442 and January 1443, a number of Bulls that could be beneficial to the Henry's plan for a global Crusade."¹ Milhou seems to have exaggerated the number of Bulls issued by Eugene IV on this issue. But popular opinion among historians like Eugen Weber, Charles Boxer, Francis Maxwell etc., maintained that pope Eugene IV blessed the military expansion of Prince Henry the Navigator with the Bull "Etsi suscepti" of January 9, 1442.² In this Bull, Eugene IV renewed the right of Patronage given to Portugal in 1179 by pope Alexander III and that of his predecessor Martin V in 1418, which gave to the military Order of Christ the right of Patronage over the Churches in the newly discovered lands belonging to Portugal particularly in Ceuta and the islands along the North-West Atlantic Coasts of Africa. This Bull "Etsi suscepti" therefore, granted the Order of Christ the right to own Church Patronage, and to possess islands in the ocean, especially Madeira and the Azoren."³

But the main papal Bulls which served as foundational documents for the establishment of the Portuguese right of ownership and benefits over its colonies and the organisation of the Church beginning from Africa, Brazil to the East India are: "Romanus Pontifex" of Nicholas V (*1397, pontificate 1447-1455) of 1454 and "Inter Caetera" of Callistus III (*1378, pontificate 1455-1458) of 1456.⁴ As we saw in chapter four, section III of this work, pope Callistus III appointed Prince Henry the Navigator as the Grandmaster of the Order of Christ and gave him and his Order the full right of Patronage

¹ Milhou, "Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen" in: Venard, ed. *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 7, p. 543.

² The contents of this Bull and the other Bulls issued to the Portuguese Crown by pope Eugene IV had been given a considerable treatment in chapter two, section III of this work and do not need to be repeated again in this section IV.

³ Milhou, *Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen*, Ibid, p. 565.

⁴ The contents of the Bulls of the aforesaid popes had been fully treated in chapters three and four, section III of this work respectively. See also original Latin Text of these Bulls in Appendix A of this Book.

(Padroado real) to see to the ecclesiastical needs of the Church in the Portuguese overseas' mission. These included the organisation of missionary works, appointment of bishops, choice of Religious Orders and diocesan priests to be sent on mission in their overseas colonies. This Order of Christ (Militia Jesu Christi) was founded in 1318 by king Diniz (*1261, reigned 1279-1325) as a young Order to replace the aged-old Temple Order of Avis founded by king Alfons I in 1162 to aid him in his fights against Islam. This new Order of Christ was charged with the function of protecting the Portuguese south coastal region of North Africa which has been constantly devastated by the Moors of North Africa. It was with the financial and military support of the said Order that made it possible for Prince Henry the Navigator to carry out his many successful expeditions and military assaults in the Muslim regions of North Africa.⁵

Other Bulls such as "Aeterni Regis" of Sixtus IV (*1414, pontificate 1471-1484) of 1481⁶ and the "Praecelsae Devotionis" of Leo X (*1475, pontificate 1513-1521) of 1514⁷ issued after the death of Prince Henry the Navigator in 1460 were used to re-confirm the grants made by the popes to the Crown of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator as contained in the "Romanus Pontifex" and "Inter Caetera" respectively. With "Praecelsae Devotionis," the administration of the Order of Christ and the position which Henry the Navigator held in it was conferred on king Manuel I (*1469, reigned 1495-1521) of Portugal. After the death of Prince Henry the Navigator in 1460, the administration of the spiritual power of jurisdiction of all the Portuguese overseas missions was given to the Grand prior of the Order of Christ and the Vicar in charge of the Vicariate of Thomar. This Vicariate covered the whole of Portuguese overseas missions from West Africa to Brazil and India until when this Vicariate of Thomar was dissolved in 1514 with the creation of the diocese of Funchal on June 12, 1514 by pope Leo X at the request of king Manuel I of Portugal. His intention for requesting for the dissolution of this Vicariate was to march with his plan to run a colonial diocese, which would be under his full control and power in all the Portuguese overseas mission territories. This plan saw the light of the day with the issuance of the Bull "Praecelsae Devotionis" on November 3, 1514 by pope Leo X, who in this Bull appointed king Manuel the administrator of the Order of Christ and gave him the power to administer

⁵ For further readings on the "Order of Christ," see the following: Adelhelm, *Die katholischen Missionen in Indien, China und Japan*; Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission*, pp. 2-5; Heinrich Schäfer, *Geschichte von Portugal*, Vol. I: *Die Tempelritter und der Christusorden*, Heeren und Ukert, eds. Hamburg 1936, pp. 353-369.

⁶ The Bull "Aeterni Regis" of pope Sixtus IV was fully treated in chapter four, section III of this work. All information and sources bothering on this Bull have been documented in this chapter.

⁷ The Bull "Praecelsae Devotionis" of pope Leo X also received considerable treatment in chapter four, section III of this work.

the right of Patronage of Portugal over its mission territories in overseas. And by so doing, the pope granted effectively to the king of Portugal an unrestricted power over the Churches in his colonies. In the views of Adrian Hastings: “The Portuguese *Padroado Real* was effectively granted by pope Leo X in his “*Praecelsae Devotionis*,” a control over the Church in overseas almost greater than that exercised by the king at home.”⁸ This power of control given to king Manuel in this Bull is in the opinion of Bernhard Wenzel, an exclusive right which was finally confirmed by this Bull to belong perpetually to the king of Portugal. This is seen when he wrote: “Thus, the international legal authority of the papacy to intervene, was for the last time on November 3, 1514 quite convincingly given in favour of the Crown of Portugal in the Portuguese discovery and mission territories.”⁹

In 1532 king Johann III (*1502, reigned 1521-1557) of Portugal founded a commission famously known as “*Mesa de Consciencia e Ordens*” (Bureau of conscience and orders) for the organisation of missions in Africa. This commission comprised of numerous competent men such as lawyers, canonists, and highly educated theologians under the leadership of the knights of the Order of Christ and the ecclesiastical administrators of the colonies of Portugal. They were given power to protect the rights of the natives in Africa as well as to oversee the activities of missionaries in all the overseas colonies belonging to Portugal. Finally during the pontificate of pope Paul III (*1468, pontificate 1534-1549), a hereditary right of control over this right of Patronage was conferred on king Johann III. This conferment was established with the papal Bull “*Aequum Reputamus*” of November 3, 1534. In this Bull, pope Paul III gave to the Portuguese Royal family the right to appoint bishops for the dioceses in the territories belonging to Portugal in overseas. This right included also the right to determine those to be sent as missionaries to these territories. Expressing his view on this, Milhou wrote: “In the Church organization, as well as in defining mission of strategic priorities and the nomination of bishops proposed by the king of Portugal, the pope had no other choice but to acknowledge the decision already taken in the choice of bishops made by the monarch. This was the merit of the transferred right of Patronage to the Order of Christ which also included the ecclesiastical jurisdiction.”¹⁰ And by so doing, the entire papal right to organise mission for the evangelization of peoples became a personal property of a Catholic king. This monopoly consisted in the fact that no other cleric or office including that of the pope has the right to enter any of the zones covered by the “*Padroado Real*” of Portugal without an express permission from the king of Portugal. The pope himself could no

⁸ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 72.

⁹ Wenzel, *Portugal und der heilige Stuhl*, p. 75.

¹⁰ Milhou, *Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen*, Ibid, p. 748.

longer decide matters relating to the appointment of bishops in the Portuguese overseas mission territories. This fact was echoed by Adelhelm Jann when he said: "Neither clergy nor laity was allowed to enter into the Portuguese mission areas without the permission of the king of Portugal. This is because the Royal-born Grandmaster of the largest Portuguese military Order of Christ had the power to determine all those chosen to be among the Portuguese missionary-personnel."¹¹ Continuing, Adelhelm concluded that this right of Patronage turned out to be an absolute power in the hands of the king of Portugal who also had become the Grandmaster of the Order of Christ. In these words, he said: "The ecclesiastical position of the Grandmaster of the Militia of Christ became a source of state absolutism in the Portuguese mission areas."¹² That means, through this right of Patronage, the king of Portugal was made not only the king of Africa but also indirectly assumed the Office of the pope in the direction of the affairs of the Christian faith in Africa. Put in another way, the entire sky was simply converted to a room for the Royal Crown of Portugal to do as she saw fit in Africa without being obliged to report to the pope from time to time or to receive instructions from him. In the light of this fact, Milhou rightly said: "Thanks to Royal Patronage, sovereignty and the capitalistic monopoly of the organs of the state, the Crown of Portugal possessed an absolute power in her colonies and trading posts in overseas."¹³

The implication of this granting of the right of Patronage on the side of the papacy was enormous. First and foremost, it made the popes to lose their apostolic authority in the affairs of the Catholic Church founded in the overseas territories belonging to Portugal as well as undermined the power of the papacy greatly. In the words of R. E. Frykenberg: "The power of the institution of the Padroado, originally granted in papal Bulls during the fifteenth century persistently and successfully thwarted and undermined papal authority itself."¹⁴ And this was the reason why the papacy could not speak out even in the face of many proofs of atrocities committed in the name of God in West Africa by the kings of Portugal and their representatives as well as their missionaries. It also led to the loss of papal control over the king. The king saw no need any more to consult the popes in making important decisions for the mission, even those of them that could perpetually hamper the lives of the peoples in mission lands as it did in West Africa. Milhou captured this view when he wrote: "By so doing, the papacy denied itself the right to intervene

¹¹ Adelhelm, *Die katholische Missionen in Indien, China und Japan*, p. 66. Cf. Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission*, p. 18.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹³ Milhou, *Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen*, *Ibid.*, p. 566.

¹⁴ Frykenberg, "India," in: Hastings, *A World History of Christianity*, p. 157.

critically and practically, and in the face of heresy and abuses, she could neither intervene in Spain nor in Portugal.”¹⁵

However, it has to be pointed out here that the right of Patronage given to the Crown of Portugal in their overseas colonies as contained in the above mentioned papal Bulls was not meant in the original intentions of the popes to serve as a tool of absolutism in the hands of the kings of Portugal as it unfortunately turned out to be later on. That it turned out to be so, was as a result of a hidden intention of the kings of Portugal, who did not make any difference between trade and Christian mission. The popes, who granted this right of Patronage to the Crown of Portugal did so with the intention of avoiding unhealthy competition among other European Christian kings and nations, who had also much interests in the flow of wealth in Africa and the trade in India. This fact is based on the truth that these popes had always laid emphasis on the need for unity among all Christian nations. And it was in the pursuit of this unity also in the newly discovered Christian areas in Africa and India that this right of exclusion of other nations in the lands discovered by the Portuguese was given so as to avoid the scandal from other Christian nations in these new territories. Bernhard Wenzel corroborated this fact when he wrote: “But the original and pure idea of the aforementioned papal edicts was based on the constant demands of the papacy for the unified idea of the entire Christendom. This was dominated by two principles which the edict "Aeterni Regis" from 1481 clearly states: ad ... Divini Nominis laudem, et principium et populorum perpetuam pacem.”¹⁶

Be that as it may, it is very unfortunate that this original intention of the popes was not respected and as a result was abused by the Portuguese kings, who unfortunately saw it as a tool of absolutism in their hands to organize and protect their political and economic interests rather than the proper missionary evangelization of peoples. And it was with this kind of mentality that the Portuguese missionary activity in Africa was conducted. A mission which as Friedler Ludwig pointed out was a means of enslavement and exploitation of the African people. According to him: "It is clear that these religious idealistic goals could go hand in hand with the enslavement of African people.”¹⁷ The truth contained in this citation will be made manifest in our consideration of the execution of this mission in Africa.

¹⁵ Milhou, *Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen*, Ibid, p. 556.

¹⁶ Wenzel, *Portugal und der heilige Stuhl*, p. 92. This Latin text reads in English thus: “To the praise of the Divine Name and Creator, and for the perpetual peace of the people.”

¹⁷ Ludwig, “Afrika 1450-1600” in: *Außereuropäische Christentumsgeschichte, Kirchen- und Theologie-Geschichte in Quellen*, Vol. VI, p. 111.

1.3 Portuguese Mission in Africa: An Overview

The missionary zeal of Prince Henry the Navigator and his countrymen to bring the words of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to West Africa could be theoretically said to have begun as far back as 1448, when Prince Henry the Navigator won the confidence of pope Eugene IV and received from him the required blessings and approval for his mission to evangelize West Africa. But in practice, this mission religiously speaking, never saw the light of the day during the lifetime of Prince Henry the Navigator (+1460) and king Alfonso V (+1481) who were the principal negotiators, recipients and beneficiaries of these grants made to the Portuguese. And in effect, this mission did not begin before the year 1481. Before this time, the mission of Prince Henry in West Africa consisted of carrying out numerous expeditions and discoveries of the Coasts of Africa and making sure of securing the sea route that linked Africa to the Indian trade against any foreign interlopers. With the help of these discoveries, the West African Coasts were considered to be of great importance to Portugal because of an easier access it provided for the trade with India. To maintain this strategic position of Africa, Portugal considered diplomatic and trade alliances with some African kings as a necessary option. This was done with the conviction that a trade relationship with these African rulers and monarchs could bring them into contact with the Christian faith, and this turned out to be so later.

In 1482 Portugal built the famous Fortress at Elmina in Ghana. This was the first meaningful establishment of Portugal in its colonial West Africa. It was built as a centre of trade and as a port for slaves, where they were assembled before their shipment to Lisbon. The presence of this fortress made it possible for some Portuguese merchants and migrants to settle around this fortress. It was here that the first chapel was built and masses were celebrated on daily basis for the repose of Prince Henry the Navigator by some missionaries living among them. With the presence of this trade centre, contacts were established with local chiefs and kings and it did help to improve relations with the Portuguese and some West African rulers. In the words of Adrian Hastings: "Trade required the establishment of forts, but it was seen as a religious and even missionary activity. It was part of an anti-Islamic Crusade."¹⁸ That being the case, some West African monarchs such as the rulers of Asante, Benin, Dahomey, Senegambia, Mali, Warri etc. who needed the Portuguese goods such as guns and gunpowder for the defence of their empires against Islamic incessant invasion going on in Africa in the fifteenth century saw this trade relation with Portugal as something beneficial. But before they could be

¹⁸ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 71.

allowed to be in possession of these ammunitions, they must first and foremost become Christian kings. This was in accordance with the Catholic teaching that arms and ammunitions should not be supplied to the infidels so that they will not have any military advantage over the Christians. Confirming this, Eugen Weber wrote: “The Roman Curia had in fact previously prohibited under the penalty of excommunication the trade in metals and other items that could be of benefits to the infidels and pagans against the Christians.”¹⁹ And with this kind of missionary methodology, some of the African rulers, who needed the Portuguese ammunitions, had the only option of converting to Christianity as a *conditio sine qua non* for gaining access to these ammunitions. And as a result, a sign of this conversion was baptism, followed by a reception of a new name that was patterned after that of the king of Portugal.

This baptism was done on the level of negotiations and not on the principle of religious conviction. Some of the kings, who negotiated for baptism were baptised alongside with some members of their families and subjects. This method of conversion has been considered by Kevin Ward as a mere diplomatic gestures. This is seen when he wrote: “For many African rulers, this was primarily a strategic and diplomatic gesture rather than something with intrinsically religious import.”²⁰ Baptism for him therefore: “Opened the way to the legitimate sale of arms, with all the advantages which that gave in local struggles for power.”²¹

Some of the kings of Benin (Oba) who wanted the Portuguese ammunitions but not their baptism were refused access to them in the late fifteenth century. A concrete example here will be of great help for us to know the nature of the Royal politics that surrounded this method of conversion of the Portuguese. In the late fifteenth century, the king of Benin called Oba Ozolua, who ruled the kingdom of Benin from 1491 to 1516 was in need of these ammunitions and wanted to get them by all means. But he was not ready to convert to Christianity by accepting to be baptised. After hearing the news of the Portuguese missionaries in the neighbouring kingdoms of Africa such as Asante and Kongo, he requested king Manuel I (*1469, reigned 1495-1521) of Portugal to send him some missionaries to work in his kingdom. His numerous petitions to king Manuel of Portugal did not help matters until he sent his emissaries to the Royal Crown in Portugal in 1514 for this same purpose. The king of Portugal this time around, assured him of granting his request but on one condition that he must convert to Christianity and open his markets for a

¹⁹ Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichsmission*, p. 48.

²⁰ Ward, “Africa,” in: Hastings, *A World History of Christianity*, p. 201.

²¹ *Ibid.*

free trade on African products such as slaves, gold, ivory and pepper.²² This assurance was contained in the letter written in 1514 by king Manuel which partly reads:

With a very good will we send you the clergy that you have asked for...when we see that you have embraced the teachings of Christianity like a good and faithful Christian, there will be nothing in our realms which we shall not be glad to favour you, whether it be arms or cannon and all other weapons of war...These things we are not sending to you now because the law of God forbids it. We earnestly recommend that you order your markets to be opened and trade to be carried on freely.²³

In this Royal encounter, the king of Benin on the one hand, indirectly asked for armaments which he was sure he would get with the presence of Portuguese missionaries in his empire for the defence of his empire. On the other hand, the king of Portugal requested for trade in African goods especially slaves which was forbidden in the Benin empire as a result of the scarcity of able bodied men to defend the empire during wars which the slave trade has caused throughout the Benin empire in the late fifteenth century. The only binding force and point of arrival for the requests of both kings was Christian conversion with its consequent baptism. But the king of Benin, knowing full well that his conversion to Christianity would imply the loss of his men through the slave trade, was tricky enough to get himself and his empire out of the rope of the Portuguese king by refusing to accept this baptism. But one wonders why king Manuel could refuse the sale of arms to the Oba of Benin even when the fear of being excommunicated for doing so has been removed and after trade relation with unbelievers has been considered as a tool for Christian conversion for the unbelievers. The prohibition made by the Church, which king Manuel referred to in his reply to the request of Oba Ozolua of Benin for missionaries

²² The trade on the pepper produced in Benin was a lucrative business in the second half of the fifteenth century when this pepper was discovered by the Portuguese explorer and captain Joham Affom da Aveiro in 1486 who was the first Portuguese that entered into Benin in this century. According to the Portuguese chronicler Ruy de Piné, the first pepper from the Guinean Coast to reach Portugal came from Benin. This pepper was produced in great quantity and was held in high esteem by the Portuguese. This was recorded in his chronicle when he wrote: "Great quantity of pepper was produced in that land, and presently samples of it were sent to Flanders and to other parts, and soon it fetched a great price and was held in high esteem." Cf. Ruy de Piné, *Chronicles of King John II*, *Collecção de Livros Inéditos de Historia Portugueza* in: Davidson, *The African Past*, p. 185.

²³ Letter of King Manuel I of Portugal in 1514, in: Ryder, *Benin and the Europeans 1485-1897*, pp. 47-48. See also Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 77. For more information on the tricks of the Oba of Benin to obtain military support from the king of Portugal while refusing to convert to Christianity, see, Asia of João de Barros, in: Crone, *Voyages of Cadamosto and other Documents*, pp. 124-125. For further details of this incident, see, Kofi Agbeti, *West African Church History: Christian Missions And Church Foundations 1482-1919*, Leiden 1986, p. 3ff.

has been already repealed by pope Julius II (*1443, pontificate 1503-1513) in 1505. This repeal was effected with the issuance of the Bull “*Sedis Apostolicae benigna*” of July 4, 1505 which lifted this arms embargo and permitted trade with unbelievers with the hope that this will bring them to the knowledge of Christ.²⁴ The only reason for this refusal to sell arms to Oba Ozolua was possibly for the mere fact that access to the required slaves he needed from Ozolua in exchange with the Portuguese ammunitions was not granted him. Be that as it may, the Oba of Benin eventually got missionaries from Portugal, but all the pressures mounted on him to convert and receive the sacrament of baptism did not bear any fruits. This made missionaries to leave Benin disappointedly and went to other places.

In other Portuguese colonies such as in Warri, Dahomey, Guinea, Mutapa, Luanda and Angola the same method of using trade for conversion was employed. And the missionary presence was restricted mainly to the coastal regions of West Africa such as Cape Verde islands and São Tome, where the Portuguese merchants and settlers were living and transacting their business on humans and gold. In his comments about these coastal areas, Adrian Hastings said as follows: “Cape Verde, São Tome and Principe were inhabited by settled white convicts from Portugal and Black slaves brought from the mainland, they were hardly an ideal base for the Church.”²⁵ Going a little further, Hastings recorded the description of these coastal regions made by one of the governors of Cape Verde islands when he wrote: “In 1627, a disillusioned governor described the Cape Verde islands and São Tome as the dung heap of the Portuguese empire.”²⁶ One wonders the kind of miracle that could be done in such areas as described above under the umbrella of missionary work. It will of course not go beyond baptism of these Black slaves before leaving the African shores.

However, from its beginning in 1448 to the time of the reign of Johann II in 1491, the main bulk of Portuguese missionary activity in West Africa rested mainly on the celebration of the sacraments on the coastal regions, training of the children belonging to Portuguese merchants and settlers and a shallow religious instruction given to the slaves before embarkation to Portugal. While throwing much light on this mission, Milhou Alain wrote: “Under king Alfonso V and the beginning of the reign of John II, the Christianization of Africa was limited essentially to what it was under Henry the Navigator: Baptism and superficial instruction of the displaced slaves kidnapped from the interior lands and the islands, at best, a stronger integration into Portuguese society through

²⁴ Cf. The Bull “*Sedis Apostolicae benigna*” in: Jordão, ed. *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. I, p. 60ff; Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission*, p. 48.

²⁵ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 118.

²⁶ *Ibid.* See also, Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 7.

the mixture of those born into the marriage between the Europeans and indigenous peoples *Mestizentum*.²⁷

In other words, missionaries in these areas served only as colonial chaplains and did not concern themselves with the conversion of the natives in the mainland. This fact was corroborated by Adrian Hastings, when he maintained that in other areas such as Warri, Mutapa, Luanda etc, the Portuguese missionaries, be they Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians who remained only at the sea ports and centres of the slave trade served only as “chaplains to Portuguese traders and soldiers, not as missionaries to the African society.”²⁸ Continuing, he concluded that: “Almost nowhere outside the Kongo did Christianity in this period escape being a mere appendage of colonial presence.”²⁹

In all, the seed of Christianity sown in these territories of West Africa was too shallow and did not go beyond the celebration of the sacraments of baptism and the holy Eucharist. The only place in Africa, where a noticed difference was seen and where the Portuguese established a sort of an organised missionary work was in the kingdom of Kongo (present day Congo). Let us now consider how this mission was carried out.

1.4 Kongo Mission: An Example of the Portuguese Mission to Evangelize Black Africa

The Kongo mission like in other territories in West Africa was arranged on a level of Royal negotiations. The king of Portugal normally sent his delegation with some gift items meant for his target African ruler and assured him of his friendliness and a peaceful trade relation with his land. It was in pursuance of this purpose that the first Portuguese were seen for the first time in the pagan kingdom of Kongo in August 1482, when Diogo Cão and his companion landed at the mouth of the river Kongo (Zaire). Diogo Cão was so to say, the first European that met with king Nzinga Nkuvu the Manikongo (ruler of Kongo). After making the intention of his king known to the king of Kongo, he left for Portugal to make his findings known to king João II who sent him. Two years later, Diogo visited again. And this time around, he came with many Royal gifts meant for the king of Kongo and the request to convert to the Christian religion. The king of Kongo Nzinga Nkuvu accepted the offer of conversion made by king João II of Portugal and requested from him missionaries to evangelize his kingdom. To fulfill this Royal request, king João II of Portugal sent his first missionary expedition to Kongo on December 19,

²⁷ Milhou, *Entdeckungen und Christianisierung der Fernen*, Ibid, p. 580.

²⁸ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 122.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 118.

1490. This expedition consisted of three ships loaded with items for Church building, liturgical items, bells, musical instruments, carpenters, masons and five missionaries from the monastery of St. Eloy. This expedition landed on the Coast of Kongo on March 29, 1491. According to Eugen Weber: "All that one needed for Christianization and cultural upliftment of the country, emigrated from these vessels."³⁰

On arrival, this team of missionary expedition were received with great joy by the delegates of king Nzinga in Soyo, a district under the kingdom of Kongo. After remaining in Soyo for a few days, they moved down to Mbanza Kongo the capital city of Kongo to meet with king Nzinga, who had been waiting for their arrival with great expectations. In order to accord them a royal reception, some of the subjects of the king were sent to accompany their coming with music and dancing thereby showing his hospitality and readiness to welcome the message of salvation in his kingdom. This reception and the preparation made for it was recorded by Lopez when he wrote: "At the command of the governor of Sogno, his men had to accompany the Portuguese, with music and singing and admirable cheerfulness. And with amazement, it was told that along the 150 miles that they travelled by sea from the city of salvation, the streets were well swept and perfectly clean and the Portuguese were well supplied with food and comforts."³¹ On arrival to the capital of Kongo kingdom, the missionaries together with the chief captain of the three Portuguese ships and representative of the Portuguese Royal Crown read out the message of the king of Portugal to king Nzinga of Kongo and his chiefs assuring them of his steady assistance in the spread and growth of Christianity in Kongo. And as a sign of his readiness to do as he promised, king Nzinga and his men were given many gifts from king João II. The king of Kongo received both the message and the gifts that accompanied it with great joy and showed his readiness to receive the waters of baptism.

On May 6, 1491, the king was baptised together with some of his chiefs, members of his family and a good number of his subjects. This baptism was conducted by João de Santa Maria as head of the missionary team while Captain Rui de Sousa and other Portuguese present at this great historical occasion served as God-fathers to all those baptised on that day. King Nzinga took the baptismal name of Dom João I of Kongo after the name of the Portuguese king João II. His conversion was believed to be the beginning of the uplifting of the image of African kings but it rather turned out to be an opening of the road to foreign domination, subjugation, enslavement and colonisation of both

³⁰ Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission*, p. 19.

³¹ Lopez O, *Relazione del Reame di Congo*, in: Koschorke, et al., eds. *Außereuropäische Christentumsgeschichte*, Vol. VI, p. 116.

his kingdom and subjects. However, his conversion and baptism was in the opinion of Adrian Hastings: "The beginning of the Christian history of Kongo and indeed of Black and central Africa."³² During the rest of his life, he gave the Portuguese missionaries free hand to spread the Gospel of salvation and within record time, about 100,000 people received baptism and were made Christians.³³ This opened up immense areas of work for the Portuguese missionaries.

The problem which stared this young Church in the face at this early stage was how to overcome the traditional religion and practices prevalent in Kongo. After the death of king João I of Kongo in 1506, it did not take long before many people and some of the chiefs of Kongo turned back to their former way of life. This was caused as a result of fewness of the Portuguese missionaries, whose work was too shallow so as to effect proper conversion based on conviction in the lives of the people. Based on this, the pagan son and successor of João I Mbanza Nzinga, who did not want to know anything about the new religion greatly promoted the tradition of his land. Also the traditional medicine men and sorcerers, whose jobs and influence were threatened by the presence of the new religion, saw this new religion as a cog in their own wheel of progress and as a result, they fought the battle of their lives to uproot it. But the baptism of the younger son of king João I - Alfonso I, who with the help of the Portuguese army overthrew his pagan brother and ascended the throne of his father, brought a new hope of survival for the new religion in the kingdom of Kongo.

The ascendancy of king Alfonso I (1507-1543) to the throne in 1507 and his long reign on this throne of his father was a blessing for the survival and growth of Christianity in Kongo. His reign kindled a new fire in the dwindling Christian Church in Kongo and promoted it up to a point of making it the state religion. He began to attack the first problem of the Church in Kongo - scarcity of priests by requesting king Manuel of Portugal to send more missionaries for the work in his kingdom. He also arranged with king Manuel to allow some young men from Kongo to receive priestly training and education in Lisbon. This plan was approved in 1508, when king Alfonso's son prince Henry Nzinga and some other sons of the chiefs of Kongo were sent to Lisbon for priestly formation. But this plan only achieved little results in the sense that only four out of twenty of such Kongo students made it to the priesthood.

King Manuel who showed great interest in the mission in Kongo did his best to promote the missionary work in Kongo. He sent another missionary expedition to Kongo in 1508 which arrived the coast of Kongo in 1509. This time around,

³² Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 73.

³³ Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission*, p. 29.

the number of priests-personnel was increased to 13 and king Alfonso I received them with great joy. Their first assignment was to correct the mistake of the first missionaries in Kongo who failed to see the great role of religious instructions for the sustenance of the young Christian religion. To begin this, a boarding school was built at the capital city Mbanza Kongo to educate mainly the Mulattoes and the children of the chiefs of Kongo. A house was also built for the missionaries in this school compound so that they could live together as members of the religious Order. But it did not last long before they began to misunderstand themselves and got separated from one another, where they began meddling in scandalous acts that were not at all in conformity with their mission. This included: engagement in trade such as the slave trade and gold as well as living in concubinage with some Kongolese women. Thus in the opinion of Eugen Weber, it was at this time that the search for the Kongo wealth and the failure of the Kongo mission began. According to him: "Of course, strife, scandal and greed became the cradle of the Congo mission, and followed them for a whole lifetime up to its destruction."³⁴ The much expected goal of strengthening the Kongo mission which led to their coming was never achieved.

However another missionary expedition sent by king Manuel in 1512 raised the hope of survival of the Church in Kongo. This time around, the king sent an expedition of five ships carrying mules, horses, instruments needed for Church service, carpenters, masons, and other technical workers but only five missionaries. The commander and representative of the king of Portugal was Simão da Silva, whom he instructed to maintain strict order and regulation of the Portuguese in Kongo. He handed him a copy of his "Regimento" (a body of laws) which contained a set of instructions meant to guide the missionaries in Kongo and the regulation of the new way of life for the natives of Kongo. But after reading the contents of this Regimento, Alfonso I found them as something very hard for his people and also almost impossible to be enforced by him. Commenting on this, Weber recorded: "When he (king of Kongo) had read the five books of the Ordenações (Ordinances) with a myriad of laws, regulations, articles and clauses, as something which the developing legal life of a civilized nation brings with itself, he saw that it was impossible to subject his people and vassals under such a legal code and that if all the people failed to obey every day accordingly, then he had to invest his whole time imposing criminal punishment and execution on offenders more than in his work of administration of his government."³⁵ This Regimento forbade Portuguese missionaries to live alone as well as to participate in the slave trade going on

³⁴ Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission*, pp. 15-16.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 56.

simultaneously with the work of evangelization in Kongo. It shifted the responsibility of the well-being and maintenance of missionaries to the king of Kongo. King Manuel also strongly empowered Simão de Silva to be very strict with the secular clergy working in Kongo so as to avoid any act that might endanger the faith of the Christians of Kongo. He instructed that any of the missionaries caught in any act of misbehaviour should be deported back to Lisbon for prosecution and punishment and should not be allowed to take any slave in the ship along with him. This restriction was done so that the ship will be able to contain all the slaves that might be given to him as gifts from king Alfonso I in return to the many gifts which he sent to him and his subjects. In the light of this intention of king Manuel, Eugen Weber wrote as follows: "He, king Manuel hopes that the five ships, though they were not meant to sail on the waters as a merchant fleet and their first purpose was to serve God, they should however not come home empty, but rather to bring from king Alfonso slaves, ivory and copper."³⁶ This wish of king Manuel came into fulfilment as he expected. The king of Kongo gave him 500 slaves and another 30 slaves as a replacement for those of them that might die on the way before landing in Lisbon. In all, Eugen Weber recorded that these ships carried to Lisbon a total of 1000 slaves given to king Manuel of Portugal as a reward for his goodwill to the people of Kongo and as a gratitude for the supply of ammunitions with which king Alfonso I successfully fought his enemies and gained victory over them. According to him: "From the war, the men of king Alfonso brought home 410 prisoners as slaves, a Portuguese bricklayer owned 190, so that Alvaro Lopez could load the 1000 slaves on the ship, all of which were to king Manuel, the lucky one, as a present for his concern for the temporal and eternal good of the kingdom of Congo. Only the strong people were chosen as gifts."³⁷ But unfortunately for king Manuel, the kind of a colonial Church, which he intended to call into being in Kongo with his Regimento of 1512 did not work out as he wished. This failure was caused as a result of the sudden death of his chief negotiator in Kongo mission Simão da Silva. His demise in 1512 meant also the natural death of his king's Regimento in Kongo, in the sense that there was no capable hand to enforce it as Simão da Silva would have done. This body of European laws did not march with the lives of the natives of Kongo at all and king Alfonso himself was not interested in its enforcement. The result was that the intended colonial rule and discipline, which the Regimento of 1512 set to realise both in the Portuguese missionaries and in the native people of Kongo became a mirage. The slave trade continued to take its toll on the people of Kongo and the missionaries themselves continued to get involved in

³⁶ Ibid, p. 60.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 63.

it. This was as a result of the fact that king Manuel of Portugal stopped the stipends that normally used to come from Lisbon for the upkeep of these missionaries. And as a result of this, they went their way looking for a way of surviving. And they saw this way of surviving in the lucrative slave trade going on in Kongo. Despite the ban placed on it by king Alfonso I of Kongo, the Portuguese merchants and clergy had their way in the spread of this trade. Alluding to this fact, Weber said: "In fact, the risk of addiction for material acquisition of the Congo missionaries grew larger than they have ever been. Owing to the fact that the Portuguese ships arrived so rare on the Coast of Congo, the economic situation of the missionaries, especially those of the secular clergy worsened significantly. The latter (secular clergy) lacked the financial support that the religious fathers had from their monastery in their country."³⁸ And as the result of this lack of financial support from their home government: "They seem to have been left to themselves to a great extent. Through this economic crisis some of them allowed themselves so easily to be led to the remunerative employment, which only the slave trade could offer."³⁹ This financial problem of the missionaries was a serious source of distraction for the missionary activities of Portuguese in Kongo on the ground that this mission suffered much neglect due to the fact that the concentration was now focused more on the slave trade than on the deepening of the Christian faith in Kongo. Their behaviour in this regard proved correct the criticism of missionaries made by Beti Mongo when he said: "Money, this was also a big problem for the mission, they all (missionaries) ran in pursuit of money, it overtook all of them, even the priests, and possibly they, even more than the others."⁴⁰ This quest for money was not the only problem that suffocated the good missionary zeal of both kings Alfonso I of Kongo and Manuel I of Portugal in Kongo. Apart from the problems of geographical dimension such as climatic condition, distance from Europe, frequent death of missionary personnel, poverty, poor lodging and maintenance of priests, there were also other problems which overburdened the promising Christian enterprise begun in Kongo by these two princes of the Catholic Church.

In the first place, the Church here suffered from want of missionaries to keep it going. All the efforts made by king Alfonso I of Kongo to rescue this problem of scarcity of priests in form of repeated petitions and appeals to send missionaries from Lisbon and Rome fell on deaf ears. And when they were heard at all, his appeals could only be met with positive reaction from Lisbon, if

³⁸ Ibid, pp.101-102. See also, Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion*, p. 19; Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 124.

³⁹ Ibid. Cf. Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion*, p. 19; Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 124.

⁴⁰ Mongo, *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, p. 38, in: Hertlein, *Christentum und Mission*, p. 80.

and only if, he attached to them the promise of sending gifts to the kings of Portugal in form of slaves even when this was against his will. Corroborating this view, Weber wrote: “He supported the request by announcing new gifts for the king of Portugal.”⁴¹ For king Alfonso, who was not ready to endure the scandals caused by the few missionaries put in place in his kingdom, this refusal of the Crown of Portugal to grant his requests for missionaries was the bitterest of his experiences under the Portuguese Crown.

On the part of Portugal, this neglect was caused as a result of her too much expeditions and acquisition of colonies in Zambezi (East Africa), India and Brazil which she simultaneously embarked upon. In these other colonies, she needed also missionaries to support the Christian projects she established in them. But in actual fact, she lacked enough missionary personnel to maintain them, but at the same time she could not allow other non-Portuguese missionaries entry into these mission territories so as to foster the pastoral care of souls needed in them. Affirming this fact, Kevin Ward said: “Portugal proved unable to provide a reliable regular supply of secular clergy and members of missionary Orders, but it was zealous in keeping out missionaries from other nations.”⁴² This fact strangled the hope of king Alfonso to gain assistance from other missionary Orders such as the Capuchins, who were ready to offer assistance. The only hope he had as a rescue of this situation was dashed to the mud, when he was informed from Lisbon that the academic progress of some young Kongo students sent to Lisbon for priestly formation so as to encourage local clergy was nothing to write home about. This evaluation was followed with a decision made by the Crown of Portugal never to bring Kongo students any longer for studies in Lisbon. For Alfonso I of Kongo, this was very heart-breaking. How then could he provide for the big gap yawning for priestly work in his kingdom?

However, all hope was not lost as his son Dom Henry with few others receiving formation in Lisbon were approved for priestly ordination and were ordained priests in 1520. In the same year, and at the suggestion of king Manuel, Dom Henry was presented to pope Leo X for approval as a bishopric candidate to assist his father back home in the Kongo mission. This request was granted by the pope and on December 1, 1520, he consecrated the young Dom Henry a titular bishop of Utica. And as such he became the first Episcopal product of the Portuguese colonial West African missionary enterprise. Although he was a consecrated bishop, he was unfortunately not given the power of jurisdiction needed to function as bishop in Africa. This was as a result of the fact that he was still under the canonical age of receiving such

⁴¹ Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission*, p. 72.

⁴² Ward, “Africa” in: Hastings, *A World History of Christianity*, p. 202.

powers. However, a year later, he was granted dispensation from Rome in 1521 and was allowed to come home to be with his people in Kongo. The hope of raising indigenous clergy through this act did not materialise in the sense that nothing was heard of him again except that he died before completing the age of 35. And that being the case, the problem of priests to fill the gap left by the death of the few available ones in Kongo continued to weigh down the Portuguese Christian mission in Kongo.

Secondly, the problem of a shallow Christianity planted in Kongo also contributed to the decline of this mission. As earlier said, the Portuguese missionary methodology in all their colonies in the Western Coasts of Africa did not go beyond baptism and the celebration of the holy mass. The mission in Kongo suffered the same fate as others did. And as a result of this, many Kongo Christians, who received the waters of baptism and salt could not know anything about the Christian religion outside the knowledge that they were given salt to leak as a sign of their being Christians. Based on this lack of deep-rooted knowledge about the Christian religion, the temptation of falling back to the strong traditional practices and customs prevalent in Kongo was too hard to be resisted. Consequently, both polygamy, fetishism, and idolatry took the upper hand.

This situation grew worse after the death of king Alfonso I in 1541. His two sons Nkanga Mbemba and Mpudi Mbemba, who succeeded him on the throne respectively could not provide the strong support for the mission needed to fight paganism like their father did. Instead, they bowed easily to the pressures of the pagan religion and as a result, Christianity lost its ground as the state religion in the kingdom of Kongo. This situation remained unchanged until in 1548, when the first four Portuguese Jesuit missionaries came to Kongo from India to rescue what was left of a once flourishing and promising Portuguese Christian colony of Kongo. And being men already advanced in missionary experience, they took up the school system where they educated the young Kongo men and women and instructed them in the Christian way of life. They settled on the coastal region of São Tome, where many of their landsmen were living and trading in both humans and other goods. Adrian Hastings attested to this fact, when he wrote: "By the end of the reign of Alfonso I, there were probably up to 100 Portuguese living in the country, some with white wives, but mostly with black ones or concubines. Their religion was Catholicism, their occupation slave trading."⁴³ The main achievement of the Jesuits lies in their efforts to combat polygamy in Kongo. Before their arrival in 1548, the women were banned by their polygamous men from taking part in the Christian services. The Jesuits successfully pleaded with the men to allow their wives

⁴³ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 82.

return back to the Church and to give up their polygamous life. Their pleas did bear fruits especially with the help and support of the new king Diogo of Kongo who brought back the Christian status of his kingdom and made it once again a state religion.

Over and above all this, the hydra headed monster that militated against the success and progress of the Kongo mission was the slave trade and the growing spirit of material acquisition predominant among the Portuguese missionaries both lay and clergy. This growing quest for material acquisition noticed among the Portuguese clergy in Africa was observed by the king of the Mani-kongo king Nzinga Menba as something very detrimental to the survival of the Christian faith of his people such that he was forced to complain bitterly against this tendency in a letter he wrote to king Manuel of Portugal in 1514. In this letter the king of Kongo wrote against the scandalous behaviours of the Portuguese missionary clerics, who rather than showing good examples to the young people brought to them in a boarding school for moral and spiritual training, were instead found scandalizing them with their immoral ways of living as well as their participation in the slave trade and other trading activities in Kongo. The protest made by the king of Kongo in this letter is well articulated when he wrote as follows:

...every day they (Priests) came and asked us for money. After we must have given them the money, they all began to make business with it, buying and selling of goods. Given this confusion, we asked them for the sake of love for our Lord Jesus Christ, to buy only those who are real slaves, but not to buy especially women so as to avoid giving a bad example and not to portray us as a liar in the eyes of the people, to whom we have preached the message of salvation. Without giving any consideration to this feeling, they began to fill their houses with women of bad lifestyle. Father Pedro Fernandes took a woman to his house, who gave birth to a Mulatto. For this reason, the young people whom he was teaching and who lodged in his house, had cause to escape and told the story of this incidence to their parents and other relatives. All of them have now begun to mock and laugh at us. They said that everything we taught them before now was a lie and that we have cheated them for our own advantage and those of the Whites. We are very sad and do not know what to reply to this.⁴⁴

Also in accounting for the failure of the Portuguese mission in Kongo, a Portuguese scholar and Canon of the Evora Cathedral Manuel Severim de Faria pointed at the poor quality of the clergy sent to Kongo and their involvement in the business of the slave trade as the main factors that accounted for their misbehaviour and failure in their mission to Kongo. According to this scholar:

⁴⁴ The letter of the Manikongo king Nzinga Mamba to king Manuel of Portugal dated 15.10.1514, in: Brasio, (M.M.A.), pp. 294-323. See also a copy of the German version of this letter in: Koschorke, et al., *Außereuropäische Christentumsgeschichte*, pp. 117-118.

“The White clergy who could be induced to serve in West Africa were mostly of poor quality, and those few were more active in the slave-trade, than in saying Mass or performing their priestly ministry.”⁴⁵ Taking a step further, he admitted that there were true and committed Christians among the Portuguese laymen in Africa, whose good works were overshadowed by the corrupt practices of the majority of the Portuguese men in Africa. This point is made clearer when he observed that: “There were a few exemplary Christians among the Portuguese and Mulatto laymen. The majority were exiled convicts or unscrupulous adventurers. The sole object of the latter was to get rich as quickly as possible, and their unedifying lives and slave-trading activities were a great hindrance to the work of conversion.”⁴⁶

Many authors also point accusing fingers at the slave trade as the main source of the fall of Kongo mission. Among them is Eugen Weber. In his opinion: “It was for the most part this unfortunate slave trade. There is no other place where it caused such devastation, and became so disadvantageous than in spreading the faith, especially at the coast of Guinea, and lastly in Kongo.”⁴⁷ For Kevin Ward, it was this slave trade that strangled the progress and prospects of the Portuguese Christian mission in Kongo. According to him: “Much of the optimism of this project was undermined by the increasingly exploitative nature of the commercial relationship between Portugal and Kongo, the depredations of the slave trade on the life of the country.”⁴⁸ On his own part, Richard Gray described the Portuguese Christian mission in Kongo as a mere potent symbol and sees the conversion of the king of Kongo Nzinga Nkuvu (Dom João I) and his son Alfonso I as: “a false dawn quickly to be obscured by the realities of the exploitation associated with mercantile capitalism and the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade.”⁴⁹ Charles Boxer bought the ideas of his fellow historians above and considered the slave trade as the main concern of Europeans especially the Portuguese in Africa. For him, instead of spreading Christianity in Africa, the Portuguese spread the slave trade which he called “black ivory.” His views are made clearer when he wrote: “The “Black ivory” quickly became and for centuries remained the principal European concern with the West African Coast, and the Portuguese were the pioneers in this as in other aspects.”⁵⁰ In his Book “Church Militant and Iberian Expansion,” Boxer concluded that the failure recorded in Kongo mission “was

⁴⁵ Severim, *Noticias de Portugal*, p. 224; Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission*, p. 94.

⁴⁸ Ward, “Africa,” in: Hastings, *A World History of Christianity*, p. 201.

⁴⁹ Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, p. 35.

⁵⁰ Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion*, p. 29.

largely due to the greater attractions of the West African slave trade, in which the missionaries became actively involved.”⁵¹ Their lack of knowing the difference between mission and commerce was adjudged by Boxer as an important element in their failure in Kongo. Thus according to him: “Commercial and missionary interests were seldom reconciled, and where they conflicted, as they did in the case of the slave-trade, it was usually the former which prevailed.”⁵² On his part, William D. Phillips also sees the slave trade as the cog in the wheel of progress for the Portuguese mission in Kongo and went as far as saying that the mission was financed with the profits accruing from the slave trade. Thus in his view: “The price of the mission to the Kongo was paid for in part by slaves, but more important, the Portuguese who began to arrive there about 1510 soon were neglecting their official duties and devoting a large portion of their attention to slave trading.”⁵³ At a point, the attitude of the missionaries went out of proportion to the extent that king Afonso I of Kongo (a.k.a. king Nzinga Memba) had to complain to the king of Portugal in a letter he wrote to him in 1526. In this letter, king Alfonso I of Kongo said among others: “That there are many traders in all corners of the country. They bring ruin to the country and we cannot estimate the extent of such ruins, because every day, people are enslaved and kidnapped by the aforesaid traders, our children are being stolen and sold, even nobles and members of the king's own family and relatives.”⁵⁴

The Jesuits of course, like the other Portuguese missionaries working in Kongo before them, did not leave their hands unstained with the blood money accruing from the slave trade going on in São Tomé where they were living. Their efforts however, to revive the Christian Church in the kingdom of Kongo and the hope of beginning proper mission work in Kongo did not come through. This hope only came afterwards especially, when the Capuchins and other missionaries of non Portuguese nationality began work in Kongo under the auspices of the Propaganda Fide

⁵¹ Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 5.

⁵² Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, p. 8.

⁵³ Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times*, p. 145.

⁵⁴ Letter of king Alfonso I of Kongo to the king of Portugal dated 6.7.1526, in: Visconde Paiva-Manso, *Historia do Congo, (Documentos)* Lissabon 1877 in: Davidson, *The African Past*, p. 191ff. See also a complete German version of this letter in: Koschorke, et al., eds. *Außereuropäische Christentumsgeschichte*, pp. 118-119; George Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo, From the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, New York 1968, p. 42; Phillips, *Slavery From Roman Times*, p. 145.

1.5 Using the Right of Patronage to Checkmate Papal Powers in the Portuguese Overseas Mission Lands

In the above consideration of the missionary activity of Portugal in Africa in the light of her *Padroado Real* (Royal Patronage), it is very striking to see the close network of interconnection between the Cross and the Crown, throne and altar and finally faith and empire at play in this mission. This interwoven nature of faith and empire was very conspicuous in the manner of the organisation and execution of this mission especially in the Christian kingdom of Kongo and other areas of mission within the range and ambient of its *Padroado Real* in Africa.

By way of definition, *Padroado* “is a combination of the rights and duties inherited by the Crown of Portugal as patron of the Roman Catholic missions and ecclesiastical establishments in a large part of Africa, Asia and in Brazil.”⁵⁵ In his own view, Richard Gray defined *Padroado Real* as: “One of the indications of the way in which the Church had been moulded by the social and economic structures of Europe and of European expansion overseas.”⁵⁶ And in a common parlance, it means the papal authority in the hands of the Portuguese kings for the acquisition of colonies, spread of Portuguese culture, Christian religion and the spirit of unbridled economic aggrandisement.

Like we saw above in the treatment of its history, this Portuguese *Padroado* was founded on the papal documents written from 1452 to 1514 by some of the renaissance popes and finally approved by pope Leo X in 1514. Up till the early seventeenth century, precisely in 1606, it was still held and maintained by the papacy that Portugal’s *Padroado Real* was still valid and that this *Padroado* is not just a mere privilege but a right given to the Crown of Portugal. This validation of the Portuguese *Padroado Real* in the modern times was made by pope Paul V (*1552, pontificate 1605-1621) in 1606. In his Consistorial Act “*Credula Consistorialis*” of January 9, 1606, Paul V decreed that the right of Patronage (*jus patronatus*) “belongs to the respective kings of Portugal by reason of pure donation (*ex meris fundatione et dotatione*) and not as a privilege, and could not therefore be deprived of him by the Holy See for no reason at all unless the king himself gives his consent to a change in the body of laws.”⁵⁷ This in effect means that no matter what evil the king of Portugal might commit under this *Padroado Real* in Africa or elsewhere, the papacy has

⁵⁵ Boxer, *Four Centuries of Iberian Expansion*, p. 64. Cf. Ward, “Africa,” in: Hastings, *A World History of Christianity*, p. 201.

⁵⁶ Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, p. 25.

⁵⁷ Pope Paul V, “*Credula Consistorialis*” of January 9, 1606, in: *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, Vol. II, pp. 4-6. German translation in: Wenzel, *Portugal und der Heilige Stuhl*, p. 111.

no right to abrogate this right unless the king of Portugal gave his consent to it. Originally, the goal of this right of Patronage at its very foundation was to checkmate the influence of the arch-enemies of the Catholic faith - the Saracens, the Turks and pagans as well as the prevention of interference of non-Portuguese Christian nations in Portuguese owned territories and to promote the unity of all the Christian nations. But with the clause contained in this Consistorial Act of 1606 which read that the Royal Patronage was given to the Crown of Portugal "ex meris fundatione et dotatione," the papal documents which established Portuguese Royal Patronage received a new dimension. This time around, to subdue the Saracens and unbelievers is no longer their sole target. The authority of the papacy is rather brought to check. Unknown to these popes, these documents would indirectly serve as an empowerment of the Crown of Portugal to checkmate papal power of interference in the areas of ecclesiastical affairs both in Portugal as well as in its organised foreign missions in overseas. In a word, it means the loss of papal authority to the Portuguese Crown. And by the time the papacy came to realize this fact, it was already too late. The Royal Patronage had become a rock in the hands of the Portuguese Crown and metamorphosed into a strong tool of imperialism. Adrian Hastings captured this view when he rightly said: "However, it would not be very long before many people involved with the missionary apostolate in Rome and elsewhere would come to regret deeply the granting of these powers."⁵⁸

This regret on the side of the papacy and the missionaries of non-Portuguese nationality was really made by the popes of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when they were made incapable of intervening to redeem the Christian kingdom of Kongo and other places in Africa under the bondage of imperialistic and monopolistic Royal Patronage of the Portuguese Crown. A concrete example of such situations of incapacitation on the side of the papacy was registered in 1620, that is shortly before the foundation of the Propaganda Fide. At this time, the papacy attempted to use its authority to send some willing Capuchin missionaries of Spanish nationality to Kongo to redeem the promising Kongo mission, which was on the verge of extinction as a result of an acute shortage of missionary personnel. About 400 such Spanish Capuchins were ready and highly motivated to be sent as missionaries to Kongo so as to minister to the thousands of Christians in need of the pastoral care of the clergy. But the Portuguese Crown unfortunately blocked this saving move of both the Capuchins and the papacy. The reason was that Africa belonged to Portuguese Monarchs and that the Padroado Real of Portugal did not allow Spanish citizens entrance into the areas covered by it. This was confirmed by

⁵⁸ Hastings, Church in Africa, p. 72.

Eugen Weber when he said: "It could no longer in reality happen that any missionary with whom the king was not pleased, could venture to undertake a missionary journey to his colonies, or that anything contrary to the will of the king of Portugal could take place in the mission areas under his control."⁵⁹ And in the views of Adrian Hastings: "The resistance of Lisbon to any Spanish entry into a Portuguese preserve, meant that no Spanish Capuchins went forth and it would be another 25 years before the first Italian Capuchins were able to set foot in the Kongo."⁶⁰ And that would imply that the Kongo mission continued to suffer for this length of time not only from Portuguese missionary neglect but also from the traditional syncretism prevalent in the regions of Kongo. Furthermore, it means that for the purpose of respecting Portuguese colonial right of Patronage with its organised and lucrative slave trade, the Christians (at least in name) and other natives of Kongo would continue to pay the price of a heavy loss in men and women in their prime age as well as exploitation of their land perpetrated by the representatives of Portuguese Crown in West Africa. This attitude of the Crown of Portugal and its representative in Kongo and elsewhere made Charles Boxer to describe its empires and the missionary enterprise in them especially in Africa as "a commercial and maritime empires cast in a military and ecclesiastical mould."⁶¹ He proved this assertion, from the point of view of the fact that both ecclesiastical and civil administrators working for the Crown of Portugal in its overseas colonies were paid directly from Lisbon. But owing to the fact that the financial capacity of the Portuguese Crown was not sufficient enough to sustain them, they resorted to trading in human beings. According to him: "Everyone, from Viceroy to cabin-boy sought to supplement his income by trading so that virtually every man in Portuguese Asia and Africa became either a full-time or a part-time merchant."⁶²

Their missionaries working in Kongo and elsewhere in Africa were also affected by this development. Boxer confirmed this fact when he said: "This affected even many of the regular and secular clergy whose stipends were often paid in trade-goods. Few of them achieved more than a mediocre morality."⁶³ And this kind of doing business in Africa under the cloak of evangelizing the continent led Adrian Hastings to evaluate the Portuguese missionary enterprise in Africa in the following manner: "The Portuguese African empire had its original function to act as a controlled passage between Lisbon and Asia. From the mid-seventeenth century, its basic purpose changed and it became instead a

⁵⁹ Weber, *Die portugiesische Reichmission*, pp. 70-71.

⁶⁰ Hastings, *Church in Africa*, p. 89.

⁶¹ Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion*, p. 18.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶³ *Ibid.* See also, Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 124.

source of labour supply for Brazil, the only economically thriving part of the empire. Nowhere could the Church within the empire escape this overriding interest.”⁶⁴ Continuing, Hastings cited an example of the role which the city of Luanda played in the hands of the Portuguese missionaries and officials of the Portuguese Crown. According to him, Luanda which should serve as a Portuguese centre of missionary activity, later-on turned out in practice to be a major point of embarkation for slaves and other economic interests of the Portuguese Crown. This point is made vividly clear when he recorded that: “Even Luanda, a city of some size had little to point to it other than as the principal point of embarkation for slaves, and the Church of Luanda in consequence had as a principal public religious function to make sure that the slaves were baptised before embarkation.”⁶⁵

It was not only Luanda as an ecclesiastical base of the Portuguese African empire that served as a point of embarkation for the African slaves. Others, such as Mbanza Kongo, São Tome and the Cape Verde islands were also ecclesiastical bases of the Portuguese African missionary enterprise. That notwithstanding, they served in practice as warehouses for slaves. In the light of this, the historian M. Saunders observed that: “The island of São Tome was the clearing-house of slaves for most of the slaves acquired in the coastal kingdoms of Benin (Nigeria) and the Kongo.”⁶⁶ And in these ecclesiastical areas of Portuguese operations in Africa, the worst type of crimes was perpetrated: blood of slaves flowed endlessly to the grounds and the worst type of humiliations was handed down to them. It was to such Portuguese ecclesiastical areas in Africa that were referred to when Alain Milhou noted as follows: “Two of the gates of the Congo in the Portuguese occupied territories served at the same time like blood-suckers: the island of São Tome and since 1575, especially Angola.”⁶⁷ Continuing, he gave a rough estimation of an annual blood shedding that took place in these Portuguese centers of missionary activity. In view of this, Milhou recorded: “From the end of the reign of Alfonso I, that is, about the end of the third decade of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century, it is estimated that the annual bloodletting ranged from 5,000 to 10,000 heads which the two African colonies were to provide as the necessary manpower especially for the Spanish America, and from the year 1570, for Brazil.”⁶⁸

Considered from the point of view of the real meaning of evangelization therefore, the so-called missionary evangelization of Africa by the Portuguese

⁶⁴ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 124.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Milhou, “Die iberische Halbinsel,” in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 753.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

missionaries was a mere colonial trick. Milhou is therefore right, when he described the right of Patronage given to Portugal as a cover up. According to him: "The Patronage of Portugal was in the Kongo as in the rest of Africa an alibi and the sacred cloak of a real imperialism."⁶⁹ In other words, this missionary enterprise was more of a medieval and crusading spirit of the Portuguese kings and Prince Henry the Navigator. This accounts to the imperialistic manner in which it was organised and carried out in Africa. This manner contained all the major attributes of imperialism present in the definition given to it by Edmund Mower. In his definition of Imperialism, he said: "Imperialism may be said to mean the projection of national power, out beyond the national boundaries, the acquisition of foreign territory, spheres of influence, or commercial privileges."⁷⁰ It was in reference to this attitude that some Neo-African Prose writers passed their negative judgement on Christian mission in Africa. According to Beti Mongo: "So, it is the government officials who always go to the missionaries and offer them cooperation, assistance and protection. Of course, they have no particular interest in spreading Christianity except in the form of Western civilization."⁷¹ This assertion also corresponds with the views of a famous Nigerian author and Nobel prize winner Chinua Achebe when he wrote: "The white man is very clever, says an old pagan. He came to us very quietly and peaceably with his religion. We laughed at his follies and allowed him to stay with us. All of a sudden, we soon heard rumors in the country that the white man had brought not only a religion but also a rulership."⁷² The thoughts of these African writers gave Nwafor Orizu the ground upon which he made his whooping judgement on the Christian nations who, under the cloak of religion practised imperialism in Africa. In his judgement, he said: "What is indisputable however is that Christian nations by their words and their deeds have failed to live up to Christian teaching in their relationship with Africa. This fact is irrefutable and tragic."⁷³ All these comments on the Christian mission are made in reference to the colonial mission of Portugal in Africa. They give us an inkling into the nature of this mission under the Royal right of Patronage of Portugal from its beginning until the period of the foundation of the Propaganda Fide, which redeemed Portuguese African mission from the strangulations of imperialism, exploitation and enslavement of the African people.

⁶⁹ Milhou, "Das christliche Königreich Kongo," in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 752.

⁷⁰ Mower, *International Government*, p. 27.

⁷¹ Mongo, *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, p. 63, in: Hertlein, *Christentum und Mission*, p. 75.

⁷² Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 195, in: Hertlein, *Christentum und Mission*, pp. 76-77.

⁷³ Orizu, *Without Bitterness*, p. 164.

However, the proper Christian mission in Africa organised by the Catholic Church without any ulterior motive attached to it could be said to have begun after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), when the Church was awake to her new way of missionary role in the world. This, according to Hastings “led to some changes and reforms of Church’s pastoral and missionary structures.”⁷⁴ And at this period, a conscious effort was made by the papacy to recover to some extent, some control over overseas mission from the governments of both Portugal and Spain. And it was in a bid to do this that the authorities of the Church in Rome founded the Office of the Congregation for the propagation of faith otherwise known as “Congregatio Propaganda Fide” in 1622. With the foundational Bull “Inscrutabili divinae providentiae arcano” of June 22, 1622, pope Gregory XV (*1554, pontificate 1621-1623) called the Sacred Office of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith into being and charged it with the responsibility of organizing mission in overseas. This Holy Office was meant to curb the atrocities committed in the name of the Church by both Portugal and Spain in their various mission areas in overseas and eventually to take up the organization of mission from them. According to Adrian Hastings: “The foundation of Propaganda Fide was a very important step in the long process of wresting control of the missions from Spain and Portugal, and the Kongo was almost Propaganda’s favourite child, perceived through the benevolent eyes of Juan Baptist Vives as a far-away but loyal Christian kingdom desperately in need of priests.”⁷⁵

But to take up mission from the firm grip of the Spanish and Portuguese right of Patronage was an uphill task which the Propaganda Fide could not rattle within a limited time. It really took this Holy Office much time to win total control over the mission in overseas as a result of the still existing Royal Patronage given to both governments of Portugal and Spain “ex meris fundatione et dotatione.” Even the burning missionary zeal of pope Urban VIII (*1568, pontificate 1623-1644) could not invalidate this Royal Patronage of Portugal so as to win for the papacy free hand in the organisation of the evangelizing mission of the Church in the modern world. However, he did not feel complacent with the unending claims of Portugal over her rights to oversee missions in foreign lands. His efforts did show at least, that at the time of his pontificate: “The papacy had become ruefully aware that the extensive privileges so freely granted to Portuguese and Spanish monarchs for the asking were in many respects highly inconvenient and actually or potentially subversive of papal authority.”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 87.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 88.

⁷⁶ Boxer, *Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, pp. 79-80.

But thanks to providence, the power and influence of Portugal in her overseas mission began to wane in strength in the first half of the seventeenth century. This was caused by her too much overseas projects which she could no longer effectively control as a result of many attacks from both Spain, England, France and Holland. For instance, the Dutch and English East Indian Companies weakened the maritime powers of Portugal in the first half of the seventeenth century. This defeat over the maritime powers of Portugal in Asia made it possible for other non-Portuguese missionaries to go to Asia for the sake of preaching the word of God. In Africa, with the help of the Dutch in Soyo province of the kingdom of Kongo, the ruler of Soyo crushed the military expansion of Portugal and weakened her power in 1570. In 1633, the Dutch's superior army conquered the Portuguese colony in Cochin, Elmina in 1637, Angola in 1640, Malacca in 1641 and settled in Angola in 1652, where they used their protestant empire to weaken the Portuguese influence in both Kongo and Angola. Last but not the least of the factors that led to the weakening of Portuguese power was her twenty-eight years war of independence against Spain (1640-1668). All these internal and external military tensions put together, made Portugal not only weak in power but also in resources, personnel and maritime capabilities such that she was unable to retain as well as maintain most of her overseas missions which fell victims of her *Padroado Real*.

The leadership of the Church in Rome did not waste time to use this waning power of Portugal to regain her lost authority to send missionaries into the areas, where their services were needed. The Propaganda Fide under the strong support of pope Urban VIII also began its own strategy of weakening the ecclesiastical powers of Portugal. This was done through the creation of many Prefectures within the Portuguese overseas missions. Thus in 1640, the Apostolic Prefecture for the Kongo mission was founded and was entrusted into the hands of the Italian Capuchin missionary Order. In 1644, the Apostolic Prefecture for the Guinean and Sierra Leone mission was founded and entrusted to the Spanish Capuchins of the Province of Andalusia. In 1647, another Apostolic Prefecture was founded for Benin mission under the auspices of the Capuchins from Aragon. With this strategy, the government of Portugal in Lisbon was forced to change her policy and allowed non Portuguese missionaries to go to Kongo and other missionary territories founded by the Portuguese Crown in Africa. Commenting on this turn of events in the first half of the seventeenth century, François Bontinck wrote: "It was within this context at once of a change in the wider European and colonial political situation of a new missionary structure devised by Propaganda Fide of Apostolic Prefectures, and of a very considerable missionary enthusiasm within the Capuchins of many lands that the arrival of twelve Italian and Spanish missionaries in Soyo in May 1645, led by their Prefect Bonaventura d' Alessano

must be seen.⁷⁷ Continuing, he observed that the arrival of these Capuchins in the Christian kingdom of Kongo was to be: “The start of almost 200 years of Capuchins involvement in the Kongo. They were received in Mbanza Soyo by its Count and people with much enthusiasm as priests of the great God “Nganga za Nzambi Mpungu.”⁷⁸

All this creation of new ecclesiastical Prefectures was a new missionary methodology adopted by the Propaganda Fide for effective operations in the mission areas not only in Africa but also in Asia. In all these Prefectures, Rome appointed their various Vicars. These were not bishops but priests endowed with the Episcopal power of jurisdiction by the Holy See. Bishops were not appointed for these Prefectures because, the Holy See did not want through such appointments to provoke the Portuguese authority in whose power it still rested to appoint bishops in the overseas mission up till 1656. This situation remained in this manner throughout the pontificate of pope Innocent X (*1574, pontificate 1644-1655). However, with this new missionary tactics of the Propaganda Fide, the papacy escaped the web of Royal influence and power over mission and gained some control of missionary works in the Portuguese mission lands. Echoing this truth, Charles Boxer noted: “The papacy was therefore enabled to whittle down and pare away the claims of the Portuguese Padroado Real in both Asia and Africa throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. And this increasing papal control was exercised primarily through the Sacred College of the Propaganda Fide.”⁷⁹ This change of bastion of power and the right to monitor missionary activities in Africa from the Royal Crown of Portugal to the authorities in Rome however, did not change matters in the exploitation and enslavement going on in the mission areas in Africa. This is informed by the fact that the few Portuguese missionaries and their authorities continued to work hand in hand in the realisation of their political and economic interests in Africa. Despite the efforts and many protests of the Italian Capuchins in Kongo to stop the mass exploitation and enslavement of the Natives going on in this Christian kingdom, the situation remained unchanged.

However, the Capuchins under the control of Propaganda Fide did not give up their burning missionary zeal in the face of the many difficulties associated with their work. Instead, they continued to work hard to restore the Christian religion in Kongo and to observe the strict measures as stipulated by Propaganda Fide in her new missionary methodology. These measures included among other things: avoidance of local politics in mission areas, learning the

⁷⁷ Bontinck, ed. *Breve Relation de la Foundation de la Mission des Freres Mineurs au royaume de Congo*, p. 30. English translation in: Hastings, *Church in Africa*, p. 96.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion*, p. 65.

language of the natives, establishment of local Seminaries so as to ensure early formation of indigenous clergy, printing of religious books in vernacular language of the people etc. With all these measures on ground, especially the ability to speak the local language of the people of Kongo (Kikongo), the Capuchin missionaries were able to rekindle the light of the Christian religion especially in the countryside of the kingdom of Kongo. Through their unrelenting missionary efforts and with the help of the Propaganda Fide, the Kongo mission in particular and other Portuguese African missions in general, which were made victims of the Padroado Real of Portugal, were saved from the unbridled exploitation and enslavement that were associated with it.

1.6 Portuguese Missionaries: Evangelizers or Slave Traders?

The interplay of faith and empire, Crown and Cross which was much noticed in the Portuguese missionary enterprise in Africa made it difficult for one to differentiate between trade and religion in this mission. Both trade and religion were seen in the interest of the Crown in Portugal as major reasons for embarking on this mission in Africa. This problem could be said to be the source of a great temptation which faced most, if not all the Portuguese missionaries in Africa especially in the Christian kingdoms of Kongo and Angola. This consisted in the difficulty to establish, where one ends and where the other begins. With this difference not clearly made in this mission, it became very easy for the Portuguese missionaries to drift from one end of the pole to the other, that is to say, from trade to religion and vice versa. This difficulty is further compounded by the fact that the main centres of Portuguese missionary activities were also centres of the trade in African goods especially slaves. And in the views of Adrian Hastings: "This was inevitably disastrous, particularly as these were the focal points for the organisation of the slave trade. Economically, they had no other function and in many cases the same people including priests were intimately involved both in slaving and evangelization"⁸⁰ In the face of this kind of situation, it is difficult to say that there was anyone among the Portuguese missionaries in Africa before the coming of Italian and other non-Portuguese missionaries in Africa in 1645 that raised his voice to condemn the slave trade going on in their various mission territories. To attempt to have done so would imply treading on a dangerous rope. That would have meant working against the economic interest of the Portuguese Crown that sent them to Africa. Moreover, the financing of the mission in Africa was supported by the gains of the slave trade. And the salaries of all those working as representatives of the Portuguese Royal Crown in Africa

⁸⁰ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 119.

including the missionaries depended much on the gains made from this slave trade. Milhou Alain confirmed this fact when he wrote: "The leaders of the Church, whether Portuguese, Mulattoes, or Black people contributed like the others their quota to these commercial transactions. As a result of the Royal Patronage, they received a part of their living from the Portuguese Crown, whose main income came from the African slave trade."⁸¹

This being the case, there is therefore no gainsaying in stating that the religious Orders, who were in the missionary team of Portugal were not saints so as to have resisted the temptation of involving themselves in this source of making quick money for themselves and for their home governments. And as such, they were actively involved in the evil of the slave trade. In a confession made by a Portuguese Jesuit priest friar João Alvarez in 1604, at a time when Portugal was having serious economic and political difficulties caused by the many wars fought both at home and in most of their overseas colonial empires, this Jesuit priest admitted as follows: "I personally feel that the troubles which afflict Portugal are on account of the slaves we secure unjustly from our conquests and the lands where we trade."⁸² Responding to this confession of a Jesuit priest, the historian Charles Boxer commented as follows: "This confession however, was a minority view, and most of his contemporaries saw nothing incongruous or immoral in the fact that the ecclesiastical establishments in São Tome, Congo and Angola were maintained almost entirely from the profits of the slave-trade."⁸³ Milhou corroborated this view when he recorded that: "Numerous clerics were also directly involved in the lucrative trade in human beings."⁸⁴ Prominent among them were the members of the Society of Jesus popularly known as the Jesuits, who worked in both Kongo and Angola where the evil of the slave trade was massively grave. We recall that it was in Kongo and Angola that the Portuguese missionaries recorded their greatest success in Africa. At the same time, it was in these areas that the evil of the slave trade achieved its greatest feat. That is to say, it was in the Christian kingdoms of Kongo and Angola that the seaports as outlets of slaves into São Tome, Brazil and the New World were located, where the yearly outpouring of the blood of innocent Black Africans was at its zenith. People then tend to ask: Is there an

⁸¹ Milhou, "Das christliche Königreich Kongo," in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 754. This citation reads in German as follows: "Verantwortlichen der Kirche, ob Portugiesen, Mulatten, oder Schwarze, leisteten wie die anderen ihren Beitrag zu diesen Geschäften. Aufgrund des königlichen Patronats erhielten sie einen Teil ihres Unterhalts von der portugiesischen Krone, deren Haupteinkünfte in Afrika aus dem Sklavenhandel stammten." See also, Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion*, p. 19; Boxer, *Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 31.

⁸² Letter of João Alvarez S.J, dated 24.7.1604, in: Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, p. 8.

⁸³ Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, pp. 8-9.

⁸⁴ Milhou, "Das christliche Königreich Kongo," *Ibid*, p. 754.

unavoidable link between the slave trade and the Church (missionary work)? Is the Church an instrument or rather an agent of the slave trade? Why could the presence of the Church and her missionaries in an area like Kongo and Angola not serve as a fire extinguisher of the flames of the slave trade found in such areas, where she found her stronghold? Little wonder then did Milhou hold the Catholic Church and her missionaries responsible for the evil of the slave trade perpetrated in both Angola and Kongo and other parts of Africa during the Portuguese missionary activity in Africa. According to him: “The Church must take responsibility for this development: From 1623, the Portuguese bishops of São Salvador do Kongo (Mbanza Congo) resided only in São Paulo de Luanda, the capital of Angola, where the See of the bishopric was eventually moved to. This became from 1677 to 1717 a suffragan of the archdiocese of Balia, that is, at a time when Angola was the most important supplier of slaves, and became more of a Brazilian colony than a Portuguese colony.”⁸⁵

The fact that the slave trade in these areas with heavy missionary presence could thrive in the manner it did in Kongo and Angola and in the rest of Portuguese mission areas in Africa, left no one in doubts about the role of the interplay of trade and religion, the Cross and the Crown in the enslavement of Black Africans. That means that the representatives of the Royal Crown of Portugal in these mission areas in Africa remained loyal to a fault in the realisation of the intention and interests of their masters (the kings of Portugal) through the slave trade. Their personal interests also did play a vital role in their involvement in the evil of the slave trade. This was one of the reasons why many Jesuits like Vieira Antonio supported the Transatlantic slave trade and gave justification for it. Antonio Vieira was convinced that the blood and the sufferings of the Black African slaves in Brazil were indispensable for the development of Portuguese establishments in Brazil. While quoting Vieira, Charles Boxer said: “While frankly acknowledging in one of his sermons that the very few Negroes from Angola had been legitimately enslaved, he likewise stressed that their blood, sweat and tears nourished and sustained Brazil, which could not dispense with their forced labour under any pretext.”⁸⁶ Despite the high standard of his fellow Jesuits in Kongo and Angola in comparison with those of other Portuguese missionary Orders in Africa, they were not different from their counterparts in Brazil, who themselves owned lots of sugar plantations and the many Black African slaves, who worked for them in these plantations. This truth was echoed by Milhou when he recorded: “Although the Jesuits made the claim that slaves, whom they baptized were liberated from the hellfire of sin, nevertheless, these religious priests in Angola were not different

⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 747-748.

⁸⁶ Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 35. See also the preaching of Antonio Vieira in support of the African Slave Trade in: Teipel, *Versklavung der Schwarzen*, p. 51.

from their own religious brothers in Brazil, who themselves were land and slave owners.”⁸⁷ Charles Boxer also observed that the Jesuits owned plantations in different places in the New World with Black slaves working in them. Thus according to him: “Negro slaves were employed on Jesuit sugar plantations in Spanish and Portuguese America, as well as in domestic servitude there and in the Philippines, and in Portuguese Asia and Africa.”⁸⁸

The Jesuits were also very popular and active in the British America, especially in the state of Maryland as a slave-holding Religious Order. In this state of Maryland alone, this religious Order owned hundreds of Black African slaves manning their six plantations of about 11,607 acres of land.⁸⁹ The history of the Jesuits slave holding in the British America precisely in Maryland began in 1717 and ended with the mass sales of their Black African slaves in 1838. This mass sale of Black African slaves was conducted by the Provincial of the Jesuits in Maryland Father Thomas Mulledy (1795-1861) and Father Richard McSherry on June 19, 1838. Father Mulledy was also the President of Georgetown from 1829-1838. Funny enough, a night before this mass sale of Black African slaves was conducted, he celebrated a Holy Mass for the intentions of these Black Africans numbering 272 slaves rather than granting them manumission which they were begging from him.⁹⁰ According to historical sources, these slaves were sold to the governor of Louisiana Henry Johnson (1779-1867) and to his close associate and landowner Dr. Jesse Beattey from the Deep South at the total price of 115,000 American Dollars. And in the views of Robert Emmett Curran: “The down payment was 25,000 dollars on a mortgage of ten years.”⁹¹ The 21st Superior General of the Jesuits Religious Order in Rome Friar Jan Philipp Roothaan (1785-1853) who managed the affairs of this religious Order from 1829-1853, directed that this money accruing from the mass sales of Black African slaves should be invested in the training of young Jesuit priests.⁹²

⁸⁷ Milhou, “Die Küste von Guinea, die kapverdischen Inseln,” in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 760.

⁸⁸ Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 31.

⁸⁹ Murphy, *Jesuits Slaveholding in Maryland*, p. Xiii.

⁹⁰ For reference to the Holy Mass celebrated for the sold Black African slaves, see, Mulledy, “Index of Mass Intentions and Diary,” 1824-1851, Box 8, Folder 4. Cf. Murphy, *Jesuit Slaveholding in Maryland*, p. 203.

⁹¹ Curran, “Splendid Poverty:” *Jesuits Slaveholding in Maryland, 1805-1838*, in: Randal M. Miller, ed. *Catholics in The Old South: Essays on Church and Culture*, Macon 1983, p. 142.

⁹² Curran, “Splendid Poverty,” *Ibid*, p. 142; Murphy, *Jesuits Slaveholding in Maryland*, p. 204. But this directive was not strictly observed by the Provincial Superior of Jesuits in Maryland Father Thomas Mulledy, who used 17,000 Dollars out of the total sum of the mass sale of these Black African slaves to settle debts incurred from the construction works going on at the Jesuits College, also known today as Georgetown University in Washington. And this act landed him into a grave trouble with his Superior General Roothaan, which finally led to his demotion and removal from the office of the Provincial of the Jesuits mission in Maryland.

As a popular religious Order with a slave holding background that actively supported and defended the use of Black Africans as slaves therefore, it is no longer surprising to anyone to learn that most of the Jesuits working in Kongo, Angola and other parts of West Africa saw nothing wrong in their involvement in the evil of slavery. They believed that the Black Africans are inferior human beings. This conviction show-cased itself in a Memorial of 1694 composed by the Portuguese slave traders in Angola. In this Memorial, the Black Africans slaves were described as: “Brutes without intellegent understanding, and almost if one may say so, irrational beings.”⁹³ The main idea behind this Memorial is the age long anti-Black sentiments found in both the Portuguese and other Europeans of the early and late medieval periods, who were convinced that the Negro was only fitted to be a slave or an indentured labourer in the human society. In an observation made by an English man, who stayed long in the Portuguese East Africa, it was confirmed that the Portuguese did conceive of the Black Africans as lesser human beings, whose very essence consisted in being mere tools of labour. According to this English observer: “The Portuguese had never viewed the Negro in anything but a proper and practical light. For them, he is first and last the “*mão d' obra*” (hand of labour), and any proposition tending to increase his value in that capacity would never, and will never be entertained by them.”⁹⁴

The level of involvement of the Portuguese Jesuits in the slave trade in Africa is reflected in their acceptance of 100 plantations and thousands of slaves as an inheritance given to them by Gasper Alvares in seventeenth century. Attesting to this inheritance, Milhou commented: “They were beneficiaries of an extraordinary gift of one pious Gasper Alvares, who bequeathed to them in his Testament at the beginning of the 17th century, his 100 plantations in both Kongo and Angola, and thousands of slaves.”⁹⁵ What could they have done with this number of slaves in their possession at a time when the slave trade was at its booming stage? May be, they retained all of them for fear of being resold to slave merchants, who at this time were hunting for slaves. This conjecture however, has been proved to be false. On the contrary, historical evidences like the one below had shown that they did not retain all of them but rather sold out some of their slaves who showed any sign of resistance or disobedience. An example of such historical evidences was the one given by a member of the Capuchin religious Order friar Lourenco de Lucques who wrote in 1705 as follows: “Although the Jesuits treated their slaves well, but at the

⁹³ Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empires*, p. 29.

⁹⁴ Maugham, *Portuguese East Africa*, pp. 301-302. Cf. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, p. 29.

⁹⁵ Milhou, “Die Küste von Guinea, die kapverdischen Inseln,” *Ibid*, p. 760.

same time, they were not reluctant to sell undesirable subjects to the slave traders due to fraud or bad behaviours.”⁹⁶

Also, the reply given to the letter of Archbishop Edoardo Cibo (who was the Secretary General of Propaganda Fide from 1680 to 1695) by the Prefect incharge of the missionaries working in Kongo and Angola on March 6, 1684 is very revealing in the involvement of the Portuguese Jesuits in the slave trade. In this letter, Archbishop Cibo wrote in the name of the Propaganda Fide instructing the Prefect of the Kongo and Angola mission to use his office to bring the slave traffic in these areas to an end by reminding Christians involved in this slave trade about the pernicious evil associated with it. In his reply to this letter, friar Giuseppe Maria de Busse explained to the Secretary of the Propaganda Fide about the difficulty involved in fighting the slave trade in Angola and Kongo. And what made this assignment more difficult was that the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries in Kongo and Angola were deeply involved in this traffic in humans such that they had their own slave ship that was carrying hundreds of Black Africans annually as slaves to Brazil. In this reply, friar Giuseppe among other things observed that it was for him: “An impossible task to eliminate the abuse of selling and buying slaves because here, the religious are engaged in it, particularly the Jesuits, who have a boat which every year sails to Brazil laden with slaves, hence only your Eminence together with His Holiness can remove such an abuse by writing to the king of Portugal concerning this affair.”⁹⁷ It is difficult to ascertain whether the Secretary General of the Propaganda Fide wrote this letter to the king of Portugal as requested by friar Giuseppe in this reply or not. But this letter however, revealed the incapacitation of both the Prefect of the Kongo mission and the Propaganda Fide to ask the Jesuits to desist from such acts that encouraged the spread of the slave trade rather than the spread of the Gospel of Christ. But the question here is, why must the Holy See first of all write to the king of Portugal for permission before asking the Jesuits in Kongo and Angola to stop the traffic in Black African slaves? The answer is simply because, the Jesuits in Kongo and Angola were representatives of the Crown in Lisbon and therefore under its command and not under the guidance and directives of the Propaganda Fide. It shows that owing to the Portuguese Royal Patronage, the mission in Africa up to the time of this incident in 1684, was not completely under the control of the Holy See and as such the Holy See cannot effect any change in Africa without first and foremost receiving clearance from the Portuguese Royal Crown. The Jesuits were so to say, the true friends and bed fellows of the Royal Crown in Portugal. This fact was echoed by Milhou when

⁹⁶ Balandier, *La Vie Quotidienne*, in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 760.

⁹⁷ Letter of Friar Giuseppe Maria de Busse, in: Archives of Propaganda Fide (APF), SC, Africa, Angola II, Fl. 92. English translation in: Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, p. 33.

he said: “In the third quarter of the 16th Century, the main interest of the Portuguese empire and its faithful servants, the Jesuits, shifted to Brazil, whose slow development further contributed to the marginalization and dependency of sub-Saharan Africa.”⁹⁸

Generally considered therefore, the Jesuits and other Portuguese missionaries both in Africa and in the New World did not consider the Transatlantic slave trade as something evil. This position is contained in the writings of friar Alonso de Sandoval titled “De Instauranda Aethiopia Salute.” This friar Alonso was a leading protector and a Jesuit missionary in Cartagena de Indias (present day Columbia). In this work, he sought explanation from a renowned Jesuit and rector of the Jesuits college of São Paulo de Loanda in Angola, friar Luis Brandão on the subject matter of the legitimacy of engaging oneself in the buying and selling of the Black African slaves. In reply to Alonso de Sandoval’s question, friar Brandão wrote as follows: “...Highly respected Father ... I think they should have no scruples in this matter. For it (the slave trade) has never been regarded as reprehensible by the Mesa de Consciencia of Lisbon, despite the fact that it is composed of learned and conscientious men.”⁹⁹ Continuing, friar Brandão went ahead to convince his fellow Jesuit priest that he should not be worried at all in participating in the evil of the Transatlantic slave trade. His reason was that even the Portuguese Bishops living in Africa since a period of 40 years as well as the missionaries in Africa have not condemned the slave trade as something evil. Instead, they bought and sold slaves like most of the Jesuits working as missionaries in Brazil did. This position of friar Brandão is clearly seen when he argued as follows:

The same applies to the Bishops, who resided in São Tome, Cape Verde and in our city Loanda (Angola) and were also learned and virtuous clerics. It is now 40 years, since we settled here, and we have had among us highly educated religious priests. Also in the Brazilian provinces, where highly learned and educated brethren of our Order had all the time resided, they have never seen this slave trade as illicit. So we buy these slaves for our services without any scruples, just as the religious Fathers of our religious Order living in Brazil do...¹⁰⁰

The depth of conviction as contained in the above reply of a Jesuit priest and rector of a highly rated Jesuits college in Angola that the slave trade is not something evil is indeed very surprising. In his conviction, he did not only justify the slave trade but also recommended that participation in it was a worthy act not condemned either by the Portuguese Bishops and missionaries

⁹⁸ Milhou, “Schwarzafrika” in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 746.

⁹⁹ Sandoval Alonso, *Tratado Sobre la Esclavitud*, Vol. 1, p. 143ff, in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, pp. 760-761. Cf. Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, pp. 147-148.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

in Africa or by the highly educated members of the *Mesa de Consciencia e Ordens* in Portugal which took over the supervision and organisation of the missionary works in Africa since 1532. That such a confession could come from the mouth of a highly placed Jesuit priest, leaves no room for doubts in the fact that his religious Order was a solid organ in the enslavement of the people of Black Africa. And this explains the reason why they were chosen by the kings of Portugal as the main agents of their exploitative and enslaving mission in Africa. With this revelation, it is no longer surprising that the Portuguese missionaries in Africa really took active part in the enslavement of the people of Africa. That is to say, they helped to maintain the status quo in the interplay of trade and religion, Cross and the Crown, and behaved in accordance with the execution and realisation of this principle in their mission territories in Africa. They were so to say, collaborators in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade and did neither raise opposition against this Transatlantic slave trade nor protested against the use of Black Africans as victims of this baneful slave trade.

Be that as it may, the negative attitude of the Church both in her popes and the Portuguese missionaries working in Africa to speak out in condemnation of the enslavement of Black Africans did not mean that there were no individual faithful of the Church, who were concerned with the sorry fate of Black Africans during and throughout the duration of the Transatlantic slave trade. The noticed silence depicted in this attitude of the Church existed mainly in those, who were at the zenith of the Church's leadership in Rome and their Jesuits collaborators. This attitude was however, interrupted from time to time by some other members of the clergy, who risked their lives to speak against the attitude of the Church's leadership and Christians of Europe and America towards the Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. Let us at this juncture see who they are and how they made their voices to be heard in their effort not only to condemn the evil of the slave trade but also to win freedom for the neglected Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade.

2. Friends of the Black African Victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

2.1 Brief Introduction

As we already indicated in the preceding section of this work as well as in the last chapter of this section of our work, there was a grossly manifested negative attitude of the Catholic Church towards the enslaved Black Africans during the

Transatlantic slave trade. But this academic work has not just the obligation to point out this negative attitude of the Church towards the victims of this baneful slave trade but has also the obligation to establish the truth as it really is. This truth consisted in the fact that the noticed silence of the Catholic Church to speak out in favour of the Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade mainly existed in the very hands of the leadership of the Catholic Church and their collaborators but did not lack totally among other members of the Church both lay and the clergy. In this sense therefore, there were some individual prophetic voices heard here and there, who risked their precious lives to break camp with the Church's leadership in her attitude of collaboration with the Portuguese Royal Crown and her representatives in Africa and that of her neglect of the enslaved Black Africans during this slave trade. They attempted early enough to motivate the Church to speak out in condemnation of this slave trade through their various writings and preaching. But their efforts were met with utter neglect and frustration. Some of these men faced imprisonment for speaking out and were expelled from their places of missionary works. Their literary works condemning the enslavement of Black Africans were either burnt or proscribed and enlisted among the Books in the Index of prohibited Books in the Vatican Secret Archives. A good example of victims of such proscription of Books is that of Friar Bartolome de Albornoz, whose Book titled "Arte de Los Contrados" was banned in 1573.¹⁰¹

This chapter of our work is an attempt made to recall the courage of such Vanguards of liberation so as to engrave their names boldly on the sand of history and to recognize their praiseworthy efforts and fearless courage in sticking out their necks in protest against the racial practices that kept Black Africans under the bondage of slavery.

2.2 Raised but Unheard Voices of the Friends of the Enslaved Black Africans during the Transatlantic Slave Trade

There were several voices of protest raised here and there in opposition to the enslavement of Black Africans which adjudged their enslavement as an unjust slavery in contradistinction to the official Church position and teachings on the theme of the Black African enslavement. These voices of protest recognized the full humanity of Black Africans and their capability of receiving the Gospel

¹⁰¹ Milhou, "Africa," in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 766. Other authors who hold the view that this Book of Bartolome de Albornoz was placed upon the Index of prohibited Books in Vatican Library include David B. Davis who once wrote: "It would appear that no one else attacked Negro slavery with such uncompromising boldness until the late seventeenth century. And one may note that Albornoz's Book, which is now exceedingly rare, was placed upon the Index." Cf. *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 190.

of redemption without inducing the force of slavery upon them as proposed by the popes of the renaissance papacy, the kings and princes of Portugal and their successors as well as the Portuguese missionaries working in Africa. They rejected the use of the just war theory propounded by St. Thomas Aquinas upon which the renaissance popes legitimized their various Bulls that called the Transatlantic slave trade into being and attacked as well as rejected the myth of Black Africa as an accursed race of Ham which served in the hands of the pro-slavery protagonists as the very bed-rock upon which the justification of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans depended.

The efforts of such men in condemning the enslavement of Black Africans and to liberate them from it are comparable to those of Bartolomé de Las Casas and his Dominican brothers who initiated and won the movement for the liberation of Indians from their enslavement. Like Las Casas, they sent letters of protest to both the kings of Spain and Portugal as well as to the popes calling for the condemnation and abolition of the enslavement of Black Africans, but their letters were often not only ignored but also rejected. It was in the light of this that the efforts of the Churchmen such as Martin de Ledesma (1480-1546), who was a Spanish Dominican priest and a professor of theology at the University of Coimbra are to be seen. Martin de Ledesma boldly condemned the enslavement of Black Africans by the Portuguese as evil. His denouncement of this enslavement was made in his work titled "Commentaria," wherein he asserted that: "All who owned slaves gained through the trickery of Portuguese traders should free them immediately on pains of eternal damnation."¹⁰² He criticised Aristotle in his support for the enslavement of the so-called "wild men without laws" on the grounds of which Aristotle justified his doctrine of natural slavery, whereby those he called slaves by nature especially native peoples from Africa and the West Indian natives were subjected to slavery. According to him, such Aristotelian designation and justification of slavery "could not be held to apply to the Black Africans, many of whom lived under regular monarchies."¹⁰³

Following in his footsteps, Fernando de Oliveira, a Portuguese captain, who later became a Catholic priest wrote a Book in the same epoch with Las Casas in 1555, wherein he condemned out-rightly the enslavement of Black Africans carried out by his landsmen. In his Book titled "Art of War at Sea," he viewed

¹⁰² De Ledesma, *Commentaria in Quartum Librum Sententiarum*, 2 Vols. 1555-1560, in: Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 127; Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 44.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* The Text of this citation is found in its original Portuguese language in: "Secunda Quarta," Fl. 225-225v as published in J.S. da Silva Dias, *Os Descobrimentos e a Problematica Cultural do Seculo XVI*, pp. 255-256.

the enslavement of Black Africans as unjust and a manifest tyranny.¹⁰⁴ According to him the African monarchs who collaborated with the European slavers obtained their slaves through foul and illegal means especially robbery or waging unjust wars. He contradicted the just war theory of the Church, which legitimatised the enslavement of Black Africans. He does not consider any war waged in Africa for the purpose of generating slaves for the slave merchants as a just war. And with this position in mind, he condemned the attitude of his countrymen for being “the inventors of such an evil trade as the buying and selling of peaceful freemen as one buys and sells animals with the spirit of a “slaughterhouse butcher.”¹⁰⁵ Going a step further in his protest against the enslavement of Black Africans, he maintained that a just war waged against Muslims, Jews or pagans is against the teaching of Christ. He opposed the slogan of the sixteenth century manufactured by his countrymen which justified the enslavement of Black Africans on the grounds that slavery existed among Black Africans before the white men began to enslave them. While condemning this attitude of his countrymen, Fernando said: “To attack them and to convert them into slaves was a public tyranny, and to say that they practice slavery among themselves is no excuse. Had there not been European slave-buyers, there would not have been African slave-sellers.¹⁰⁶ In his boldness, he accused his countrymen of being the inventors of this wicked traffic in human beings. But in all his efforts to bring freedom to the Black Africans under the chains of slavery, he did neither receive support from the kings of Portugal nor from the leaders of the Catholic Church in Rome. Instead, he was arrested as a heretic and forced to face the judgement of the inquisitors set up by the Church in his country.

Also the Dominican Archbishop of Mexico Alonso de Montufar (*1489, bishopric 1551-1572) protested boldly against the decision made on the choice of Black Africans as slaves in place of the Indians of the West Indies at the suggestion of his fellow Dominican Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas. His disagreement with such a decision was contained in a protest letter which he sent to the Spanish king Philip II (*1527, reigned 1554-1598) in 1560 requesting him to condemn the idea of replacing Indian slaves with Black African slaves. In his reaction to the unfortunate choice of Black Africans to serve as slaves in place of the Indians, this Archbishop lamented: “We do not know of any just cause why the Negroes should be captives any more than the Indians because, we are told that they receive the Gospel in goodwill and do not make war on

¹⁰⁴ De Oliveira, *Art of War at Sea*, pp. 23-25; Boxer, *Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, P. 33. Cf. Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 126; Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, pp. 42-44.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* Cf. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 43; Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁶ De Oliveira, *Arte de Guerra no Mar*, in: Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, pp. 32-33. See also, Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 766.

Christians.”¹⁰⁷ The explanation which he sought to know on why Black Africans should still be held as slaves while Indians are walking freely along the path of freedom, remains till today unanswered. However, he remained in the opinion of the historian Charles Boxer as “the only prominent Prelate of the Church who condemned the Black African slave trade unreservedly.”¹⁰⁸

On his own part, Friar Bartolome de Albornoz, a Spanish born lawyer and a professor of Law at the University of Mexico wrote a Book in 1573 titled “Arte de Los Contratos” through which he demonstrated his protest against the enslavement of Black Africans by his countrymen. In this Book, Albornoz attacked the just war theory propounded by Thomas Aquinas which approved of slavery. He argued that the justification of slavery on grounds of the just war theory is evil and unchristian. From the point of view of his profession as a lawyer, he doubted the legality of reducing prisoners of war to the status of a slave. He also contrasted the common belief among slave traders coined by Jean Barbot in 1680, who held the view that: “However unpleasant it was to be a slave in the Americas, it was better than to be one, or even to be a free man in Africa.”¹⁰⁹ Against the backdrop of this erroneous belief, Albornoz argued that: “No African could benefit from living as a slave in the Americas, and that Christianity could not justify the violence of the trade and the act of kidnapping.”¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Albornoz debunked the belief of the slave traders and some Spanish Jesuits such as fray Alonso de Sandovals who saw slavery as a lesser evil provided that it served as a means of liberating Black Africans from their pagan worship and prepares the road to save them from eternal damnation. According to him: “Of course, I do not believe that someone can provide me the evidence that according to the law of Christ, the freedom of the soul can be bought with the bondage of the body.”¹¹¹ All his efforts to argue against the enslavement of Black Africans however, did not merit the attention of the Church so as to bring about a condemnation of the Transatlantic slave trade. Rather, his teaching as contained in this book was considered by the Church leaders in Rome as being heretic and therefore, was seen as unduly disturbing the smooth transaction of the traffic in Black African slaves. This

¹⁰⁷ De Montufar, in: Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 32; Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 126; Phillips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, p. 157.

¹⁰⁸ Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁹ Barbot, in: Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 302. See also, Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 190.

¹¹⁰ De Albornoz, *Arte de Los Contratos*, in: Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 146. The Portuguese version of this work of Albornoz is contained in Folie 130-131 and has been published in *Obras Escogidas de Filsofos*, ed. A. de Castro, Vol. Lxv of *Bibliotheca de Autores Espanoles*, pp. 232-233. See also, Milhou, “Africa,” in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 766.

¹¹¹ De Albornoz, *Arte de Los Contratos*, *Ibid.* Cf. Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 34; Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 44.

merited his Book in the eyes of the Church leaders to be catalogued among the numerous Books placed in the Index of forbidden Books in the Vatican Library.¹¹²

Also Tomas de Mercado (1525-1575), a noted Dominican Friar and theologian from Seville, who lived both in Seville and in America raised his voice in protest against the enslavement of Black Africans. In his Book “Summa de tratos y Contratos” published in 1571, he argued that a buyer of any commodity was guilty of sin if he had reason to suspect that the commodity was stolen property or that the seller lacked a legal title. And since it was common knowledge that a large proportion of Negroes had been obtained unlawfully, no one could enter into the commerce with a clear conscience.¹¹³ In this way, Mercado condemned the slave trade as evil and considered all those who participated in it as “Todsünder” (mortal sinners).¹¹⁴ In like manner, Friar Miguel Garcia who was a Jesuit priest also protested against the enslavement of Black Africans. He made this protest on arriving Brazil in 1580, when he discovered that not only his countrymen were keeping Black Africans as slaves but also that: “Even his Order's college at Bahia owned Negroes who had been illicitly enslaved.”¹¹⁵ In reaction to such evil, he refused to hear confessions of all those in possession of Black African slaves and returned to Europe together with Friar Goncalo Leite in protest. And according to David Brion Davis: “Neither he nor Goncalo Leite, the first professor of Arts in Brazil could stomach a country that claimed its survival depended on necessary injustice, and both returned to Europe, perhaps the first but certainly not the last of such emigrants from an American slave society.”¹¹⁶ Their protest however, did not change the fate of Black Africans carrying the burden of chains of their enslavement all over them.

The historian Juan Suarez de Peralta was not left out in the list of those who raised a critical voice of protest against the enslavement of Black Africans. His protest is contained in his Book “Noticias Historicas de la Nueva Espana” wherein he could not understand the reason why no papal voice was raised on behalf of Black Africans in chains as it was done for the Indians so as to liberate them from the unjust hands of the Spanish Conquistadors. He saw this neglect from the side of the Church and her leaders in this century as a naked injustice. According to him, both the Indians and Black Africans were unjustly

¹¹² Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 190.

¹¹³ De Mercado, *Summa de Tratos y Contratos*, Liv. II, cap. Xx, Fl. 102-106, in: Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 189.

¹¹⁴ De Mercado, *Ibid*, in: Venard, *Geschichte des Christentums*, Vol. 8, p. 766.

¹¹⁵ Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 191.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*. See also, Serafim Leite, *Historia da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro & Lisboa 1938-50, II, pp. 227-228.

enslaved and as such, there is no justification for liberating the Indians while allowing Black Africans to remain under the chains of slavery. For him therefore: "There is no difference between them other than that one is darker in colour."¹¹⁷ For expressing his view on this injustice, his Book never saw the light of the day again until in the nineteenth century. Those of the Jesuits missionaries in Brazil such as the ones written by padre André João Antonil titled "Cultura e Opulencia do Brasil por suas Drogas e Minas" published in 1711 in Lisbon and that of padre Jorge Benci titled "Economia Christa dos Senhores no Governo de Escravos" published in Rome in 1705 which condemned the enslavement of Black Africans could not achieve anything as a result of the censorship carried out by the Portuguese government in Brazil. Both works of protest against the enslavement of Black Africans were proscribed by the Portuguese authority in Brazil just two weeks after their publications.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, the efforts of Francisco Jose de Jaca (1645-1688) and his fellow missionary Epifano de Moirans (1644-1689) are worthy to find expression in this work. Both of these men were members of the Capuchin religious Order who devoted their time and lives as missionaries to fight the unjust treatment of the Black African slaves in Cuba in 1681. They were often seen preaching to the Black African slaves working in the mines and sugar plantations in the island of La Habana. The central theme of their preaching was the affirmation of the humanity of the Black Africans, whose humanity at this time was made an object of caricature and doubts.¹¹⁹ In their view, the Black African slaves are human beings created free by God in the same manner that He created the white-slave masters. In his Book "In defence of the Natural Freedom of Slaves," Epifanio de Moirans condemned slavery as illegal in the sense that it is against the fundamental right of man as well as the divinely revealed rights of man.¹²⁰ For him, all who are in possession of slaves as well as those who contributed in the enslavement of their fellow human beings risk the pains of eternal damnation. He therefore called for immediate release of all slaves and demanded that slaves should be paid remunerations for all their unpaid labours as reparation for the injustices they suffered in the hands of their masters.¹²¹ By arguing in this manner, they mandated their fellow brother-priests to refuse to give absolution to all the slave masters still in possession of Black African

¹¹⁷ De Peralta, *Noticias Historicas de la Nueva Espana*, p. 50, in: Hugh, *Slave Trade*, p. 147.

¹¹⁸ Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, p. 103.

¹¹⁹ Appiah, ed. *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, Vol. 1, Second Edition, p. 160.

¹²⁰ Epifanio de Moirans, *In Defence of the Natural Freedom of Slaves*, in: Phillips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, p. 158.

¹²¹ Appiah, ed. *The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, *Ibid*, p. 160.

slaves.¹²² This prohibition brought about a heavy protest organized by the slave traders operating on the island of La Habana in Cuba. The aftermath of this protest was that both Francisco and Epifanio were banned from preaching any longer in this island and were forbidden from making any public speeches as well as to hear confession by their Superiors. But this prohibition to preach publicly did not hinder them from going about to spread their condemnation of the enslavement of Black Africans. As a result of this, they were accused of being French spies, whose intention was to cause slaves to revolt against their masters. And on the strength of this false accusation, they were taken as prisoners and deported back to Europe where they were placed under house arrest in different monasteries.¹²³ However, it is regrettable that their struggle to see to the freedom of Black African slaves did not see the light of the day in Cuba. But in all, they did fight like courageous men of God worthy of the name. Their greatest achievement in this fight lies in the fact that they were bold enough to challenge the theology of slavery of their time and broke away from that kind of theology that supported the evil of enslavement, especially those of innocent Black Africans forced to wear the chains of slavery through the military prowess of the Portuguese and Spanish slave merchants on the grounds that they are descendants of the accursed race of Ham, whose enslavement was justified by a divine decree pronounced over their race in perpetuity.

All these reactions made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were geared towards provoking and pressurising both the civil and papal authorities of these centuries to react to the evil of the Transatlantic slave trade with a consequent condemnation and abolition of it. Many historians such as Francis Maxwell, Adrian Hastings and Thomas Hugh are of the view that these voices of protest against the enslavement of Black Africans were loud enough to have moved the Church leaders to act in defence and liberation of Black African victims of the Transatlantic slave trade. But that was not to be. Instead, a deaf ear was paid to these voices and their owners were utterly ignored and were branded heretics and enemies of the Church. In the views of Thomas Hugh: “Despite this official neglect of criticism of the new trade in Black slaves, it is hard not to feel that there were by the sixteenth century or so, enough hostile voices to have brought the trade to an end within the next generation.”¹²⁴

The Church’s interest at this time was not to listen to voices that were hostile to the institution of slavery and the slave trade. Voices reminding the Church of her moral obligation to right the wrongs committed by pope Nicholas V and

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Phillips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, p. 158. Cf. Appiah, ed. *The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, p. 160.

¹²⁴ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 148.

other popes of the Church, who supported the slave trade with their various Bulls and approved of all the evils done in West Africa by the kings of Portugal, Prince Henry the Navigator and the Portuguese Conquistadors, were never considered necessary to be adhered to. She was rather very akin to listen to frivolous and unimaginable visions and self-fabricated revelations of men like a Dominican Friar Francisco de la Cruz, who appeared before the inquisition in 1575 in Lima and narrated how an angel explained to him that: “The Black Africans are justly captives by reason of the sins of their forefathers and that because of that sin, God gave them that colour.”¹²⁵ Continuing in his revelation full of anti-Blacks sentiments, Francisco de la Cruz maintained that: “The Black Africans descended from the tribe of Isacchar and that they were so warlike and indomitable that they would upset everyone if they were allowed to live free.”¹²⁶ And many Black Africans tend to believe that the Church’s attitude towards them is to be located in such beliefs. And it was based on such beliefs and other traditionally based teachings of the Catholic Church about Black Africans in the history of Christianity as we noted in the justification of the enslavement of Black Africans in section two of this work, that the untiring efforts of these friends of the Black African slaves did not receive a timely support from the Church’s authority. David Brion Davis was then right to have remarked that: “The rare individuals who did revive the early doubts on the legitimacy of African enslavement were held in disrepute and even banished from the colonies.”¹²⁷ Instead of giving a listening ear to the truths of their mouths, the Church and her leadership rather continued to ignore the atrocities committed by the kings of Portugal and their missionaries in West Africa under the disguise of spreading the light of the Christian Gospel in the African society which as she believed was still labouring under the darkness of paganism and so in need of salvation. This quest for the spread of the Gospel in Africa unfortunately ended up in the spread of Black Africans as slaves in the Portuguese foreign colonies and in the New World of the South and North America.

¹²⁵ De La Cruz, Excerpts from the Inquisition Proceedings in the Madrid Historical Archives, trans. Marcel Bataillon, in: Juan Friede & Benjamin Keen, eds. *Bartolomé de Las Casas in History*, Illinois 1971, p. 417. Cf. Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 147.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, p. 196.

V. Conclusion

We began our investigation into the accusation of the involvement of the Catholic Church and her leaders in the evil of the Transatlantic slave trade with the first two chapters of this work dedicated to the theme of slavery in Africa and that of the Transatlantic slave trade respectively. The goal of treating these themes was to acquaint us with the face of slavery in West Africa before the Transatlantic slave trade and to keep us abreast with the evil of the Transatlantic slave trade, its inhuman manner of operation, those behind it and the various European nations which took active part in it and profited heavily from it. Through the help of the inquiry made in the history of slavery, this work was able to establish the fact that as far as slavery is concerned, Africa was not alone. Slavery existed in all known human societies of the world. And this being the case, Africa is not synonymous with the term slavery, and servitude is not the birth right of Black Africans. Despite this basic historical truth, West African sons and daughters were singled out as the rightful victims of the Transatlantic slave trade. In trying to find out the reason why slavery in other societies of the world vanished into the tin air, but the one in Africa did not only continue, but also lasted for another 400 years, we delved into the various possible justifications of Black African enslavement both from the theological, philosophical, scientific as well as racial point of view. The surprising result of this critical inquiry was indeed not only revealing but at the same time very astonishing. It revealed that the very nature and character of the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans was purely racial. The race of the Black Africans became a hot issue and was made the fulcrum point around which their enslavement rotated. And all that the Black Africans suffered during this enslavement depended solely on their race. And this racial character of this enslavement was not only scientifically and philosophically based but also theologically centred.

Scientifically, the Western pseudo scientists of the medieval and early modern periods singled out the Black man for humiliation and degradation based on his skin-color and place of origin which characterized and influenced his physiological components. These physiological components such as his skull, the size of his brain, dark skin-color, shape of his nose, hairs, elongated male genitals etc., were made a serious issue from the point of view of anatomical ethnology which denied the humanity of the Black man and removed him from the human family of Adam and Eve but located his alleged “rightful place” in the animal world, especially in the family of apes.¹ And if at all he was accepted

¹ Cuvier, *Animal Kingdom*, Vol. 1, p. 97; Payne, *The Negro, What is his Ethnological Status?* p. 9.

to be a human being, he was believed to be an inferior type of human being with only a servile status among men. And for this reason, he was born to serve others as their slave.²

Philosophically, race and environmental theory dominated the manner in which the Black man was considered. Coming from the remotest part of the Southern hemisphere which classical philosophers interpreted as a mark of lowliness, cowardice, barbarism and primitivism, both classical, medieval and early modern philosophers viewed the Black man with the lens of a sub-human being and concluded that he was an inferior type of human being, barbarous in nature, not equipped by nature with a human intellect like other humans, and as a result of this, he was termed a knowing and emotional being rather than a thinking being, who is not in a position either to achieve any meaningful feat in history or to undertake any rational assignments and incapable of attaining salvation due to a lack of a human soul in him.³ The result of all this, was that the Black man was adjudged to be good for nothing, only created by God to serve as a slave and as a raw material for the development of the rest of the world.⁴

Theologically, the image and status of the Black man suffered a dangerous blow. He was adjudged a human being, and to have descended from the human family of Adam and Eve. But his humanity was marred and tainted with a divine curse which resulted from the curse of Noah upon his son Ham, whom both the patristic and the medieval theologians identified as the progenitor of the Black African race.⁵ As a result of this, the Black man was believed to have been descended from the accursed race of Ham. The mark of his accursed nature was his dark skin-color which he cannot run away from as well as his servile nature which made him to be a slave of all slaves wherever he finds himself. For bearing a dark skin-color, which was considered by patristic and medieval Christian sources as a symbol of evil, sin and moral debasement, the Black African was conceived to be morally debased, sexually lascivious and devilish by nature.⁶ The result of this conception was that the Black man was treated as a devil-incarnate and all the negative characteristics of blackness were directed and transferred onto his person as an enemy of the Christian religion

² Simms, "The Morals of Slavery," *The Pro-Slavery Argument*, p. 270ff; Carlyle, "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question," 1849, in: Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 196.

³ Hume, *Essays & Treatise On Several Subjects*, 1758, Vol. 1, 125n, in: Eze, ed. *Race and the Enlightenment*, p. 30; Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans, p. 174.

⁴ Jaspers, in: Neckebrout, *L' Afrique Noire*, p. 102.

⁵ Calmet, *Calmet's Great Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, p. 21; Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, Vol. 1, p. 13.

⁶ St. Jerome, *Liber de Expositione Psalmorum VII*, (PL 26, 1287). English version in: *The Homilies of St. Jerome, Hom. 3 on Psalm 7*, (F.C. 1, 29); Flavius Cassiodorus, *Expositio in Psalterium 71,9* (PL 70, 510). English Translation by P. G. Walsh, (ACW 52, 189).

especially in the periods of the Crusades, when he was seen as a child of the Devil and belonging to the army of the evil One.⁷ This skin-color and servitude were also considered by many Western theologians as the double punishments which the Black man has to undergo as a result of the curse placed upon his race by the patriarch Noah. The result of this interpretation was that his enslavement was appropriate to him and as an enslavement that was divinely approved.⁸ The height of this myth of an accursed race of the Black African was its acceptance by the leadership of the Catholic Church at the convocation of the First Vatican Council in 1870 under the guidance of pope Pius IX, who in a prayer he formulated, called on all Christians to pray for the release of the Black Africans from the curse placed upon them by Noah. This manner of conceiving the Black man with all its racially oriented and damning stereotypes prepared a fertile ground as well as provided a favourable environment for the enslavement of Black Africans and gave justification for this enslavement during the Transatlantic slave trade.

Apart from treating the Western Christian approach to the Black man in a manner stated above, this work also delved into the difficult task of investigating if there was a concrete step taken by the Church and her leadership in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries in the enslavement of Black Africans. In the course of making this investigation, the basic question that guided this work is: Did the popes of the Church actively involve themselves in the enslavement of Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade? At the end of this investigation, the findings from the historical sources available to this study unfortunately tended to answer this basic question in the positive. This slave trade was not only supported and approved by the Catholic Church but also received the blessings of the popes for a good number of reasons.

In the first place, the political interest of the renaissance papacy to realize the vision of the high medieval papal universal authority in the whole world favoured this enslavement of Black Africans. It was in pursuit of this papal ambition that the papacy was caught in the web of involvement in the Transatlantic slave trade. This point has been elaborately explained in the résumé we made above in chapter seven, section III of this work and does not need to be repeated again in this section.

In the second place, the Christian Crusades against Islam and the Saracens in Africa which was adjudged by the popes as a just war, linked the papacy with

⁷ Pope Urban II, in: Bongars, *Gesta Dei Per Francos*, 1, p. 382ff, in: Thatcher & Holmes McNeal, eds. *A Source Book for Medieval History*, pp. 513-417; Martin, *Afrikaner in Geschichte und Bewußtsein der Deutschen*, p. 20.

⁸ Bishop John England, "Letters to the Hon. John Forsyth On The Subject of Domestic Slavery," *The Works*, ed. Ignatius A. Reynolds, 5 Vols. p. 119.

the Transatlantic slave trade and the enslavement of Black Africans. In a bid to carry out this Crusade, the political strategy of the renaissance papacy to re-launch itself at the centre stage of exercising authority over the whole world and the economic and political interests of the Portuguese Crown in Africa were united into a common goal conceived to be realised in carrying out Christian mission in Africa through the organ of Crusades against the militant Islamic religion and the pagans of West Africa. It was for this reason that the renaissance popes especially Martin IV, Eugene IV and Nicholas V as well as their successors up to 1514 gave their approval and blessings to the menaces and atrocities of Prince Henry the Navigator and his team of Conquistadors in Africa through a barrel of papal Bulls already discussed in this work. With the help of these numerous Bulls, these popes gave to Prince Henry the Navigator and the Royal Crown in Portugal not only a political and economic authority over Africans especially the power to force them into perpetual slavery, but also a spiritual mandate to dominate their souls through the right of Patronage granted to the Royal Crown of Portugal. Consequent upon this, the road was cleared by the renaissance papacy for the Portuguese undoing of Africa. The result of these papal grants to Portugal was enslavement and total exploitation of Black Africans and their possessions which lasted for over four centuries under the watchful eyes of the papacy.

In the third place, the reason behind this papal granting of the said Bulls to the Crown in Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator was not only to arrive at a political vision of exercising authority over the inhabitants of the newly discovered territories in Africa but also a religious interest of bringing the Gospel of Christ to the pagan natives of the West Africa in pursuit of the papal theory of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. This mission was to be achieved through the king of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator as ideal Christian Princes and representatives of the popes in their mission areas in Africa. It was for this reason that the renaissance popes added the right of Patronage to the many grants and privileges already granted to Prince Henry and the kings of Portugal in Africa. But the historical truth remains that as far as this mission was concerned, the popes were only at sea with the reality on grounds. The very recipients of these papal grants, mainly Prince Henry the Navigator and king Alfonso V of Portugal, in whose names and respects these grants were made and continuously renewed by the popes up to the seventeenth century, proved that these papal grants in their hands were not meant for the evangelization of Black Africans but rather were just a mere camouflage for the realisation of their dream of gaining monopoly control over the trade in West African gold, ivory, silver and other goods as well as the enslavement of Black Africans. This fact is hinged on the truth that throughout their lifetime (+1460 Prince Henry, +1481 king Alfonso V) there was no historical trace of missionary works

undertaken either by them or by any of their representatives (knights of the military Order of Christ) in West Africa. Rather than carrying out a salvific mission of spreading the Gospel to the Black Africans so as to save their souls claimed to be in danger of eternal damnation in hell fire, they undertook to pick up the West African gold as well as to spread Black Africans in Europe and in the Spanish and Portuguese Americas as slaves for the attainment of monetary gains.

A further proof of this deceptive ploy of the said Portuguese recipients of the papal Bulls is seen in the attitude of the Portuguese Crown and her missionaries in Africa in the areas of administering the sacrament of baptism to the Black African slaves as was recommended by the popes before their embarkation to Portugal and her Brazilian colony as well as to the Spanish New World. This holy sacrament of the Church was turned into a veritable source of monetary enrichment by the Portuguese missionaries in West Africa. It was carried out as a mass-baptism which was hurriedly conducted before their embarkation so as to make them better and obedient slaves in the hands of their white Christian masters. Rather than helping to improve on the status and image of the enslaved Black Africans, baptism turned out to be a means of making huge material profits for the Church especially for the Portuguese missionaries stationed at their numerous slave ports in Africa such as Alguin, Elmina, São Tome, Gorée, Bight of Biafra, Luanda etc. And for every baptized slave, the Portuguese missionaries received in the name of the Church a stipulated amount of money from the beginning of the Portuguese Atlantic slave trade until the period of the abolition of the slave trade in Portuguese territories in 1836. In the views of Françoise Latour da Veiga Pinto: "As far as Portugal was concerned, the Church had a material interest in the business from the start through the dues she collected for the baptism of slaves. Every slave shipped to Europe and the Spanish West Indies and North America had to be baptised, and though the ceremony of baptism was carried out in groups, the officiating priest made his charges on a per capita basis."⁹ Going a step further, he revealed that different amounts of money were charged by the Portuguese missionaries in Africa for baptism. According to him: "In the eighteenth century, the rate was 300 to 500 reis for adults and 50 to 100 reis for children and infants in arms."¹⁰ Continuing, he asserted that: "Most of the times, this collection of money led to conflicts between the clergy and the slave traders especially in 1697 and 1719 leading to the intervention of the civil power."¹¹ That means, the highly trumpeted conversion of the pagan peoples of West Africa glaringly exhibited in the said papal Bulls issued for this mission, was

⁹ Da Veiga Pinto, "Portuguese Participation in the Slave Trade," p. 138.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

only a camouflage. The popes and the kings of Portugal only hid themselves under the mask of mission and the need to save the pagan souls of Black Africans from damnation in order to encourage and promote their enslavement.

Apart from the goals of extending papal authority in the newly discovered Portuguese territories in Africa and the fight against the Saracens as well as the conversion of the pagan natives of West Africa, there was no other clear interest pursued by the renaissance papacy in West Africa other than to allow this enslavement to continue to thrive. This was the reason why the popes in the first two centuries of the Black African enslavement did not feel concerned with whatever the Portuguese Crown and her representatives were doing in their respective areas of influence in the West African Atlantic. The popes did not consider it necessary to check the atrocities and abuses committed by the Portuguese Royal Crown and her representatives in the West African Atlantic in the name of evangelizing mission of the Church in Africa. It was this kind of *laissez-faire* attitude towards the evil of Black African enslavement that characterized the disposition of the popes in the first two centuries of their enslavement.

This same attitude of the popes towards the enslavement of Black Africans did not change in the centuries that followed until the end of the slave trade in the nineteenth century. Even in the sixteenth century precisely in 1537 during the papacy of pope Paul III, when the papacy at last began to show interest in the sufferings of peoples held under the bondage of slavery by condemning the enslavement of the Indians of the West Indies, the Black Africans were left out and ignored in this papal interest in protecting those under enslavement. In this interest of the papacy in the enslaved peoples of the world, there was a clear evidence of the policy of papal selective justice. The enslaved Indians in the Spanish New World were given necessary support by the popes, leading to the condemnation of their enslavement in 1537. But the Black Africans were neglected and abandoned to their fate and were refused any support of the same papal Office that fought for the Indians and liberated them from enslavement.

Moreover, apart from the Bull “*Sublimis Deus*” of 1537 through which pope Paul III condemned the Spanish enslavement of the said Indians in their own land, a greater majority of other papal Bulls through which the popes condemned their further enslavement were directed to the enslavement of the said Indians in the Portuguese Brazilian colony where 99% of the enslaved in Brazil were Black Africans. Why did this huge number of Black African slaves in the Portuguese Brazilian colony not attract the attention and fatherly love of the popes so as to condemn their enslavement or even to mention them in the Bulls written in condemnation of the enslaved Indians? If the popes were afraid

of the king of Portugal in failing to condemn the enslavement of Black Africans, why didn't they extend such fears to the same Crown in Portugal while condemning the enslavement of the Indians on a Brazilian soil who were being enslaved by the same Portuguese that enslaved Black Africans in the same land? The papal Bull "Immensa Pastorum" of pope Benedict XIV in 1741 was very close at doing this after recalling that: "Help, aid and protection should be given to those who lack faith and that neither injuries nor the scourge, nor chains nor servitude nor death should be inflicted on them."¹² But unfortunately, this pope failed like others before him to include the enslaved Black Africans in Brazil among those who should be granted protection and aid by the leadership of the Church in Brazil. The reason for doing all this was that the Indians were Christian converts and their enslavement went contrary to the law of the Church which prohibits Christians from enslaving their fellow Christians. But what of these Black Africans? Were they not baptised before their embarkation to their lands of enslavement? Why were they still considered as pagans after they must have been baptised? Was their own baptism not enough to have set them free from enslavement by their fellow Western Christians? This is the moral issue raised here by this decision of the popes in allowing the continued enslavement of baptised Black African slaves. Indeed, the truth is that those Black African captives were baptised by the Portuguese missionaries in Africa before their shipment to their lands of enslavement both in Brazil and in the Spanish New World but their conversion to Christianity was not considered appropriate enough by the leadership of the Church to free them from the bond of slavery. This attitude towards the baptised Black African slaves goes back to the time of pope Gregory IX (*1145, pontificate 1227-1241) who legislated in his Decretal of July 28, 1237 that baptism was not enough to set slaves free. In the said Decretal the pope protected the interest of the Christian slave owners both lay and clergy who were afraid of what they were about to lose, if it were to be legislated by the Church that baptism liberates the slaves from their enslavement. It was in the light of this protection that pope Gregory IX decreed that: "Converted and baptised slaves should be allowed to attend the sacraments of the Church, but that the sacrament of baptism does not change anything in the status of slaves after baptism."¹³ However, the fact remains that from the sixteenth century onwards, this rule was set aside for the Indians by the popes such that baptism changed their

¹² Pope Benedict XIV, "Immensa Pastorum," in: Benedict XIV Bullarium, Vol. I, Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, pp. 99-102.

¹³ Pope Gregory IX, Decretales, No. 10421, in: Vauchez, Geschichte des Christentums, Vol. 2, p. 790. This same position was maintained by the Dominican monk and Saint Raimund von Penafort (1178-1275) when he taught that: "Baptism alone does not justify the freedom of slaves especially not in the areas or places where slavery is legalized." See, Summa de Casibus Poenitentiae, 1,4,7, Rome 1603, p. 37, in: Vauchez, Geschichte des Christentums, Ibid.

status as slaves. But in the case of the enslaved Black Africans, it did not change their slave status and did not give them any dignity worthy of respect by their white slave masters. In the opinion of Robinson Milwood: “Baptism for the Black African slaves is only a change of names. African names were changed with those of the slave masters thereby proving that they are properties of their owners. It did not remove the branded initials or numbers on the bodies of the Black African slaves.”¹⁴ Continuing, Milwood asserted that: “Both conversion and baptism worked hand in hand in the hands of the slave masters and the European missionaries to recreate the African as nothing but a slave designed by God for European influence and redemption.”¹⁵

Furthermore, the attitude of the popes towards the enslavement of Black Africans was further influenced by their much dependence on the flimsy reasons, which the Portuguese kings and Prince Henry the Navigator were always presenting to them while asking for favours whenever they intended to invade any pagan territories along the West African Atlantic. The most recurrent of such reasons are: (a) That the Black Africans are pagans and live in ignorance of God. (b) That they live in the remotest parts of the world still unknown to the Christian world. (c) That they are less humans and therefore inferior to the Europeans. (d) That they are primitive and a barbarous folk. (e) That they are salvages and live a beastly life, (f) That they are completely lacking in the knowledge of good living. (g) That their enslavement will bring them civilisation and teach them to know bread and wine, housing and clothing. (h) Over and above all these reasons, it was assumed that their enslavement by the Portuguese Christians will make them to become Christians and therefore enslavement is good and very redeeming for them. This manner of reasoning here has its roots in the description of the native inhabitants of West African Atlantic made by the famous Portuguese palace chronicler Gomes Azurara shortly before the Transatlantic slave trade was launched into its full swing. According to him:

West Africans were in a state of perdition of their bodies by living so like beasts, with no law of reasonable creatures, nor did they know what bread, wine, clothing or houses were, and what was worse, because of their great ignorance, they had no knowledge of good, only of living in bestial sloth.¹⁶

Azurara, in his capacity as a historian and knight of the Portuguese military Order of Christ therefore, justified the enslavement of Black Africans carried out by the Portuguese Crown as something very redeeming for them. In his

¹⁴ Milwood, *European Christianity and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 149.

¹⁵ Milwood, p. 150.

¹⁶ Azurara, *Cronica de Guiné*, Cap. XXVI. Cf. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 39.

very words, he remarked that: "Slavery made Blacks to become Christians. Despite the fact that they are bestial, they still possess a human soul in need of salvation."¹⁷ Going a step further, he maintained that: "Through their enslavement by the Portuguese Christians, Black Africans have come to know bread, wine, clothing, housing and other enjoyments of the civilized man."¹⁸ The frame of mind in the aforesaid reasons given by Prince Henry the Navigator and Gomez Azurara hinges around the claim that the Black Africans are pagans and inferior human beings. And by so being, they fell into the category of the Aristotelian theory of natural slaves as primitive and barbarous people, who do not have the wherewithal for self-rule and private possession of their goods, but as those, who by nature must be led and ruled by the superior race of the Portuguese. Much of these reasons have been taken care of in section two of this work. But suffice it to mention herein that at the time of writing the aforesaid Crusade Bulls which authorized the Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans in the fifteenth century, the European manner of thinking as revealed by Azurara and Prince Henry the Navigator above, was one that was very unfavourable and unfriendly to the Black Africans. A lot of unscientific and unverifiable utterances and beliefs arising from both Christian theology, philosophy, history and sciences against Black Africans filled the air of the European academic and religious environment. Such untrue beliefs created a smack of resentment in the minds of Western Christians towards Black Africans such that they were made objects of hatred, discrimination and caricature among the European Christians of the medieval and early modern periods. The renaissance popes being products of a Christian world with such a mind-set as the above, were highly influenced by this background of anti-Black sentiments in their decisions over Black Africans in favour of their most cherished Christian kings and princes of Portugal. And it was from such a prejudiced background, that the said Crusade Bulls (especially *Romanus Pontifex* of pope Nicholas V) against West Africans were issued. This very Bull incorporated in its content all the alleged erroneous and unhistorical information about Black Africa and her natives presented to pope Nicholas V by the Crown in Portugal in the Royal Charter of 1433, which formed the very back-bone upon which this Bull centred in its condemnation of Black Africans to perpetual enslavement. And with such a background, the renaissance popes laid a solid tradition, which proved hard to be broken by other popes that ruled

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. See also, Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves*, p. 39. In this reference, Saunders wrote as follows: "To justify the enslavement of the Blacks and Idzagen, the Portuguese Crown's official propagandist declared that these West Africans were primitive peoples whose enslavement in Portugal brought them the inestimable benefits of Christianity and European material civilization." See, p. 35.

the Church after them, such that the idea of condemning the Black African enslavement was never considered a worthy task to be undertaken by any of them.

These anti-Blacks sentiments undoubtedly did influence the popes in their decision to abandon the enslaved Black Africans in their state of bondage even after they had become Christians via baptism. Otherwise what else could have led them to be selective in the justice rendered to the enslaved Indians and Black Africans as noted above? Both the Indians and Black Africans were enslaved by the same Western Christians for the same reasons as outlined by Gomes Azurara above. All the said negative attributes were waved aside for the Indians by the leadership of the Church, and they were proclaimed to be truly and reasonable human beings who are capable of receiving the Christian message as well as attaining human salvation.¹⁹ Even in the face of numerous protests made by some anti-slavery proponents in both Europe and America against the continued unjust enslavement of Black Africans, none of the popes of the Church beginning from the renaissance papacy in the fifteenth century, throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries and up to the first three decades of the nineteenth century ever remembered to hearken to those voices of protests so as to extend their fatherly concern towards Black Africans laboring under the chains of Transatlantic slavery. It was as a result of this attitude of the popes towards Black Africans in chains that led the historian Charles Boxer to conclude that: “The Church’s attitude to Negro slavery was to put it politely, a highly permissible one for nearly four centuries.”²⁰ That means, the many centuries of Black African enslavement seemed not to have posed any serious problem in the eyes of the popes so as to call for their intervention to save the enslaved Black African victims of this slave trade. And by reason of evidence of facts revealed in the various papal Bulls on slavery, the Church was more concerned with the free Indians of West Indies rather than the millions of Black Africans carrying the chains of enslavement all over their bodies.

Over and above all these, the attitude of the popes towards the enslavement of Black Africans which led them to develop the character of “pick and choose” in the defence given to those under the bondage of slavery was further influenced by the following reasons. Firstly, the popes tolerated this enslavement based on the belief and conviction that the Black African race is an accursed race and therefore the punishment of slavery placed upon their progenitor Ham fell on them as descendants of the accursed Ham. In other words, their enslavement was divinely pronounced and approved.

¹⁹ Pope Paul III, “*Sublimis Deus*,” ASV, A.A.Arm. XXXVII, Vol. 15, Fl. 145rv.

²⁰ Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, p. 30.

Secondly, Portuguese Christian mission in Africa was intrinsically tied to the slave trade. That means that missionary activities in Africa went hand in hand with the slave trade. This is so because, historical records showed that African regions such as Kongo, Angola, Benin and Elmina with heavy presence of Portuguese missionaries registered the highest number of the enslaved Black Africans during the Transatlantic slave trade. The reason for this is that the Portuguese missionary centres in Africa were at the same time major centres of the slave trade and this led the missionaries to engage themselves in this baneful traffic on human beings. Attesting to this fact, Adrian Hastings wrote: “There can be no doubts that many ecclesiastics owned slaves and that some participated actively in the slave trade in Angola as elsewhere. Almost all Portuguese clergy were effectively dependent upon it for their financial support.”²¹

Thirdly, the enslavement of Black Africans favoured their mission financially, in the sense that the gains of the slave trade were used to sponsor Portuguese missionary works in both Angola and Kongo. The expenses made by king Manuel (*1469, reigned 1495-1521) of Portugal in sending ships carrying materials for the building of Churches in Kongo in 1508 were according to the historian Eugen Weber paid back with 1000 Black African captives given to him as compensation for his gift items to the mission in Kongo and Luanda.²² Also there are reports showing that the profits accruing from the slave trade on Black Africans were used to finance the wars against Islam in North Africa. This revelation is contained in the reports made to pope Innocent VIII by king John II of Portugal in 1488.²³ In the same token, William D. Phillips recorded that the Christian mission in Africa was sponsored with the profits accruing from the evil traffic on Black African slaves.²⁴ Even the Jesuits religious Order in both Brazil and in Maryland (USA) profited much from the Transatlantic slave trade and invested the profits made from this slave trade in the training of her religious priests and in the building of Schools and Colleges in Maryland and in Brazil. A concrete example of such Jesuits’ College where such investment was made is the famous Jesuit College in Washington founded in 1789 and today known as the Georgetown University. A good chunk of the blood money accruing from the sale of the last 272 Black African slaves sold by the Jesuits in Maryland was used to pay off the debt owed by this University in 1838. In the face of all these abuses of a Christian mission in Africa, there was no recorded effort made by the papacy to correct these abuses either by way of abrogating the privileges (*Padroado Real*) it constantly granted to Portugal

²¹ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 124.

²² Weber, *Portugiesische Reichsmission*, p. 63

²³ Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, p. 83.

²⁴ Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade*, p. 145.

between 1452 and 1514 or to amend some of the clauses contained in them, which gave the kings of Portugal and their various successors in perpetuity an exclusive Patronage right of control over its overseas empires.

The last but not the least among the reasons why the popes developed cold feet in condemning the enslavement of Black Africans was that some popes unfortunately were directly involved in the traffic on human beings and kept slaves in their Papal States up till 1831. And this made them to lack the moral credibility to denounce the Transatlantic slave trade. Confirming this, Hastings said: "Moreover, as the popes themselves made use of slaves in their Galleys all through the eighteenth century, and some of them had been bought, they were in no position to mount an effective moral Crusade against the Transatlantic slave trade."²⁵ All these reasons put together, made the popes to neglect the enslaved Black Africans during the Transatlantic slavery despite a huge evidence of protests raised by some missionaries both clergy and laymen against the continued enslavement of Black Africans during this slave trade. This lack of interest of the popes to feel concerned with the sufferings of the unjustly enslaved Black Africans made them late comers in the campaign for the condemnation and consequent abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade. Consequent upon this, they were totally ignored by the individual reformers and the various abolitionist movement of the nineteenth century that brought about an end to the Transatlantic slave trade. John Maxwell echoed this fact when he recorded: "The lay reformers and abolitionists had won their campaigns without much effective help or moral leadership from the Catholic Church which had hitherto consistently refused to condemn the institution of slavery or the practice of slave trading as such."²⁶

The papacy showed her concern for Black Africans in 1814 and 1823 respectively only at the motivation of the British government and only on the condition that the British government will help the Church to recover her lost Papal States which were taken away from her by the Napoleonic invasion and occupation of the Papal States in 1808. It was based on this enticement that the leadership of the Church accepted to work hand in hand with the British government in her bid to eradicate Transatlantic slave trade by condemning this baneful trade at last as an evil against humanity through a papal Bull issued in 1839 by pope Gregory XVI. This condemnation took place more than three hundred and fifty years of duration of the Transatlantic slave trade, and of course after the European enslaving nations had pronounced the traffic on humans as illegal and made laws for its prohibition and abolition in 1807, 1818 and 1833 respectively.

²⁵ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, p. 125.

²⁶ Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 119.

Be that as it may, this noticed failure of the leadership of the Church in condemning the enslavement of Black Africans had brought a question mark on the image of the Church's leadership during the Transatlantic slave trade. This cloud of bad image cast upon the Church and her leadership is mainly as a result of her failure to listen to the wise advice of St. Gregory of Nyssa (*335, bishopric 372-395) given many centuries before the Transatlantic slave trade. In one of his Homilies on the Book of Ecclesiastes, St. Gregory of Nyssa preached against the slave trade in the following words:

Tell me, what price did you pay to acquire them? What is the equivalent in goods for the cost of human nature? How much in terms of money is the value of intelligence? What price did you pay for the image of God? For how many staters did you buy a human nature made by God? For He, who knew the nature of mankind rightly said that the whole world was not worth giving in exchange for a human soul. Whenever a human being is for sale, therefore, nothing less than the Owner of the earth is led into the sale-room.²⁷

Following this wise counsel of St. Gregory of Nyssa, did the popes of the renaissance Catholic Church who authorized the kings of Portugal to lead Black Africans into perpetual servitude ever know that they also indirectly authorized the true God living in those unfortunate Black Africans to be led into a sale-room? If they had hearkened to this wise counsel, it could have led the Church to be on the side of the oppressed innocent victims of the slave trade rather than on the side of their unjust oppressors. It could have saved the Black Africans from their image damaged internationally up to this present time by the perpetrators of this baneful traffic on humans. Justice demands that those still bearing the brunt of this many years of devastations and damages caused by the Transatlantic slave trade should not be forgotten. The leadership of the Church, following the teaching of Christ should brace it up to be in the vanguard in the call for reparation. And this has to begin with issuing an official Apostolic writing through which an apology should be rendered to the peoples and regions of Black Africa whose continent and children bore the brunt of the Transatlantic slave trade for so long a time. It is very unfortunate that this has not been done even up to this date, almost 200 years after the end of the Transatlantic slave trade. All nations and peoples in history injured by the Church had been issued an apology in an official manner by the leadership of the Church so as to sooth the wounds of the past inflicted on them. For instance, for the Holocaust against the Jews, the Indian slave trade etc., apologies have been rendered by the Church through the medium of an official

²⁷ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. Dom. IV 3* (PG 44, 667). English version in: Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, p. 33; Klein, *Die Haltung der kappadokischen Bischöfe*, pp. 210-212.

Apostolic writing from the papacy. Why should the Holocaust against the Black African race be an exception? Mentioning it just in passing as the newly canonized St. John Paul II did on the island of Gorée in a Homily delivered in 1992 is not enough. It is interesting to read from the text of that Homily to see if he actually accepted this crime as one committed by the very papal Office which he was occupying at that time. In this Homily, he said among other things:

This visit to the “slave house” recalls to mind that enslavement of Black people which in 1462 Pius II, writing to a missionary Bishop who was leaving for Guinea, described as the “enormous crime,” the “magnum scelus.” Throughout a whole period of the history of the African continent, Black men, women and children were brought to this cramped space, uprooted from their land and separated from their loved ones to be sold as goods. They came from all different countries and parting in chains for new lands, they retained as the last image of their native Africa Gorée's basalt rock cliffs. We could say that this island is fixed in the memory and heart of all the Black diaspora. These men, women and children were the victims of a disgraceful trade in which people who were baptised, but who did not live their faith took part. How can we forget the enormous suffering inflicted, the violation of the most basic human rights, on those people deported from the African continent? How can we forget the human lives destroyed by slavery? In all truth and humility this sin of man against man, this sin of man against God must be confessed. How far the human family still has to go until its members learn to look at and respect one another as God's image, in order to love one another as sons and daughters of their common heavenly Father.²⁸

I strongly believe that the true confession which the pope advocated in this citation must begin with the papacy itself, by accepting the culpability of the leadership of the Church in this Transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans. If the popes had not sanctioned and supported it, there would not have been such a trade in history. Shifting the blame of this crime against humanity and God to those whom he here described as “people who were baptised, but who did not live their faith,” makes his gestures here to lack any smack of sincerity and seriousness, and as such lessens the magnitude of this Holocaust and crime against the humanity of Black Africans. It was the popes of the Catholic Church that used their papal Office to establish this crime and supported it for over three hundred years, it would therefore not be an over-demanding to ask the papacy also to use the same papal Office to issue an Apostolic letter declaring her regrets and apologizing for this crime committed against the Black African race in history. The time to show this sign of regret for her sins of the past against the Black Africans has not passed. It is still not too late to be done. But the time of a continued washing of her hands innocent of the blame and involvement in this crime against the humanity of Black Africans has long past.

²⁸ Pope John Paul II, Homily Delivered on the Island of Gorée in Senegal on February 22, 1992, in: Panzer, *The Popes And Slavery*, p. 119.

In the process of healing the wounds of her past history which the Church began at the eve of the third millennium as we noted in the introduction to this work, the wounds afflicted on the Black Africans by the Church in the Transatlantic slavery was not remembered in the official Apostolic documents that heralded this event. The bitterness of the after effect of this enslavement in the lives of the present generation of Black Africans living at home and in diaspora especially in America, England and France is not yet over. It remains an undeniable fact that the Transatlantic slave trade left a dangerous and indelible scar in the psyche of the Black Africans and remains till tomorrow a common historical experience that unites all Black Africans both home and in diaspora. The great French existentialist philosopher, playwright and political activist Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) rightly captured this fact when he viewed this enslavement of Black Africans as a gigantic nightmare from which the present generation of Black Africans has not fully awakened. He wrote in his "Orphée Noir" (Black Orpheus) that:

It was during the centuries of slavery that the Negroes drank the cup of bitterness to the dregs. Slavery is a fact of the past which neither present-day authors nor their fathers knew personally. But it is also a gigantic nightmare from which even the youngest are not certain they have awakened completely. The Negroes, divided by the languages, policies and histories of colonial powers, have this one collective memory in common, from one end of the continent to the other.²⁹

In the like manner, the Congolese born poet Martial Sinda, whose land suffered a terrible blow and horror of the slave trade summarized the feelings of his fellow Black Africans with regard to the said trade with the following words: "Slave trade, that unhealable wound in Africa's wrist...The smell of clubs, the smell of ropes round the neck stifles the stormy waves of my thoughts."³⁰ This smell of the clubs and of the ropes round the necks of Black African past has not gone completely from the nostrils of the new generation of Black Africans. The Church represented by her leaders in the present millennium should not close her eyes to this fact of a naked reality in seeking ways of healing the indelible mark left behind on the Black African past. One of these ways of redressing and healing the wounds inflicted on the Black African past has been mentioned above. And until this has been done, the guilt of involvement in this baneful trade will not cease to hover around the image of the leadership of the Church for granting approval and Apostolic blessings to the kings of Portugal and Prince Henry the Navigator for the propagation of this reprehensible traffic in human beings of Black African origin and for tolerating its evil and atrocious practices by keeping silence for too long a time.

²⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, "Orphée Noir," in: Wauthier, *The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa*, p. 146.

³⁰ Martial Sinda, in: Wauthier, *The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa*, p. 147.

VI. Die Päpste, die katholische Kirche und die transatlantische Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner 1418-1839

Eine Zusammenfassung

Den transatlantischen Sklavenhandel kann man als eines der größten Ereignisse bezeichnen, die Afrika und seine ganze Geschichte negativ verändert haben. Es war zweifelsohne ein großes historisches Ereignis, wodurch Afrika, Europa und Amerika überhaupt in Handelsbeziehungen gebracht wurden. Diese Handelsbeziehungen brachten für Europa und Amerika Reichtümer, Ruhm, industrielle Fortschritte und die Überwindung einiger ihrer sozialen und ökonomischen Schwierigkeiten. Man kann wohl mit Recht sagen, dass diese Handelsbeziehungen Europa und Amerika zugute kamen und sie auf dem Weg zur strukturellen Entwicklung und zu einer Verbesserung ihres Lebensstandards geführt haben.

Auf der anderen Seite brachte der transatlantische Sklavenhandel Afrika viele Verluste. Afrikas Reichtümer und seine Küstenregionen wurden ausgeplündert und ausgebeutet. Millionen seiner Söhne und Töchter wurden im arbeitsfähigen Alter mit Gewalt nach Europa und Amerika gebracht, wo man sie in den Zuckerplantagen und Gold- und Silberminen eingesetzt und sie wie Tiere schlecht und brutal behandelt hat. Wie die jüngsten Statistiken zeigen, schätzt man, dass insgesamt zwischen elf bis dreizehn Millionen Afrikaner als Sklaven nach Amerika verschifft worden sind.¹

Hinter dieser heute allgemein verurteilten und als verabscheuenswert angesehenen Tat an den Schwarzafrikanern standen die europäischen Länder wie Portugal, Spanien, Großbritannien, Holland, Frankreich, Schweden und Dänemark. In jüngster Zeit hat man auch die Führung der katholischen Kirche mit dem Verbrechen des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels in Verbindung gebracht. Sowohl europäische Autoren wie Christian Delacampagne, Francis Maxwell, Thomas Hugh, Charles R. Boxer, Eugene Weber, Peter Russell, C. R. Crone und andere, als auch manche afrikanischen Autoren wie Theophilus Okere und Jean Marc Ela sind der Meinung, dass die katholische Kirche eine wichtige Rolle vor und während dieses Handelsverkehrs mit Menschen afrikanischer Herkunft gespielt hat. Beispielsweise schrieb Delacampagne im Jahr 2002: „Heinrich (der Seefahrer), der die Kirche um die Billigung seiner Handelstätigkeiten gebeten und diese erhalten hatte, zog also, wenn man so

¹ Vgl. Lovejoy, Transformations in Slavery, S. 47; Hugh, The Slave Trade, S. 862.

sagen will, nicht nur materielle sondern auch geistliche Gewinne daraus. Erkannte doch der Papst in einem Privileg von 1455 tatsächlich die Rechtmäßigkeit der portugiesischen Eroberungen südlich des Kap Bojador an und erlaubte Portugal, alle heidnischen Völker zu versklaven, nicht ohne vorher all jenen einen vollkommenen Ablass versprochen zu haben, die sich an diesem ‚heiligen‘ Krieg beteiligten.² Im gleichen Kontext stellt die afrikanische Zeitschrift „New African Magazine“ in ihrer Ausgabe von April 2000 fest: “It is instructive that the earliest European slavers of Africa the Portuguese and Spanish sought and got the blessings of the Pope in 1455.”³ Die Rolle der Führung der katholischen Kirche in der Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner besteht nicht nur darin, dass die Päpste kraft ihrer zahlreichen Bullen die Portugiesen ermächtigt haben, die Schwarzafrikaner in die fortwährende Sklaverei zu führen, sondern auch dass sie jahrhundertlang eine laissez faire-Haltung gegenüber den versklavten Schwarzafrikanern eingenommen haben. Diese Wahrheit lässt sich an der Tatsache erkennen, dass die Indianer zur gleichen Zeit wie die Schwarzafrikaner versklavt wurden, aber ihre Versklavung von den Päpsten frühzeitig verurteilt worden ist. Die Päpste setzten sich für die versklavten Indianer ein und befreiten sie aus den Händen und Ketten der spanischen Konquistadoren. Aber im Fall der versklavten Schwarzafrikaner war ihre Position ganz anders. Die Päpste der katholischen Kirche zeigten kein Interesse an ihrer Situation. Den Schwarzafrikanern blieb das „Tor des Erbarmens und der Gerechtigkeit“ der Päpste verschlossen. Einige Missionare protestierten gegen die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner, aber die damalige Führung der katholischen Kirche setzte sich trotzdem nicht für die Schwarzafrikaner ein. Manche Bücher wie „Arte de los Contrados“ von Bartolomé de Albornoz, die sich gegen die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner geäußert haben, wurden von der Kirche auf den Index der verbotenen Bücher gesetzt.⁴ Insgesamt dauerte die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner von der Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts bis ins 19. Jahrhundert an (im Jahr 1888 hat Brasilien als letztes Land die Sklaverei abgeschafft).

In Afrika ist dieser Tatbestand noch wenig bekannt. Das Bewusstsein, dass die katholische Kirche die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner gebilligt und gesegnet hat, wächst jedoch stetig. Diese Tatsache kommt häufig zu Wort unter den Gelehrten, besonders in vielen Diskussionen und akademischen Konferenzen, die in Afrika in jüngster Zeit stattgefunden haben. Und heute ist die Meinung

² Delacampagne, Die Geschichte der Sklaverei, S. 136-137. Vgl. Der Bericht des portugiesischen Reisenden und Historikers João de Barros, in: Koschorke, et al., (Hg.), Außereuropäische Christentumsgeschichte, S. 111.

³ Malanda, “The Pope Loves You,” in: New African Magazine, S. 14.

⁴ Milhou, “Africa,” in: Venard, (Hg.), Geschichte des Christentums, Bd. 8, S. 766. Vgl. Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture, S. 190.

weit verbreitet, dass mit Hilfe dieser Billigung auch die katholische Kirche zu den schlechten wirtschaftlichen Zuständen und der mangelnden strukturellen Entwicklung in Afrika beigetragen hat.

Damit stellt sich die Frage nach der Berechtigung dieser Vorwürfe, die die katholische Kirche so heftig anklagen. In welchem Ausmaß genau treffen diese Anschuldigungen zu? Oder sind es lediglich Erfindungen von Kirchenkritikern? Welche Rolle hat die Führung der katholischen Kirche in der Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner gespielt? Und hat sich die katholische Kirche auch die Mühe gemacht, die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner zu stoppen? Hat die damalige Führung der katholischen Kirche diese Versklavung verurteilt und in welcher Weise? Vor dem Hintergrund dieser kritischen Fragen und den aktuellen Diskussionen in Afrika wurde das vorliegende Thema konzipiert. Diese Arbeit ist in sieben große Teile gegliedert.

TEIL I

Der erste Teil, der aus fünf Kapiteln besteht, dient als Einführung in die gesamte Arbeit. Dieser Teil beschäftigt sich mit dem Thema Sklaverei in den verschiedenen Kulturen der Welt, richtet jedoch ein besonderes Augenmerk auf die Sklaverei in Afrika. Hierin werden der Ursprung und der Charakter der Sklaverei in Afrika vor dem Beginn des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels geschildert. Es beginnt mit der Definition und der Herkunft des Begriffs „Sklaverei“ und stellt die drei griechischen Bedeutungen von Sklaverei heraus, nämlich: *Oiketes*, *Doũlos* und *Andrapodon*. Der Begriff *Oiketes* bedeutet Hausklave (*Oikos* = *Haus*) und bezeichnet die Position des Sklaven in der Familie, wo er seine häuslichen Dienste verrichtet. *Doũlos* bezeichnet die Stellung eines Sklaven in der Gesellschaft und zeigt den Status einer Person, die völlig unterworfen ist. *Andrapodon* beschreibt eine Person als *Menschenfüßler* in Analogie zu den „Vierfüßlern“ *Tetrapoda*, den Tieren. Damit wird seine Nähe zu den Tieren und sein defizitäres Menschsein in den Vordergrund gerückt.

Diese Begriffe zeigen die Stellung des Sklaven als Eigentum, seine völlige Rechtlosigkeit und seinen Mangel an familiärer Bindung. In diesem Licht kann man einen Sklaven definieren als: „einen Menschen, der direkt einer totalen, d.h. unbeschränkten und dauerhaften Gewalt eines Herrn unterworfen ist.“⁵

Mittels dieser Begriffe wird herausgestellt, dass auch in Afrika die Sklaverei vor der Zeit der europäischen Expansion nur im Familienbund (*Oikos*) stattfand. Der Sklave befand sich in einer Familie in der afrikanischen Gesellschaft. Er wurde in die Familie integriert und war Mitglied der Familie. Sein Status als Sklave beraubte ihn nicht all seiner Rechte. Er wurde nicht wie eine Sache betrachtet. Seine Rechte auf eigene Familiengründung und Besitz blieben ihm erhalten. Seine Situation als ein Sklave gab keinen Raum für Diskriminierung,

⁵ Vgl. Schumacher, Sklaverei in der Antike, Alltag und Schicksal der Unfreien, S. 13.

wie man es während des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels erlebte. Vielmehr lebten und arbeiteten viele dieser Sklaven „genauso wie ihre Herrn, so dass ihre Unterscheidung für Europäer und auch Afrikaner unmöglich war.“⁶

Trotz dieser Erklärung haben einige nicht-afrikanische Autoren versucht, den transatlantischen Sklavenhandel aufgrund der in Afrika existierenden Sklaverei zu rechtfertigen. Um die These nicht-afrikanischer Autoren wie Paul E. Lovejoy, Herbert Klein und George Bancroft zu prüfen, wonach die Sklaverei in Afrika die transatlantische Sklaverei vorbereitet habe, wurde im nächsten Abschnitt die afrikanische Praxis mit der antiken Sklaverei verglichen. Daraus ergibt sich, dass die Sklaverei nicht eine pure afrikanische Angelegenheit war, sondern auch in anderen Gesellschaften wie Griechenland und Rom existiert hatte. Das Fazit in diesem Abschnitt ist, dass jede bekannte Gesellschaft irgendwann eine Form von Unterwerfung in ihrer Geschichte ausgeübt hat.

Von diesen Grundlagen her fährt die Arbeit mit einem Überblick des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels fort. Geschildert werden die Entstehung und die Faktoren, die dazu beigetragen haben, dass dieser Sklavenhandel überhaupt ins Leben gerufen wurde, die Frühgeschichte des transatlantischen Handels mit Sklaven, die schlechte und unmenschliche Behandlung der schwarzafrikanischen Sklaven und die verschiedenen Entwicklungen, die von 1510 bis ins 19. Jahrhundert durchschritten worden sind. Am Ende dieser Untersuchung konnte mit dieser Arbeit die Natur und der Charakter des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels als diskriminierend und unmenschlich identifiziert werden. Das heißt: Trotz der Tatsache, dass es Sklaverei auch in anderen Gesellschaften gab, wählte man die Schwarzafrikaner als die einzigen Opfer dieses Typs von Sklavenhandel aus. Der transatlantische Sklavenhandel legte also neben anderen Gründen wie physische Begabung und Arbeitsfähigkeit mehr Wert auf die Hautfarbe seiner Opfer. Die Hautfarbe war so offenkundig, dass sie eine entscheidende Rolle spielte, um zu bestimmen, wer die Opfer des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels waren. Aus diesen Gründen wurden die Schwarzafrikaner wie Tiere an Füßen und Händen mit Ketten gebunden und unter menschenunwürdigen Zuständen nach Amerika eingeschifft. Ohne Mitleid und Erbarmen setzte man Millionen dieser schwarzafrikanischen Sklaven sowohl in den Zucker- und Baumwollplantagen als auch in den Gold- und Silberminen ein, wo sie pausenlos unter den unmenschlichsten und härtesten Bedingungen arbeiteten, ohne bezahlt zu werden. Zudem wurden sie ihrer Rechte auf Leben, Freiheit, die Gründung eigener Familien und auf eigenen Besitz beraubt. Dieser Zustand blieb das Schicksal der Schwarzafrikaner für mehrere Jahrhunderte, bis zu dem Zeitpunkt, als die Quäker ab 1715 ihre Kampagne gegen den transatlantischen Sklavenhandel auf

⁶ Bley, Sklaverei in Afrika, S. 8.

den Weg brachten. Mittels ihrer unermüdlichen Bemühungen wurde die Einschiffung der schwarz-afrikanischen Sklaven nach Amerika vom englischen Parlament im Jahr 1807 als Übel erklärt und verboten. Dadurch kam ein Prozess in Gang, der zur internationalen Verurteilung des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels im Jahr 1815 und 1818 durch die europäischen Kongresse in Wien und Aachen führte, wo er zu einem Übel und Verbrechen gegen die Menschenwürde erklärt wurde.⁷

TEIL II

Der zweite Teil dieser Arbeit, der insgesamt in sechs Kapitel gegliedert wurde, untersucht, wie die Sklaverei sowohl als Institution als auch der transatlantische Sklavenhandel in der Lehre der katholischen Kirche gerechtfertigt wurde. Er stellt zudem die Frage, warum die Schwarzafrikaner als Opfer dieses Sklavenhandels ausgewählt wurden? Wie wir im ersten Teil dieser Arbeit herausgestellt haben, gab es Sklavenhaltergesellschaften wie Griechenland, Rom, China, usw. Sklavenrouten, die Russland, Armenien und Persien verbanden und andere, die nach Venedig, Marseille und Verdun führten, sind Spuren der Sklaverei in diesen Ländern. Internationale Sklavenmärkte wie zum Beispiel jene, die sich damals in Athen, Rom, Marseille, Pisa, Venedig, Genua, Verdun und Barcelona befanden, sind Beweise dafür, dass es Sklaven und Sklaverei in diesen Gesellschaften gegeben hat. Aber warum sind all diese Sklavenrouten und Märkte im Verlauf der Zeit verschwunden, nur die in Afrika nicht? Warum hatte Bischof Bartolomé de Las Casas dem römischen Kaiser Karl V. und Papst Paul III. empfohlen, die Schwarzafrikaner als Sklaven, und nicht die Slowenen oder die Araber nach Amerika zu exportieren? Warum befahl Papst Nikolaus V. den Königen von Portugal und ihren Nachfolgern die Schwarzafrikaner in die ewige Sklaverei zu führen? Die Antwort auf diese wichtige Frage ist in den theologischen, biblischen und rassistischen Gründen für die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner zu entdecken.

Theologisch betrachtet, basierte die Kirche ihre Lehre über die Sklaverei auf Positionen von Platon (427-347 v. Chr.)⁸ und Aristoteles (384-322 v. Chr.)⁹ Vor allem Aristoteles war der Meinung, dass die Sklaverei von Natur aus gerechtfertigt sei. Diese Stellung wurde in der Theologie der Kirche akzeptiert, besonders in den Werken von Thomas von Aquin (1228-1274)¹⁰ und der spanischen Theologen der Universität Salamanca des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts. Die Theologen dieser Schule von Salamanca wie Francisco de Vitoria (1483-

⁷ Vgl. "Declaration of the Powers on the Abolition of the Slave Trade" of February 8, 1815, Act No. XV, in: Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, S. 200-201.

⁸ Vgl. Platon, Der Staat, Buch V, 469c.

⁹ Vgl. Aristoteles, Politik, Buch 1, 1254b.

¹⁰ Vgl. Thomas von Aquin, Summa Theologiae, 1a, q. 92, art. 1, ad. 2, in: T. Gilby & T. C. O'Brien, eds. Summa Theologiae, 60 Vols.

1546)¹¹ und Domingo de Soto (1494-1560) verteidigten Sklaverei unter dem Gesichtspunkt des aristotelischen Begriffs des (*physei doulos*) „Sklaven von Natur.“ Die Indios und Schwarzafrikaner wurden von ihnen als barbarische Völker eingestuft und in diesem Sinne als Sklaven von Natur betrachtet. Und dadurch gaben sie den spanischen und portugiesischen Christen das Recht, sowohl Indios als auch Schwarzafrikaner in die Sklaverei zu treiben und sie als Sklaven zu halten.¹²

Auch unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Lehre von Kirchenvätern wie Basilius von Caesarea (*329, Bischof 370-379),¹³ Ambrosius von Mailand (*330, Bischof 374-397),¹⁴ Gregor von Nyssa (*335, Bischof 372-395),¹⁵ Johannes Chrysostomos (*347, Bischof 397-407)¹⁶ und Augustinus von Hippo (*354, Bischof 394-430), wurden die Gründe für die Rechtfertigung der Sklaverei auf die Erbsünde zurückgeführt. Für sie ist die Sklaverei also eine Folge von Sünde. Und die aktuelle Sklaverei, wie man sie ab den 15. Jahrhundert erlebte, sei eine Folge des Verbrechens Hams,¹⁷ der wegen seiner Respektlosigkeit gegenüber seinem Vater Noah mit dem Status eines Sklaven aller Sklaven bestraft wurde (Gen. 9,18-29).¹⁸ Diese biblische Passage beinhaltet die Verfluchung Hams und seiner Nachkommen durch seinen Vater Noah nach der Sintflut. Laut dieser Episode wurde Ham verflucht, Sklave seiner anderen Brüder zu sein. Aus diesem Ereignis entstand seit den 3. Jahrhundert im Christentum eine Auslegung dieser Passage, welche behauptet, dass Ham und seine Nachkommen die Vorfahren der Schwarzafrikaner seien.¹⁹ Von daher wird behauptet, dass die Schwarzafrikaner verflucht seien und der Fluch ihres Vaters

¹¹ Vgl. Vitoria, De Indis et jure Belli, in: Priesching, Von Menschenfängern und Menschenfischern, S. 110; Francisco de Vitoria, De Indis, Recenter Inventis et de Jure Belli, S. 29.

¹² Vgl. Vitoria, De Indis et de jure Belli, in: Priesching, Ibid, S. 112

¹³ St. Basilius von Caesarea, De Spiritu Sancto 20, 51 (F.C. 12, 227ff); (PG 32,4; 160-162). Vgl. Schaff, (NPNF), Bd. VIII, S. 32-33; Hom. de Ieiunio 16 (PG 31, 172).

¹⁴ St. Ambrosius von Mailand, Epist. VII, (CSEL 82,1; 45-46). Vgl. auch (PL 17, 221).

¹⁵ St. Gregor von Nyssa, Oratione de Beatitudinibus III, 4 (GNO, VII 2; 106); Or. Dom. V, 3 (GNO, VII 2; 62). Vgl. St. Gregor von Nyssa, In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae, 4,2,7 (F.C. 16,1; 292).

¹⁶ St. Johannes Chrysostomos, Hom. in Genesim, 28 (PG 53, 251-259). Vgl. Hill, Homilies on Genesis, 3 Vols, S. 191. Vgl. auch, St. Johannes Chrysostomos, Hom. in Genesim 29, 6 (PG 53, 271-272); Sermones in Genesim 4, (PG 54, 595).

¹⁷ St. Augustinus von Hippo, De Civitate Dei, XIX,15 (CSEL 40, 2; 400). Vgl. Dods, The City of God, XIX, 15, S. 694.

¹⁸ St. Augustinus von Hippo, De Civitate Dei, XIX, 15 (CSEL 40,2; 399-400). Vgl. Dods, The City of God, XIX, 15, S. 693.

¹⁹ Vgl. Priest, Bible Defence of Slavery, S. 34; Vgl. auch Patriarch Euty chius von Alexandria, in: Pockocke's translation of the Annales, Bd. III, 917B, sec. 41-43, (1658-59).

Ham auf sie von Geburt an übertragen worden sei.²⁰ In dieser Verfluchung fand man die Begründung für die Rechtmäßigkeit der Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner während der ganzen Periode des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels.²¹ Laut Aussage von Thomas Peterson war diese Theorie der Verfluchung von Schwarzafrikanern ein Eckstein der Rechtmäßigkeit ihrer Versklavung: „There can be no denying the central role this curse played in sustaining the slave system. It was the cornerstone for the justification of Black slavery, the major argument in the pro-slavery arsenal of biblical texts, certainly among the most popular defenses of slavery, if not the most popular.”²² Diese Mythologie dauerte im Christentum bis zum Pontifikat von Papst Pius IX. (*1792, Pontifikat 1846-1878), der im Jahr 1873 die Christen aufforderte, dass sie Gott um die Aufhebung der Verfluchung der Schwarzafrikaner bitten sollten.²³ Auf diese Bitte hin hoffte er, dass: „The Almighty God might at length remove the curse of Ham from their hearts.”²⁴

Von dem Gesichtspunkt des Rassismus beurteilt man die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner als etwas Rechtmäßiges. Diese Beurteilung wurde damit begründet, dass die Schwarzafrikaner keine vernünftigen Menschen seien. Ihre Menschlichkeit wurde in Frage gestellt. Diese Negierung der völligen Menschlichkeit der Schwarzafrikaner wurde von Charles Montesquieu (1689-1755) besonders vertreten. Er vertritt folgende Meinung: “On ne peut se mettre dans l'esprit que Dieu, qui est un être très sage, ait mis une âme, surtout bonne, dans un corps tout noir... Il est impossible que nous supposions que ces gens-là soient des hommes; parce que, si nous les supposions des hommes, on commencerait à croire que nous ne sommes pas nous-mêmes chrétiens.”²⁵ Sowohl andere Philosophen wie Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) und David Hume (1711-1776) als auch Anthropologen wie Georges Cuvier (1769-1832),

²⁰ Vgl. Augustodunensis, *Imago Mundi*, (PL 172, 166); Renier, (Hg.), *Petro Presbyteri Carmina*, Bd. 13, 123, Fl. 48v. Vgl. auch, Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in Early Modern Era*, S. 37.

²¹ Böhm, *Omnium Gentium Mores*, B1r. Vgl. auch, Basire, *The Dead Man's Real Speech*, S. 18; Calmet's *Great Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, Bd. IV, S. 21-23; Bishop Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, Bd. 1, S. 5-6 & 12-16.

²² Vgl. Peterson, *Ham and Japhet*, S. 47.

²³ Pope Pius IX, “Prayer for the Conversion of Africa,” Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, Oct. 2, 1873.

²⁴ Pius IX, “Prayer for the Wretched Ethiopians in Central Africa,” in: Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, S. 20.

²⁵ Montesquieu, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Theodore Besterman (Hg.), Bd. 117, S. 374. Vgl. Hugh, *The Slave Trade*, S. 465. Das obige Zitat lautet ins Deutsch: “Man kann sich nicht setzen in die Stimmung, in der Gott, ja, der ein sehr weiser Wesen ist, nahm es auf sich, um eine Seele und zwar, eine sehr gute noch dazu in so einem ganz schwarzen Körper zu setzen ... So ist es für uns unmöglich, anzunehmen, dass diese Kreaturen Männer sind, weil, wenn man es ihnen ermöglichen, so würde der Verdacht zu folgen, dass wir selbst nicht mehr Christen sind.“

Jeffries Wyman (1814-1874), Alexander Winchell (1824-1891), Charles Carroll (1829-1900) usw. lehnten die völlige Menschlichkeit der Schwarzafrikaner ab. Nach ihrer Meinung sind die Schwarzafrikaner minderwertig und den wilden Tieren ähnlich, unvernünftig, barbarisch, nicht ordentlich usw. Zudem sind die Schwarzafrikaner unterwürfig und Taugenichtse. Sie können in der Menschheitsfamilie nur als Rohmaterialien für die Entwicklung der Welt nützlich sein. Aus diesen Gründen ist es rechtmäßig, sie zu versklaven.

TEIL III

Der dritte Teil dieser Arbeit ist das Herzstück und der längste Abschnitt dieser Arbeit. Er ist in sieben Kapitel unterteilt und fokussiert die Rolle der Führung der katholischen Kirche in der Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner vor und während des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels. Um diese Rolle festzustellen, wurden alle wichtigen päpstlichen Bullen untersucht, in welchen die Päpste zur Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner Stellung bezogen haben. Diese Untersuchung beginnt mit Papst Martin V. (*1368, Pontifikat 1417-1431), der dem portugiesischen Prinzen Heinrich dem Seefahrer (1394-1460) für seine Eroberungen in Afrika seine Zustimmung gewährt hat. Es geht weiter bis zu dem Pontifikat Gregor XVI. (*1765, Pontifikat 1831-1846), der in seiner Bulle „*In Supremo Apostolatus*“ von 1839 ausdrücklich die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner verurteilt hat. In dieser Bulle sagte er: “Im Bemühen, diese so große Schmach aus allen Gebieten der Christen zu entfernen, ermahnen wir daher kraft Apostolischer Autorität alle Christgläubigen jedweden Standes und beschwören sie nachdrücklich im Herrn: Keiner soll es künftig wagen, Indianer, Neger oder andere derartige Menschen ungerecht zu quälen, ihrer Güter zu berauben, in die Sklaverei zu führen, anderen, die solches wider sie verüben, Hilfe oder Unterstützung zu leisten oder jenen unmenschlichen Handel auszuüben, in dem Neger, die, als ob sie keine Menschen, sondern bare und bloße Tiere wären, wie auch immer in die Sklaverei geführt wurden, ohne jede Unterscheidung entgegen den Geboten der Gerechtigkeit und Menschlichkeit gekauft, verkauft und dazu verdammt werden, die bisweilen härtesten Arbeiten zu erdulden....Daher, kraft unserer Apostolischen Autorität, verurteilen wir alle solche Praktiken als absolut unwürdig des christlichen Namen.”²⁶

Auf diesem langen Weg der päpstlichen Billigung werden jene Bullen dargestellt, die etwas mit der Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner zu tun haben. Unter ihnen sind vor allem die zwei Bullen von Papst Nikolaus V. (*1397, Pontifikat 1447-1455) aus den Jahren 1452 und 1454 zu nennen. In seiner Bulle „*Dum Diversas*“ von 1452 ließ Papst Nikolaus V. seine päpstliche Autorität der Krone von Portugal, um die Schwarzafrikaner zu bekriegen, die südlich von

²⁶ Gregory XVI, “*In Supremo Apostolatus*” von 1839 (APF), *Fondi Brevi*, Bd. 4, Fls. 317r-320r. Deutsche Übersetzung in: Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum*, S. 709-710.

Kap Bojador wohnten. In diesem Auftrag erklärte der Papst die Schwarzafrikaner zusammen mit den Sarazenen zu Feinden der Christen. Er bevollmächtigte die portugiesischen Könige und Prinz Heinrich den Seefahrer, die dort lebenden Menschen nicht nur auszubeuten, sondern auch sie in die Sklaverei zu führen. Wörtlich sagte der Papst: „Daher gewähren wir [...] dir aufgrund unserer apostolischen Vollmacht mit dem Wortlaut dieser Urkunde das volle und uneingeschränkte Recht, die Sarazenen, Heiden und anderen Ungläubigen und Feinde Christi, welche es auch sein mögen, zu unterwerfen und wo immer diese auch gelegen sein mögen, ihre Königreiche, Herzogtümer, Grafschaften, Fürstentümer und anderen Herrschaften, Länder, Plätze, Städte, Burgen und andere Besitzungen jedweder Art, ihr bewegliches und unbewegliches Gut, woraus es auch bestehen mag und welche Bezeichnung ihm auch beigelegt wird, welche alle von Sarazenen, Heiden, Ungläubigen und Feinden Christi innegehabt und besessen werden, ebenso aber auch die Reiche eines jeden beliebigen Königs oder Fürsten, die Herzogtümer, Grafschaften, Fürstentümer und anderen Herrschaften, Länder, Plätze, Städte, Burgen, Besitzungen und Güter anzugreifen, zu erobern, einzunehmen und zu unterwerfen und die darin lebenden Personen in ewige Sklaverei zu führen.“²⁷

Dieser Wortlaut findet sich wieder in der Bulle „*Romanus Pontifex*“ von 1454. Doch gewährte Papst Nikolaus V. den Portugiesen auch das Besitzrecht für die Territorien in Afrika und den anderen Regionen, die sie künftig erobern werden. Die Bulle „*Romanus Pontifex*“ beinhaltet auch das Patronatsrecht Portugals über die Kirchen in den Territorien Afrikas. Dadurch überließ der Papst den schwarz-afrikanischen Kontinent Portugal als ein ewiges Geschenk und sowohl in politisch-ökonomischen als auch in religiösen Fragen als Untertan Portugals. Die danach folgenden Bullen: „*Inter Caetera*“ von Callixtus III. (*1378, Pontifikat 1455-1458) aus dem Jahr 1456, „*Aeterni Regis*“ von Sixtus IV. (*1414, Pontifikat 1471-1484) aus dem Jahr 1481, „*Praeelsae Devotionis*“ von Leo X. (*1475, Pontifikat 1513-1521) aus dem Jahr 1514, „*Inter Caetera*“ von Alexander VI. (*1431, Pontifikat 1492-1503) aus dem Jahr 1493 waren Bestätigungen und Bestärkungen der päpstlichen Schenkungen in den Bullen „*Dum Diversas*“ und „*Romanus Pontifex*“ von 1452 und 1454. Unter Berufung auf diese Bullen beuteten die Portugiesen Afrika aus und machten Millionen Schwarzafrikaner zu Sklaven, die sie per Schiff in die portugiesischen Kolonien in Brasilien sowie in die spanischen Kolonien Amerikas verfrachteten.

Ferner versucht dieser Teil zu ergründen, ob einer der Päpste des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts der Haltung Nikolaus V. zu den Schwarzafrikanern, welche zu ihrer Versklavung geführt hat, widersprochen oder die transatlantische

²⁷ Nikolaus V, „*Dum Diversas*,“ Reg. Vat. 431, Fls. 194v-196r. Vgl. (M.H.), XI, S. 199-202; Schmitt, (Hg.), Die Anfänge der europäischen Expansion, Bd. II, S. 90-92.

Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner verurteilt hat. Um diese Untersuchung durchzuführen, wurden die päpstlichen Bullen eingehend betrachtet, mit denen die Päpste ihren Einsatz und ihr Mitleid für die unterdrückten und versklavten Völker in der Geschichte bewiesen haben. Dies sind folgende: „*Sublimus Deus*“ von Paul III. (*1468, Pontifikat 1534-1549) aus dem Jahr 1537, „*Cum Sicuti*“ von Gregor XIV. (*1535, Pontifikat 1590-1591) aus dem Jahr 1591, „*Commissum Nobis*“ von Urban VIII. (*1568, Pontifikat 1623-1644) aus dem Jahr 1639, „*Immensa Pastorum*“ von Benedikt XIV. (*1675, Pontifikat 1740-1758) aus dem Jahr 1741. Alle diese Bullen äußerten sich wiederholt gegen die Versklavung der Indianer, aber keine davon hat sich mit der Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner befasst. Das heißt: Weder erwähnte einer dieser Päpste die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner in seinen apostolischen Schreiben noch verurteilte einer von ihnen den transatlantischen Sklavenhandel. Es war also erst im Jahr 1839, nachdem die internationale Bewegung für die Abschaffung des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels ihr Ziel bereits im Jahr 1818 erreicht hatte, dass die Päpste der katholischen Kirche Stellung zur Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner beziehen konnten. Diese Stellungnahme der Kirche wurde mit der Bulle „*In Supremo Apostolatus*“ von Papst Gregor XVI. (1831-1846) im Jahr 1839 verwirklicht. In dieser Bulle, wie wir schon in dem obigen Zitat gesehen haben, erklärte der Papst zum ersten Mal, dass die Schwarzafrikaner vernünftige Menschen sind. Er bezeichnete ihre Versklavung als ein Unrecht, das Gerechtigkeit und Humanität negiert. Diese päpstliche Verurteilung der Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner erfolgte 387 Jahre, nachdem die Führung der katholischen Kirche 1452 und 1454 diese Versklavung gebilligt und gesegnet hatte.

Trotz dieses jahrhundertelangen Schweigens der Führung der katholischen Kirche zur Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner erkennt diese Arbeit auch die Bemühungen einiger Missionare an, die es gewagt haben, ihre Stimme gegen die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner zu erheben. Diese Leute sind als Freunde der Opfer des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels in dieser Arbeit bezeichnet. Es sind: der Dominikaner und Erzbischof von Mexiko Alonso de Montufar, Fernando de Oliveira, Martin de Ladesma, Bartolomé de Albornoz, Miguel Garcia, Juan Suarez, Tomas de Mercado, Francisco Jose de Jaca und sein Freund Epifano de Moirans. Sie alle haben Widerstand gegen die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner geleistet, obwohl ihre Proteste nicht viel für die rechtzeitige Befreiung der versklavten Schwarzafrikaner bewirkt haben.

TEIL IV

Der vierte Teil dieser Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Mission Portugals in Afrika. Die Päpste hatten Portugal damit beauftragt, das Licht des Evangeliums in die Dunkelheit der Menschen in den eroberten Ländern Afrikas zu bringen. Darum gewährten sie der portugiesischen Krone zahlreiche Rechte, worum

diese die Päpste gebeten hat. Darunter war auch das Patronatsrecht, das dem König Portugals die päpstliche Vollmacht für die Durchführung der Mission in Afrika übertrug. Das heißt, der König besaß sowohl das Recht auf die Organisation der missionarischen Tätigkeit in Afrika, als auch die Bestimmungsmacht bzgl. der Ordensniederlassungen und der Ordensleute, die in Missionsländer ausgesandt wurden. Die Anfangsphase dieses Missionsauftrags verlief ohne Probleme zwischen dem Heiligen Stuhl und der Krone Portugals. Aber im Nachhinein wurde dieser Auftrag zu einem Instrument der imperialistischen Macht in den Händen der portugiesischen Krone. Die Folgen waren erheblich. Der Heilige Stuhl verlor jeden Einfluss auf die Mission der Portugiesen in Übersee. Auch wenn Portugal das Patronatsrecht missbrauchte und nicht mehr in der Lage war, Missionsarbeit auszuüben, konnte der Heilige Stuhl in portugiesischen Missionsländern in Afrika nicht eingreifen. Angesichts dieses Patronatsrechts konnte der Heilige Stuhl nicht gegen den Willen Portugals handeln, um die portugiesischen Missionsländer in Afrika „aus den Ketten“ zu befreien. Dadurch sind die Missionsländer Portugals in Afrika, besonders Kongo und Angola, ein Opfer des portugiesischen „Padroado Real“ geworden.

Auf Seiten der Schwarzafrikaner war die Folge ebenfalls erheblich. Ihre Versklavung, Ausbeutung und Deportation vollzogen sich Hand in Hand mit ihrer Missionierung. Die portugiesischen Missionsgebiete in Afrika wie Kongo, Luanda, Gorée, São Tomé, Benin und Elmina waren zugleich Zentren des Sklavenhandels und Sklaveninseln, wohin sie die Sklaven vor ihrer Einschiffung nach Brasilien und Amerika verbrachten. Und die geistliche Aufgabe der Missionare war meist die Taufe der Sklaven vor ihrer Einschiffung nach Brasilien und Spanisch-Amerika.²⁸ Geld und materielles Gewinnstreben nahmen vorrangige Positionen vor dem Evangelium ein. Selbst die Missionare haben am Sklavenbetrieb teilgenommen. Es gibt viele Beweise, die uns zeigen, dass die portugiesischen Missionare, besonders die Jesuiten, den Sklavenhandel gebilligt haben. Sie haben selber Sklaven gekauft, die sie in ihren Plantagen in Brasilien und in Maryland einsetzten. Sie haben auch Sklaven verkauft und besaßen sogar ein eigenes Sklavenschiff, mit dem sie Sklaven von Kongo, Luanda und São Tomé nach Brasilien verschifft haben.²⁹ Historische Aufzeichnungen zeigen auch, dass die Jesuiten im Jahr 1838 in Maryland ihre Sklaven an den Gouverneur von Louisiana, Henry Johnson (1779-1867) verkauften. Es waren insgesamt 272 schwarz-afrikanische Sklaven, die im Auftrag des Provinzials der Jesuiten in Maryland Pater Thomas Mulledy (1795-1861) verkauft wurden. Der Verkaufspreis dieser genannten Sklaven belief sich

²⁸ Vgl. Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, S. 124.

²⁹ Vgl. Brief von Friar Guisepppe Maria de Busse, in: *Archiv der Propaganda Fide (APF)*, SC, Afrika, Angola II, Fl. 92. Vgl. auch, Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, S. 33.

auf 115.000 amerikanische Dollar.³⁰ Aus diesen Gründen kann man mit Recht sagen, dass die portugiesischen Missionare in Afrika Kollaborateure in der Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner während des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels waren, anstatt ihre Gegner zu sein.

TEIL V

Der fünfte Teil dieser Arbeit enthält die Schlussfolgerungen. Hier versucht diese Arbeit die Ergebnisse dieser Forschung über die Rolle der katholischen Kirche in der Versklavung von Schwarzafrikanern während des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels zusammenzufassen.

Teil VI dieser Arbeit enthält eine deutsche Zusammenfassung. Diese wurde angefertigt, damit viele Interessierte aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum auch die Möglichkeit bekommen, einen Überblick über dieser Arbeit zu gewinnen.

Im Anhang (**Teil VII**) ermöglicht diese Arbeit einen Zugang zu den wichtigsten päpstlichen Bullen, sowie zu den königlichen Briefen, die hier als primäre Quellen verwendet worden sind. Solche päpstlichen und königlichen Quellen, in denen die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner thematisiert wird, dienen als die tragenden Säulen dieser Arbeit. Sie waren für diese Untersuchung von unschätzbarem Wert. Dieser Teil dokumentiert Beispiele aus dem reichen Fundus von Archivmaterialien aus dem Geheimarchiv des Vatikanischen Archivs, aus dem Archiv des Heiligen Offiziums, aus dem Archiv der Congregatio de Propaganda Fide sowie dem Nationalarchiv Portugals (Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo Portuguez). Auch ein Abkürzungsverzeichnis, ein Quellenverzeichnis und ein Literaturverzeichnis gehören zu diesem Teil.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Forschung sind sehr erstaunlich. Insgesamt zeigt diese Arbeit, dass die katholische Kirche den transatlantischen Sklavenhandel indirekt auf den Weg gebracht hat. Zur Zeit dieses Sklavenhandels hat die Kirche als eine moralische Instanz nicht genug zur Rettung der versklavten Schwarzafrikaner getan. Die Führung der damaligen katholischen Kirche hüllte sich überwiegend in Schweigen und ließ dieser Versklavung ihren Lauf. Und es gibt viele Gründe dafür.

Erstens stellte sich die damalige Führung der katholischen Kirche wegen des Patronatsrechts Portugals an die Seite der Regierung Portugals anstatt auf die Seite der versklavten Schwarzafrikaner. Darum konnte die Kirche die Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner nicht rechtzeitig verurteilen.

Zweitens wurden die Schwarzafrikaner aufgrund ihrer Hautfarbe von der Führung der katholischen Kirche und den Königen von Portugal auf das

³⁰ Vgl. Curran, "Splendid Poverty: Jesuits Slaveholding in Maryland, in: Miller, (Hg.) Catholics in the Old South, S. 142.

„Golgotha“ des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels geführt und zugleich verurteilt.

Drittens wurde die Billigung ihrer Versklavung von der Kirchenführung durch den Mythos der Verfluchung Hams durch seinen Vater Noah (Gen 9,18-27) begründet. Damit wird gesagt: Die Schwarzafrikaner stammen aus der verfluchten Rasse Hams, sie seien die direkten Nachkommen des verfluchten Ham, und logischerweise sind sie eine verfluchte Rasse. Daher fiel auf sie der Fluch ihres Vorfahren Ham und seiner Kinder. Die Konsequenz daraus ist ihre Bestrafung mit ewiger Versklavung. Dies besagt, dass ihre Versklavung also göttlich gerechtfertigt sei.

Viertens billigte die Führung der katholischen Kirche die Versklavung von Schwarzafrikanern aufgrund der Tatsache, dass sie Heiden waren. So wurde die Sklaverei als ein Medium betrachtet, wodurch die Schwarzafrikaner überhaupt mit dem Christentum in Berührung kommen konnten.

Fünftens begünstigte die Versklavung ihre Mission. Damit wird gesagt, dass die Finanzierung der von den Portugiesen organisierten Mission in Afrika von dem gewinnträchtigen Sklavenhandel abhängig war. Aus diesem Sklavenhandel floss das Geld für die Zahlung der Gehälter sowohl der Vertreter der portugiesischen Krone in Afrika als auch der portugiesischen Missionare. Auch die Profite, die man aus dem Sklavenhandel gewonnen hatte, wurden in der Finanzierung des Krieges gegen den Islam in Afrika eingesetzt.

Ferner führten die Konflikte mit dem Islam und der Hass gegen die Sarazenen dazu, dass die Führung der katholischen Kirche die portugiesischen Könige ermächtigte, die Sarazenen und die heidnischen Völker West-Afrikas ohne Unterschied in die ewige Sklaverei zu führen. Schlussendlich haben sich nach Meinung vieler Autoren die Päpste und kirchlichen Institutionen am transatlantischen Sklavenhandel beteiligt. Die Päpste haben sogar jahrelang Kriegsgefangene und Sklaven als Galeerensklaven im Kirchenstaat gehalten. Beispielsweise schrieb Adrian Hastings: „Moreover, as the popes themselves made use of slaves in their Galleys all through the eighteenth century, and some of them had been bought, they were in no position to mount an effective moral crusade against the transatlantic slave trade.“³¹ Den Päpsten dieser Zeit fehlte der Mut, eine starke Kampagne für die Bekämpfung des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels zu führen. Diese Arbeit leistet also einen wichtigen Beitrag in der Diskussion über die Rolle der Führung der katholischen Kirche in der Versklavung der Schwarzafrikaner während des transatlantischen Sklavenhandels. Sie legt einen Finger in die Wunden dieses dunklen Kapitels in der Geschichte und im Leben der katholischen Kirche.

³¹ Hastings, *The Church in Africa*, S. 125. Vgl. Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, S. 78.

VII. Appendix

A. Documents of the Papal Magisterium in Favour of Enslavement of Black Africans Used in this Work

1. “Manifestis Comprobatum” of Pope Alexander III in 1179 (Source: Document of ANTT- Codices de Bulas, maço, 16, Fl. 20.)

Alexander III Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei. Charrissimo in Christo filio Alphonso illustri Portugallensium regi, eiusque Haeredibus, in Perpetuum.

Manifestis comprobatum est argumentis, quod per sudores bellicos et certamina militaria inimicorum christiani nominis intrepidus extirpator, et propugnator diligens fidei christianae, sicut bonus filius et princeps catholicus, multimoda obsequia matri tuae sacrosanctae Ecclesiae impendisti, dignum memoria nomen et exemplum imitabile posteris derelinquens. Aequum est autem, quod quem ad regnum et salutem populi ab alto dispensatio caelestis elegit, Apostolica Sedis affectione sincera diligit, et iustis postulationibus studeat efficaciter exaudire. Proinde nos attendentes personam tuam prudentia ornatam, iustitia praeditam, atque ad populi regimen idoneam, eam sub beati Petri et nostra protectione suscipimus, et regnum Portugallense cum integritate honoris, regni dignitate, quae ad reges pertinet, necnon et omnia loca, quae cum auxilio caelestis gratiae de Sarracenorum manibus eripueris, in quibus sibi non possunt christiani principes circumpositi vindicare, excellentiae tuae concedimus, et auctoritate apostolica confirmamus. Ut autem ad obsequium beati Petri apostolorum principis, et sacrosanctae Romae Ecclesiae vehementius accendaris, haec ipsa praefatis haeredibus tuis ducimus concedenda: eosque super his, quae concessasunt, Deo propitio, pro iniuncti nobis apostolatus officio defendemus. Tua itaque intererit, fili charissime, ita circa honorem et obsequium matris tuae sacrosanctae Romae Ecclesiae humilem et devotum existere, et sic te ipsum eius opportunitatibus, et dilatandis christianae Fidei finibus exercere, ut de tam devoto et glorioso filio Sedes Apostolica gratuletur, et in eius amore quiescat. In iudicium autem, quod praescriptum regnum beati Petri iuris existat, pro amplioris reverentiae argumento statuisti duas marchas auri annis singulis nobis nostrisque successorum nostrorum Bracharensi archiepiscopo, qui pro tempore fuerit, tu et successores tui curabitis assignare. Decernimus ergo, ut nulli omnino hominum liceat, personam tuam aut tuorum haeredum, vel etiam

praefatum regnum temere perturbare, aut eius possessiones auferre, vel ablatas retinere, minuere, aut aliquibus vexationibus fatigare.

Si qua igitur in futurum ecclesiastica saecularisve persona, hanc nostrae constitutionis paginam sciens, contra eam temere venire temptaverit: secundo tertiove commonita, nisi reatum suum digna satisfactione correxerit, potestatis honorisque sui dignitate careat, reamque se divino iudicio existere de perpetrata iniquitate cognoscat, et a sacratissimo Corpore et Sanguine die et Domini Redemptoris nostri Jesu Christi aliena fiat, atque in extremo examine districtae ultioni subiaceat; cunctis autem eidem regno sua iura servantibus sit pax Domini Jesu Christi, quatenus et hic fructum bonae actionis percipiant, et apud districtum Iudicem praemia aeternae pacis inveniant. Amen.

Ego Alexander Catholicae Ecclesiae Episcopus.

2. “Sane Charissimus” of Pope Martinus V in 1418 (Source: Odoricus Raynaldes, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, ad annos 1418, Vol. 10, No, 21-23.)

Martinus V Episcopus, Servus Servorum Dei. Ad Perpetuam Memoriam. (Venerabilis Fratris Patriarchis, Archiepiscopis, Episcopis, ac dilectis filiis Electis, Administratoribus, Abbatibus, Prioribus, aliisque ecclesiarum et monasteriorum Praelatis, necnon caeteris Christianae Religionis professoribus ubilibet constitutis, ad quos praesentes literae pervenerint, Salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem).

Sane charissimus in Christo filius noster Joannes Portugalliae Rex illustris, sicuti tam aliquorum fide dignorum plurima relatione, quam suadente fama didicimus, Christianae propagationis affectibus inflammatus, ac cupiens collatam sibi a summo rege potentiam in exaltationem gloriosi sui nominis, exterminiumque ipsius hostium exercere, instructis Christianorum militum aciebus ad debellandos, tam in Africanis, quam aliis partibus convicinis, Sarracenos et alios infideles, qui Christianos crebris insultationibus, captivitatibus, et occisionibus affligebant, in detenta per eos territoria et loca processit, ac locum de Cepta, quem longis retroactis temporibus occuparunt, ab ipsorum intolerabili servitute potenter eripiens, suavissimo Christianae professionis jugo restituit. Cum autem idem Rex, Catholicae fidei pugil et athleta fortissimus, indultam sibi felicem victoriam in eosdem infideles viriliter prosequi decideret, ac proponat, et adjuncta sibi multitudine copiosa fidelium intendat, eodem praestante, cujus causam devote amplectitur, ad subjugandos Sarracenos et infideles hujusmodi, redigendosque ad cultum ipsius verae fidei terras, quas occupant, omnem suam et dictorum suorum regnorum potentiam adhibere, nostras et Catholicae Ecclesiae, quae congregationem ipsorum

fideliū comprehendit, pro tam felici consummatione negotiū partes adjutrices humiliter imploravit.

Nos itaque tam salutare praefati Regis propositum maximis in Domino laudibus extollentes, et pro ejusdem successu directis in coelum oculis, ei cujus negotium geritur immensas proinde gratis exsolventes, omnes et singulos Imperatores, Reges, duces, marchiones, principes, barones, comites, potestates, capitaneos, magistratus, et quolibet alios officiales, ac eorum locatenentes, communitates quoque civitatum, et aliorum quorumcumque locorum, caeterosque ejusdem Christiani nominis zelatores, status et religionis quorumlibet exhortamur, ac per aspersionem Sanguinis ejusdem gloriosissimi Redemptoris paternis affectibus obsecramus, in suorum eis remissionem peccaminum suadentes, ut ad infidelium errorumque eorundem exterminium, et ad impendenda profutura suffragia, quibus hujusmodi negotiū prosecutio feliciter adjuvetur, potenter ac viriliter se accinganti, ad hoc enim spiritualibus munificentis, remissionibus videlicet et indulgentis, ipsos de fratrum nostrorum consilio providimus invitandos.

Quocirca vobis, et vestrum cuilibet, fratres Patriarchae, Archiepiscopi, ac filii electi, administratores et praelati, per Apostolica scripta committimus et mandamus, quatenus vos, et quilibet vestrum, quoties Joannem praedictum Portugalliae Regem hujusmodi negotio intendere, et adversus infideles eosdem exercitus instruere et ordinare contigerit, super hoc quoque vigore praesentium, quas plenae firmitatis robore, quamdiu idem Joannes Rex vitam duxerit, in humanis, fulciri volumus, debite fueritis requisiti ad praemissum tam pium, tamque salubre negotium exequendum, veluti praecones fortes, exaltantes in Dei nomine voces vestras in singulis civitatibus, dioecibus atque locis ubi congruere prospexeritis, per vos aliasque personas saeculares et regulares Ordinum quorumcumque, quas ad hoc idoneas duxeritis eligendas, juxta datam vobis, et illis a Deo prudentiam, Christi fidelibus quibuscunque ad audiendum confluentibus, et accedere volentibus, quibus vere poenitentibus, et confessis, ut ad id eo libentius inducantur pro vice qualibet accessus hujusmodi quadraginta dies de injunctis tunc eis poenitentis per vos, auctoritate Apostolica, relaxentur, verbum Crucis ejusdem, ac ipsius admirabile signum publice proponere et praedicare curetis, idque fidelibus ipsis id devote suscipere volentibus, vestris, et eorundem elingendorum exhortationibus, ac opprtunis monitionibus praevis, ut cum reverentia debita signum hujusmodi recipiant, et illud contra perversa dictorum infidelium conatus atque molimina suis cordibus imprimant, et negotium ipsum fideli, ac ferventi animo prosequantur, libere concedatis, eorumque humeris affligatis.

Nos enim ut fideles ipsi ad id eo ferventius animentur, quo uberiolem gratiam exinde se noverint percepturos, de Omnipotentis Dei misericordia, et Beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum ejus auctoritate confisi, et illa, quam nobis, licet

immeritis, Deus ligandi atque solvendi contulit, potestate, eisdem fidelibus, qui, crucis hujusmodi signo suscepto, praefatis exercitibus in personis propriis interfuerint pariter, et expensis, quique ut illis interessent sine fraude iter arripuerint, seu in ipso fuerint itinere vita functi, plenam suorum peccaminum, de quibus corde contriti, et ore confessi fuerint, veniam impertimur, et in retributione justorum salutis aeternae pollicemur augmentum, &c.

Decernit indulgentiarum participes fore eos, qui opes in militum stipendia contulerint, aut alios ad gerendum bellum miserint, aut consilio vel opera juverint exercitum: cuncta autem loca, quae in hac expeditione barbaris eripientur, Joannis Portugalliae Regis atque successorum ditioni adjunctum iri: praeterea omnes qui religiosae militiae, accepto crucis symbolo, se devoverint, universis praerogativis, quibus olim a conciliis oecumenicis in Syriam contra Sarracenos transfertantes affecti erant, potituros, atque in clientelam Apostolicae. Sedis ipsorum bona accipienda, donec de eorum nece certissimus nuntius esset perlatus, &c. Ut vero arduum opus cruce signati puris ab omni scelere mentibus aggredierentur, haec ad expiandas ipsorum conscientias statuit.

Caeterum, ut ipsius vivificae Crucis, signo miniti eo facilius reddantur hujusmodi remissionum, et indulgentiarum participes, quo se liberius eximere posse conspexerint ab onere delictorum, Joanni Regi praefato, ac illis, quos vice dicti Joannis Regis exercituum duces sive capitaneos fore contigerit, tot ex vobis fratres Patriarchae, Archiepiscopi, Episcopi, et filii electi, abbates, et praelati, de quibus illis pro tempore visum fuerit, quam alii idonei saeculares, vel regulares, ad id per vos assumendi, omnium pro hujusmodi deductione negotii cruce signatorum confiteri volentium, confessiones audire, et hujusmodi confessionibus diligenter auditis pro peccatis suis, ac excessibus omnibus per illos commissis, etiamsi manuum injectores in clericos, et religiosos, necnon incendiarii, et sacrilegi fuerint, nisi adeo graves, in ipsarum manuum injectionibus excessus commissi fuerint, quod ad eandem Sedem merito debeant destinari, injunctis ipsis pro modo culpa etiam cum exaggeratione congrua adversus illos ex ipsis, qui, quod absit, in progressu exercituum praedictorum, aciebus quoque contra infideles eosdem instruendis Joannis Regis praefati, et illorum, qui exercituum, ut praemittitur, duces extiterint, eorundem ordinationes et mandata temere transgredi praesumpserint, poenitentia salutari, ac aliis, quae de jure fuerint injungenda, debitaee absolutionis beneficium, eadem auctoritate, impendere possitis, quoties opportunum fuerit eligere, ac deputari: et insuper pro colligendis et acceptandis pecuniarum summis, ac rebus aliis, quas pro hujusmodi prosecutione negotii per quosvis erogare contigerit, personas ecclesiasticas honorabiles, idoneas et fideles, de quibus eis videbitur, assumere licite valeant, auctoritate praedicta, tenore praesentium indulgemus. Datum Constantiae secundo nonas Aprilis Pontificatus nostris anno primo (4 de abril 1418).

3. “Dudum Cum” of Pope Eugenius IV in 1436 (Source: Document of Vatican Secret Archives, (ASV), Reg. Vat. 359, Fl. vari, 157v.)

Eugenius IV Epsicopus, Servus Servorum Dei. Ad perpetuam Rei Memoriam. Dudum cum ad nos accessissent tuae serenitatis oratores, ac plura a nobis ex tui parte postulassent; nos ad complacendum tuae serenitati, erga quam maxima afficimur, tanquam ad devotissimum filium, charitate, inter caetera pro conservatione et defensione loci de Cepta, wuem recolendae memoriae genitor tuus de manibus perfidorum Sarracenorum in partibus Africae manu armata abstulerat, necnon pro recuperatione aliorum terrarum, castrorum et locorum ab ipsis infidelibus in eisdem partibus constitutorum, nostrae certi tenoris litteras, quae cruciata vulgariter nuncupantur, concessimus, et similiter certas insulas Canariae, quas ab infidelibus possideri, et in quibus nullum Principem Christianum jus habere aut praetendere asserebas, tibi per alias nostras litteras dedimus in conquestam, prout in ipsis litteris latius continetur.

Cum autem postmodum clarissimus in Christo filius noster Joannes, Castellae et Legionis Rex illustris, intellectis praefatarum litterarum concessione et tenoribus, multum apud nos, per suos oratores et litteras, conquestus fuerit, asserens sibi magnum fieri praepjudicium ex litteris praefatis, et ex eis sequi juris sui diminutionem, cum asserat terrae Africae et insularum praefatarum conquestam ad se spectare, nos nolentes, ut ex concessionibus hujusmodi aliquod tanto Regi praepjudicium fiat, sicut neque etiam vellenmus in aliquo praepjudicare juribus tuis, intendentes quoque nemini eripere jus sibi competens, nuper per nostras litteras declaravimus nostrae intentionis fuisse et esse, in nullo velle praepjudicare per hujusmodi nostras concessiones juribus dicti Regis, sed conquestam dumtaxat tibi concedere, et prohibitionem tolerare, si et in quantum nemo alter et in praefatis insulis aliquod jus competere praetenderet.

Itaque cum cupiamus obviare omnibus scandalis, quae ex hac causa oriri possent, ac providere ne aliquid innovetur, quod pacem vestram possit in aliquo conturbare, exhortamur sublimitatem tuam, ut maturo consilio et prudenti deliberatione examinet diligenter litteras nostras, nihil attentans quod in praefati Regis praepjudicium aut juris laesionem possit redundare, neque aliquam causam des discordiis, aut materiam excites futuri scandali alicujus. Datum Bononiae, die..... 1436, Pontificatus nostri anno sexto.

4. “Etsi Suscepti” of Pope Eugenius IV in 1442 (Source: Document of ANTT- Chancelaria de Don Afonso V. Liv. 24, Fl. 61-61v)

Eugenius IV Episcopus, Servus Servorum Dei. Ad perpetuam Rei Memoriam. Etsi suscepti cura regiminis personas ac loca singula Religionis insignita titulis, ut eorum status prosperetur feliciter, paternis confovere debeamus affectibus, militiam tamen Jesu Christi, necnon ejus fratres et personas singularibus favorum attolere praesidiis intendentes, petitionibus libenter illis annuimus, per quae votis ipsi possint in domino proficere jugiter incrementis.

Hinc est quod nos dilecti filii, nobilis viri Henrici, ducis Visensis, qui Magistratus militiae Jesu Christi deputatus per sedem apostolicam in spiritualibus ac temporalibus Administrator existit, et sicut ejus parte nobis fuit expositum, singularis, quam ad eandem militiam gerit, devotionis zelo regularem per illius fratres emitti solitam professionem emittere proponit; in hac parte supplicationibus inclinati sibi, quod etiam postquam hujusmodi professionem emisit, ducatum Visensem et quavis alia temporalia dominia atque nunc, et etiam in antea si dictam professionem non emitteret, ad eum legitime pertinentia, quo ad vixerit retinere, nec non eis preaeesse ac illa in temporalibus regere gubernareque valeat et quae post ejus obitum ad illum vel illos perveniant cui seu quibus, si professio hujusmodi non fieret, ea pertinere deberent, et administratori praedicto, necnon pro tempore existentibus Magistro ac fratribus ejusdem militiae, quod terras, possessiones et alia mobilia et immobilia bona quaecumque in regnis ac dominiis Regis Portugaliae pro tempore existentis, et quibuslibet aliis locis consistentiaque praefatae militiae per quosvis Christi fideles donari vel alias per eam justis modis acquiri contingerit, acceptare et cum similibus quibus alia in ipsis regnis bona nunc habet et possidet immunitatibus, libertatibus, privilegiis, modis atque formis retinere, ac etiam singulas, quarum jus patronatus ei Christo fideles donaverint vel in ipsum, transtulerint ecclesias recipere, necnon sub modis, et cum privilegiis, quibus ecclesiam de Casevel Ulixbonensis dioecesis tenet, etiam retinere, ac in mare Oceano quarum aliquae, quo ad temporalia, dictae militiae pertinent, et quas in posterum illa Christi fidelium largitionibus vel alias juste adquisierit insulas, licet nondum populatae fuerint, cum quibusvis privilegiis aliis eidem militiae competentibus similiter recipere et in illis ex eisque propriis actis et etiam praeteritis, de quibus hominum memoria sit, temporibus, Episcopos non habuerint ab aliis Catholicis Episcopis gratiam et communionem apostolicae sedis habentibus, ad id per ipsum Magistrum eligendis pro tempore, spiritualia exercere possint, auctoritate Apostolica, tenore praesentium indulgemus.

Necnon ecclesiam sive capellam gloriosissimae Mariae Virginis de Africa nuncupatam, et in civitate Ceptensis, postquam illa a Sarracenorum faucibus

recuperata fuerit, edificatam, ipsi militiae pleno jure concedimus, ac de Valdangere, Tetuam, et Alcacaguer loca ab ipsis Sarracenis adhuc detenta, si et postquam ab eis erepta fuerint, ecclesiae sive capellae praefatae pro parochia constituimus pariter et assignamus.

Non obstantibus constitutionibus et ordinationibus Apostolicis, ac militiae praedictae, juramento, confirmatione Apostolica, vel quavis alia firmitate, roboratis statutis et consuetudinibus, caeterisque contrariis quibuscumque.

Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostrae concessionis et assignationis infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Siquis autem hoc attentare praesumpserit, indignationem Omnipotentis Dei, et Beatorum Petri et Pauli, Apostolorum ejus, se noverit incursum. Datum Florentiae ejus, anno Incarnationis Dominicae milesimo quadringentesimo quadragésimo secundo, quinto idus Januarii, Pontificatus nostri anno duodecimo (9 de Janeiro de 1442).

5. “Illius Qui” of Pope Eugenius IV in 1442 (Source: Document of ANTT- Ordem de Cristo, Cod. 234, Pte. 4, Fl. 59)

Eugenius IV Episcopus, Servus Servorum Dei. Ad Futuram Rei Memoriam.

Illius, qui se pro divini salvatione gregis in pretium immolare non abnuit, vices quamquam immeriti gerentes in terris, ad ea curis flectimur assiduis, ut perfedorum superstitiones, et errores reprimi possint, ac fidelium inde peramplius salus succedat animarum.

Cum itaque, sicut exhibita nobis nuper pro parte dilecti filii, nobilis viri Henrici Ducis Visensis, petitio continebat, ipse qui Magistratus Militiae Jesu Christi per Sedem Apostolicam deputatus in spiritualibus, et temporalibus Administrator existit, pro confundendis, exterminandisque Sarracenis, ac Christiani nominis inimicis, et in partibus, quas illi detinent, Catholica fide propaganda personaliter cum gentium armigerarum comitiva, partes illas accedere, et exercitum adversus Sarracenos, ac inimicos hujusmodi dirigere proponat, etiam firmam in Domino spem gerens, quod successu temporis, licet tunc personaliter non intersit, milites, et fratres dictae Militiae, necnon alii Christi fideles plerique sub ejusdem Militiae vexillo confictus, et bella contra Sarracenos ac inimicos praefatos movere velint, et debeant, Altissimos suffragante.

Nos, ut ipsi fideles ad id ferventius animentur, eis omnibus, et singulis, qui praemissis, et exercitus hujusmodi bellis, ac conflictibus interfuerint, plenarum omnium suorum, de quibus corde contriti, et ore confessi extiterint, auctoritate Apostolica, tenore praesentium concedimus remissionem peccatorum.

Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostrae concessionis infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Siquis autem hoc attentare

praesumpserit, indignationem Omnipotentis Dei, et Beatorum Petri et Pauli, Apostolorum ejus, se noverit incursum.

Datum Florentiae, anno 1442, kalend. Januarii 14, Pontificatus nostri anno XII (19 de Dezembro de 1442).

6. “Dum Diversas” of Pope Nicholas V in 1452 (Source: Document of Archivio Secreto Vaticano (ASV), Reg. Vat. Vol. 431, Fls. 194v-196)

Nicholaus Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei. Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam. Charissimo in Christo filio Alfonso, Portugalliae et Algarbiorum Regi illustri, Salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem.

Dum diversas, nobis licet immeritis superna providentia commissi Apostolicae servitutis officii, curas, quibus quotidie Nos urgentibus angimur, sedula quoque hortatione pulsamur, in mente revolvimus, illam nobis potissime gerimus in praecordiis sollicitudinem, ut Christi nominis inimicorum rabies Christi fidelibus in orthodoxae vilipendium fidei semper infesta reprimi, Christianaeque Religioni valeat subjugari, ad id quoque cum rerum expostulat opportunitas, nostrum liberum studium impendimus operose, necnon singulos Christi fideles, praecipue charissimos in Christo filios Reges illustres, Christi fidem professos, qui pro Aeterni Regis gloria fidem ipsam defendere ac illius inimicos potenti student brachio expugnare, paterno prosequi teneamur affectu, singula quoque quae ad hujusmodi salutiferum opus dictae videlicet defensionem, augmentationemque Religionis cooperari conspiciamus, a nostra non immerito debent provisione procedere, Christi fideles quoque singulos ut vices suas in adiutorium fidei exagitent, spiritualibus, et gratis invitamus.

Sane sicut ex pio, christianoque desiderio tuo procedere conspiciamus, tu Christi inimicos, Sarracenos videlicet, subjugare, ac ad Christi fidem potenti manu redigere intendis, si ad id tibi Apostolicae Sedis suffragetur auctoritas. Nos igitur considerantes, quod contra Catholicam fidem insurgentibus, Christianamque Religionem extinguere molientibus, ea virtute, et alia constantia a Christi fidelibus est resistendum, ut fideles ipsi fidei ardore succensi, virtutibusque pro posse succinti detestandum illorum propositum, non solum obice intentionis contraire impediunt, si ex oppositione roboris iniquos conatus prohibeant, et Deo cui militant, ipsis assistente perfidorum substernant molimenta, nos, que divino amore communiti, Christianorum charitate invitati, officiique pastoralis stricti debito, ea quae fidei, pro qua Christus Deus noster sanguinem effudit, integritatem, augmentumque respiciunt, nobis fidelium animis vigorem, tuamque Regiam Majestatem in hujusmodi sanctissimo proposito confovere merito cupientes, tibi Saracenos, et Paganos, aliosque

infideles, et Christi inimicos quoscunque, et ubicunque constitutos Regna, Ducatus, Comitatus, Principatus, aliaque Dominia, Terras, Loca, Villas, Castra, et quaecunque alia possessiones, bona mobilia, et immobilia in quibuscunque rebus consistentia, et quocunque nomine censeantur, per eosdem Sarracenos, Paganos, infideles, et Christi inimicos detenta,, et possessa, etiam cujuscunque, seu quorumcunque Regis, seu Principis, aut Regum, vel Principum Regna, Ducatus, Comitatus, Principatus, aliaque Dominia, Terrae, Loca, Villae, Castra, possessiones, et bona hujusmodi fuerint, invadendi, conquerendi, expugnandi, et subjugandi, illorumque personas in perpetuam servitutem redigendi, regna quoque, Ducatus, Comitatus, Principatus, aliaque Dominia, possessiones, et bona hujusmodi, tibi et successoribus tuis Regibus Portugalliae, perpetuo applicandi, et appropriandi, ac in tuos, et eorundem successorum usus, et utilitates convertendi plenam, et liberam, auctoritate Apostolica, tenore praesentium concedimus facultatem, eandemque Regiam Majestatem tuam rogamus, requirimus, et hortamur attente, quatenus virtutis gladio praecinctus, ac forti animo praemunitis, pro divini nominis augmento, fideique exaltatione, ac animae tuae salute conquirenda, Deum prae oculis habens, in hujusmodi negotio, potentiam virtutis tuae extenddas, ut fides Catholica, per tuam Reginam Magestatem contra inimicos Christi triumphum se reportasse censeat, tuque coronam aeternae gloriae, pro qua militandum est in terris, quamque promisit Deus diligentibus se, nostramque, et dictae Sedis benedictionem, et gratiam exinde valeas uberius promereri.

Nos enim, ut tu, ac dilecti filii nobiles viri Duces, Principes, Barones, Milites, aliquique Christi fideles tuam Regiam serenitatem, in hac fidei pugna concomitantes, seu imitantes, ac de bonis suis contribuentes, eo animosius, ferventiorique zelo opus hoc aggrediaris, ac illi aggrediantur, seu de bonis suis contribuant, aut mittant, ut praefertur, quo ex hoc tu, ac illi suarum animarum salute consequi posse speraveris, ac illi speraverint, de omnipotentis Dei misericordia, ac Beatorum Petri et Pauli, Apostolorum ejus, auctoritate confisi, tibi, necnon omnibus, et singulis utriusque sexus Christi fidelibus tuam Magestatem in hoc fidei negotio concomitantibus, necnon illis, qui te personaliter comitari non voluerint, sed in subsidium juxta suarum facultatum, vel devotionis exigentiam miserint, seu de bonis eis a Deo collatis rationabiliter contribuerint, ut confessor idoneus, quem tu ad hoc, et eorum quilibet duxeris, seu duxerint eligendum, plenariam remissionem omnium, et singulorum peccatorum, criminum, delictorum, et excessuum, de quibus tu, et illi corde contriti, et ore confessi fueritis, tibi, ac eisdem concomitantibus, quoties bellum aliquod contra praefatos infidels te, et illos inire contigerit, non concomitantibus vero, sed mittentibus, et contribuentibus, ut praeffertur, in sinceritate fidei, unitate Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae, ac obedientia, et devotione nostra, et successorum nostrorum Romanorum Pontificum canooice

intransium, persistentibus semel dumtaxat in mortis articulo concedere valeat, devotionis tuae eadem auctoritate indulgemus. Sic tamen quod idem confessor de his, de quibus alteri satisfaction impendenda eam tibi, concomitantibus, mittentibus, et contribuentibus, per te ac illos, si supervixeris, et illi supervixerint, aut tuos, vel illorum haeredes, si forte tunc transieris, seu illi transierint, faciendam injungat, quam tu, et illi, ac haeredes praefati facere teneamini, ut praefertur.

Et nihilominus sit e, seu aliquos ex concomitantibus praefatis contra Sarracenos, et alios infidels hujusmodi, eundo, stando, vel redeundo, ab hoc saeculo migrare contigerit, te, ac eosdem concomitants in sinceritate, et unitate praedictis persistentes, purae innocentiae, qua, baptismate suscepto, exististi, et illi extiterint, restituimus per praesentes.

Volumus autem quod Omnia, et singula, quae Christi fideles ipsi te non concomitants in subsidium tuum pro hujusmodi fidei negotio peragendo contribuerint, per Praelatos singulorum locorum in quibus contributiones hujusmodi pro tempore constitutae fuerint, leventur, et simul reponantur, tibi que per secures nuntios, seu litteras cambiorum, sine quacumque diminutione, expensis, et salariis, rationabilibus in his laborantibus dumtaxat reservatis, et sub authentico computo transmittantur, quodque si Praelati ipsi, seu quicumque alii de summis in subsidium hujusmodi mittendis, quidquam praeter expensas, et salaria hujusmodi subtraxerint, alienaverint, seu in suos usus usurpaverint, seu fraudulenter, vel dolose subtrahi, alienari, seu usurpari permiserint, vel consenserint, ex communicationis, a qua praeterquam per Romanum Pontificum, seu in mortis articulo constitute, absolve nequeant, sententiam incurrant eo ipso.

Caeterum cum difficile foret praesentes litteras ad singular, in quibus de eis fides forsan facienda fuerit, loca deferre, volumus, et dicta auctoritate decernimus, quod illarum transumptus, manu publici Notarii subscriptas, et sigillo alicujus Episcopalis, aut Superioris Curiae munitis, perinde plenaria fides adhibeatur, ac si originales litterae hujusmodi exhibitae forent, vel ostensae.

Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostrae concessionis, restitutionis, voluntatis, indulti, et decreti infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Siquis autem hoc attentare praesumpserit, indignationem Omnipotentis Dei, ac Beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum se noverit incursurum. Datum Romae apud Sanctum Petrum, anno Incarnationis Dominicae millesimo quadringentesimo quinquagesimo secundo, quartodecimo kalendas Julii, Pontificatus nostril anno sexton (18 de junho de 1452).

7. “Romanus Pontifex” of Pope Nicholas V in 1454. (Source: Document of Archivio Secreto Vaticano (ASV), Reg. Vat. 405, Fl. 71r)

Nicholas V. Episcopus, Servus Servorum Dei, Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam.

Romanus Pontifex coelestis Clavigeri successor et Vicarius Iesus Christi cuncta mundi climata omniumque Nationum in illis degentium qualitates paterna consideratione discutiens, ac salutem quaerens et appetens singulorum, illa, perpersa deliberatione, salubriter ordinat et disponit, quae grata Divinae Majestati fore conspicit, et per quae oves sibi divinitus creditas ad unum ovile Dominicum reducat, et adquirat eis felicitatis aeternae praemium, ac veniam impetret animabus, quae eo certius, autore Domino, provenire credimus, si condignis favoribus, specialibus gratis eos Catholicos prosequamur Reges et Principes, quos veluti Christianae Fidei athletas et intrepidus, non modo Saracenorum caeterorumque Infidelium Christi nominis inimicorum feritatem reprimere, sed etiam ipsos eorumque Regna, ac loca etiam in longissimis nobisque incognitis partibus consistentia pro defensione et aumento Fidei debellare, suoque temporali dominio subdere, nullis parcendo laboribus et expensis, a facti evidentia cognoscimus, ut Reges et Principes ipsi, sublatis quibusvis dispendiis, ad tam saluberrimum tamen laudabile prosequendum opus peramplius animentur.

Ad nostrum siquidem nuper, non sine ingenti gaudio et nostrae mentis laetitia, pervenit auditum, quod dilectus Filius, nobilis Vir, Henricus, Infans Portugalliae, Charissimi in Christo Filii Nostri Alphonsi, Portugalliae et Algarbii Regnorum Regis illustris, patriis inhaerens vestigiis, clarae memoriae Joannis, dictorum Regnorum Regis, ejus genitoris, ac zelo salutis animarum et Fidei ardore plurimum succensus, tamquam Catholicus et omnium caeteris Christi miles, ipsiusque Fidei acerrimus ac fortissimus defensor et interpidus pugil, ejusdem Craetoris gloriosissimum nomen per universum terrarum orbem etiam in remotissimis et incognitis locis divulgari, extolli et venerari, necnon illius ac vivificae, qua redempti sumus, crucis inimicos perfidos Saracenos videlicet, ac quoscumque alios Infideles ad ipsius Fidei gremium reduci, ab ejus ineunte aetate, totis adspirat viribus, post Ceptensem Civitatem in Africa consistentem per dictum Joannem Regem ejus subactam dominio, et post multa per ipsum Infantem nomine dicti Regis contra hostes et Infideles praedictos, quam etiam in propria persona, non absque maximis laboribus et expensis ac rerum et personarum periculis et jactura, plurimorumque naturalium quorum code gesta bella, ex tot tantisque laboribus periculis et damnis non fractus neque territus, sed ad hujusmodi laudabilis et pii propositi sui prosecutionem in dies magis atque magis exardescens in Oceano Mari quosdam solitarias Insulas Fidelibus propalavit, ac fundari et construi inibi fecit Ecclesias et alia pia loca in quibus

Divina celebrantur Officia, et dicti quoque Infantis laudabili opera et industria quamplures diversarum in dicto Mari existentium Insularum incolae seu habitatores ad veri Dei cognitionem venientes, sacrum Baptisma susceperunt, ad ipsius laudem et gloriam, ac plurimarum animarum salutem, Orthodoxae Fidei propagationem, et Divini cultas augmentum.

Praeterea cum olim ad ipsius Infantis pervenisset notitiam, quam nunquam, vel saltem a memoria hominum, non consuevisset per hujusmodi Oceanum mare versus meridionales et orientales plagas navigari, illudque nobis Occiduis adeo foret incognitum, ut nullam de partium illarum gentibus certam notitiam haberemus, credens se maxime in hoc Doe prestare obsequium, si ejus opera et industria mare usque ad Indos, qui Christi nomen colere dicuntur, navigabile fieret, sicque cum eis participare, et illos in Christianorum auxilium adversus Saracenos et alios hujusmodi Fidei hostes commovere posset, ac nonnullos Gentiles seu paganos nefandissimi Mahometi secta minima infectos populos inibi medio existentes continuo debellare eisque incognitum sacratissimum Christi nomen predicare ac facere praedicari, Regia tamen sempre auctoritate minitus, a viginti quinque annis citra exercituum ex dictorum Regnorum gentibus, maximis cum laboribus, periculis et expensis, in velocissimis navibus, Carabeliis nuncupatis, ad perquirendum mare et Provincias maritimas versus meridionales partes, et polum antarcticum annis singulis efer mittere non cessavit, sicque factum est, ut cum nave hujusmodi quamplures portus, Insula, et maria perlustrassent, ad Ghineam Provinciam tandem pervenirent, occupatisque nonnullis Insulsi, portibus ac mari, ejusdem Provinciae adjacentibus, ulterius navigantes, ad ostium cujusdam magni fluminis, Nili communiter reputati, pervenerunt, et contra illarum partium populos, nomine ipsorum, Alphonsi Regis et Infantis, per aliquos annos guerra abita extitit, et in illa quamplures inibi vicinae Insulae debellatae ac pacifice possessae fuerunt, prout adhuc cum adiacenti mari possidentur.

Exinde quoque multi Gginei et alii Nigri vi capti, quidam etiam non prohibitarum rerum permutatione, seu alio legitimo contractu emptionis ad dicta sunt Regna transmissi: quorum inibi copioso numero ad Catholicam Fidem conversi extiterunt, speraturque, Divina favente clementia, quod si hujusmodi cum eis continetur progressus, vel populi ipsi ad Fidem convertentur, vel saltem multorum ex eis animae Christo lucrifient.

Cum autem, sicut accepimus, licet Rex et Infans praedicti, qui cum tot tantisque periculis, laboribus et expensis, necnon perditione tot naturalium Regnorum hujusmodi, quorum inibi quamplures perierunt, ipsorum naturalium dumtaxat freti auxilio Provincias illas perlustrari fecerunt, ac portus, Insulas, et maria, hujusmodi acquisiverunt et possederunt, ut praefertur, ut illorum veri Domini, timentes ne alicui cupiditate ducti ad partes illas navigarent, et operis hujusmodi perfectionem, fructum et laudem sibi usurpare vel saltem impedire

cupientes propterea, seu lucri commodo aut malitia, ferrum arma, lignamina aliasque res et bona ad Infideles deferri prohibita portarent vel transmitterent, aut ipsos Infideles navigandi modum edocerent, propter quae eis hostes fortiores ac duriores fierent, et hujusmodi prosecutio vel impediretur vel forsitan penitus cessaret, non absque offensa magna Dei, et ingenti totius Christianitatis opprobrio, ad obviandum praemissis, ac pro suorum juris et possessionis conservatione, sub certis tunc expressis gravissimis poenis prohibuerint, et generaliter statuerint, quod nullus, nisi cum suis nautis ac navibus et certi tributi solutione, obtentaque prius desuper expressa ab eodem Rege vel Infante licentia, ad dictas Provincias navigare, aut in earum portibus contractare, seu in mari piscari praesumeret: tamen successu temporis evenire posset, quod aliorum Regnorum seu Nationem personae, invidia, malitia aut cupiditate ducti contra prohibitionem praedictam absque et tributi solutione hujusmodi ad dictas Provincias accedere, et in sic adquisitis Provinciis, portibus et Insulis ac mari navigare, contractare et piscari praesumerent, et exinde inter Alphonsum Regem ac Infantem, qui nullatenus se in iis sic deludi paterentur, et praesumentes praedictos quamplura odia, rancores, dissensiones, guerrae et scandala in maximam Dei offensam et animarum periculum verisimiliter subsequi possent et subsequerentur.

Nos, praemissa omnia et singula debita meditatione attendentes, quod cum olim praefato Alphonso Regi quoscumque Saracenos ac paganos aliosque Christi inimicos ubicumque constitutos, ac Regna, Ducatus, Principatus, Dominia, possessiones et mobilia et immobilia bona quaecumque per eos detenta ac possessa invadendi, conquirendi, expugnandi, debellandi et subjugandi, illorumque personas in perpetuam servitutem redigendi, ac Regna, Ducatus, Comitatus, Principatus, Domina, possessiones et bona sibi et successoribus suis applicandi, appropriandi, ac in suos successorumque suorum usus utilitatemque convertendi, aliis nostris Litteris plenam et liberam inter caetera concessimus facultatem: dictae facultatis obtentu idem Alphonsus Rex, seu quis auctoritate praedictus Infans juste et legitime terras, portus et maria hujusmodi adquisivit ac possedit et possidet, illaque ad eundem Alphonsum Regem et ipsius Successores de jure spectant et pertinent, neque quivis alius ex Christifidelibus absque ipsorum Alphonsi Regis et Successorum suorum licentia speciali de illis se hactenus intromittere licite potuit nec potest quoquomodo, ut ipse Alphonsus rex ejusque Successores et Infans eo sincerius huic tam piissimo ac praeclaro et omni aevo memoratu dignissimo operi, in quo cum animarum salus, Fidei augmentum et illius hostium depressio procurantur, Dei ipsiusque Fidei ac Reipublicae universalis Ecclesiae rem agi conspiciamus, insistere valeant et insistant, quos, sublatis quibusvis dispendiis amplioribus, seu per Nos et Sedem Apostolicam favoribus et gratis munitos fore conspexerint.

De praemissi omnibus et singulis plenissime informatos, Motu proprio, non ad ipsorum Alphonsi Regis et Infantis, vel alterius pro eis nobis super hoc oblatae petitionis instantiam, maturaque prius desuper deliberatione praehabita, auctoritate Apostolica et ex certa scientia de apostolicae potestatis plenitudine, Litteras facultatis praefatas, quarum tenores de verbo ad verbum praesentibus haberi volumus pro insertis, cum omnibus et singulis in eis contentis clausulis ad Ceptensem et praedicta et quaecumque alia etiam ante datam dictarum facultatem Litterarum acquisita, ea, quae in posterum nomine dictorum Alphonsi Regis suorumque Successorum et Infantis in ipsis ac illis circumvicinis et ulterioribus ac remotioribus partibus de Infidelium seu Paganorum manibus adquiri potuerunt, provincias, Insulas, Portus et maria quaecumque extendi, et illa sub ejusdem facultatis Litteris comprehendere, ipsarumque facultatis et praesentium Litterarum vigore jam acquisita et quae in futurum adquiri contigerit, postquam acquisita fuerint ad praefatum Regem et successores suos ac Infantem, ipsamque conquestam, quam a Capitibus de Boxador et de Nam usque per totam Ghineam, videlicet versus illam meridionalem plagam extendi, harum serie declaramus, etiam ad ipsos Alphonsum Regem et Successores suos ac Infantem, et non ad aliquos alios, spectasse et pertinuisse, ac in perpetuum spectare et pertinere de jure: necnon Alphonsum Regem et Successores suos ac Infantem praedictos in illis, et circa ea quaecumque prohibitiones, statuta et mandata etiam poenalia et cum cujusvis tributi impositione facere, et de ipsis et de rebus propriis et aliis ipsorum Dominiis disponere et ordinare potuisse, ac nunc et in futurum posse libere et licite, tenore praesentium, decernimus et declaramus, ac, pro potioris juris et cautela suffragio, jam acquisita et quae in posterum adquiri contigerit, provincias, Insulas, Portus, loca et maria quaecumque, quotcumque et qualiacumque fuerint, ipsamque conquestam a Capitibus de Boxador et de Nam praedictis, Alphonso Regi et successoribus suis Regibus dictorum Regnorum ac Infanti praefatis, perpetuo donamus, concedimus et appropriamus per praesentes.

Praeterea, cum ad perficiendum opus hujusmodi multipliciter sit opportunum, quod Alphonsus Rex et Successores ac Infans praedicti, necnon personae, quibus hoc duxerint, seu aliquis ipsorum duxerit committendum, illius dicto Joanni regi per felicis recordationis Martinum V, et alterius idultorum etiam inclytae memoriae Eduardo, eorundem Regnorum Regi, ejusdem Alphonsi Regis Genitori per piaae memoriae Eugenium IV, Romanus Pontifices, predecessores nostros, concessorum versus dictas partes cum quibusdam Saracenis et Infidelibus de quibuscumque rebus et bonis ac victualibus, emptiones et venditiones, prout congruit facere, necnon quoscumque contractus inire, transigere, pacisci, mercari ac negotiari, et merces quascumque ad ipsorum Saracenorum et Infidelium loca, dummodo ferramenta, lignamina, funes, naves seu armaturarum genera non sint, deferre, et ea dictis Saracenis et

Infidelibus vendere, omnia quoque alia et singula in praemissis, et circa ea opportuna vel necessaria facere, gerere vel exercere, ipsique Alphonsus Rex, Successores et Infans in jam adquisitis et per eum acquirendis Provinciis, Insulis ac locis quascumque Ecclesias, Monasteria et alia pia loca fundare ac fundari et construi: necnon quascumque personas Ecclesiasticas, saeculares et quorumvis etiam Mendicantium Ordinum Regulares (de Superiorum tamen licentia) ad illa transmittere, ipsaeque personae inibi etiam, quae advenerint, commorari, ac quorumcumque in dictis partibus existentium vel accedetium Confessiones audire, illisque auditis, in omnibus praeterquam Sedi praedictae reservatis casibus debitam absolutionem impendere ac poenitentiam salutarem injungere, necnon Ecclesiastica Sacramenta ministrare valeant libere ac licite decernimus, ipsique Alphonso et Successoribus suis, Regibus Portugalliae, qui erunt in posterum, et Infanti praefato concedimus et indulgemus.

Ac universos et singularos Christifideles, Ecclesiasticos, Saeculares et Ordinum quorumcumque Regulares, ubilibet per orbem constitutos, cujuscumque status, gradus, ordinis, conditionis vel praeminetiae fuerint, etiamsi Archiepiscopali, Episcopali, Imperiali, Regali, Ducali seu alia quacumque majori Ecclesiastica seu mundana dignitate praefulgeant, obsecramus in Domino, et per aspersionem Sanguinis Domini Nostri Jesu, cujus, ut praemittitur, res agitur, exhortamur eisque in remissionem suorum peccaminum injungimus, necnon hoc perpetuo prohibitionis edicto districtius inhibemus, ne ad adquisita seu possessa nomine Alphonsi Regis aut in conquista hujusmodi consistentia, Provincias, Insulas, Portus, Maria et loca quaecumque, seu alias ipsis Saracenis, Infidelibus vel Paganis arma, ferrum, lignamina, aliaque a jure Saracenis deferri prohibita, quoquo modo vel etiam absque speciali ipsius Alphonsi Regis et Successorum suorum et Infantis licentia, merces et alia a jure permissa deferre, aut per maria hujusmodi navigare, seu deferri, vel navigari facere, aut in illis piscari, seu de Provinciis, Insulis, protubus, maribus et locis, se aliquibus eorum, aut de conquista hujusmodi, seu intromittere, vel aliquid, per quod Alphonsus Rex et Successores et Infans praedicti, quominus adquisita et possessa pacifice possideant ac conquestam hujusmodi prosequantur et facient per se vel alium, seu alia, directe vel indirecte, opere vel consilio, facere aut impedire quoquomodo praesumant.

Qui vero contrarium fecerit, ultra poenas contra deferentes arma et alia prohibita Saracenis quibuscumque jure promulgatas, quas illos incurrant, si Communitas vel Universitas, Civitas, Castrum, Villae seu loci, ipsa Civitas, Castrum, Villa, seu locus interdicto subjaceat eo ipso: necnon contrafacientes, ipsi vel aliqui eorum, Excommunicationis sententia absolvantur, nec interdicti hujusmodi relaxationem, Apostolica seu alia quavis auctoritate obtinere possint, nisi ipsi Alphonso et Successoribus ac Infanti prius pro praemissis congrue satisfecerint, aut desuper amicabiliter concordaverint cum eisdem. Mandantes

per Apostolica scripta Venerabilibus Fratribus nostris Archiepiscopo Ulixbonensi, Silvensi ac Ceptensi, Episcopis, quatenus ipsi vel duo aut unus eorum per se vel alium seu alios, quoties pro parte Alphonsi Regis et illius Successorum ac Infantis praedictorum vel alicujus, eorum desuper fuerint requisiti, vel aliquis ipsorum fuerit requisitus, illos, quos Excommunicationis et interdicti sententias hujusmodi incurrisse constituit, tamdiu Dominicis aliisque festivis diebus in Ecclesiis, dum inibi major populi multitudo convenerit ad Divina, excommunicatos et interdictos, aliisque poenis praedictis innodatos fuisse et esse, auctoritate Apostolica declarent et denuncient, necnon ab illis unuciari, et ab omnibus arctius evitari faciant, donec pro praemissis satisfecerint, seu concordaverint, ut praefertur. Contradictores per censuram Ecclesiasticam, appellatione postposita, compescendo, non obstantibus Constitutionis et Ordinationibus Apostolicis, caeterisque contrariis quibuscumque.

Caeterum ne praesentes Litterae, quae a nobis de nostra certa scientia et matura desuper deliberatione praehabita emanarunt, ut praefertur, de subreptionis aut nullitatis vitio a quoquam in posterum valeant impugnari: volumus, et auctoritate Apostolica, scientia ac potestate praedictis, harum serie decernimus pariter et declaramus, quod dictae Litterae et in eis contenta de subreptionis vel obreptionis vel nullitatis, etiam exordinariae vel alterius cujuscumque potestatis, aut quovis alio defectu impugnari, illarumque effectus retardari vel impedire nullatenus possint, sed in perpetuum valeant, ac plenam obtineant roboris firmitatem: irritum quoque sit et inane, si secus super his a quoquam, quavis auctoritate, scienter vel ignoranter, contigerit attentari.

Et insuper, quia difficile foret praesentes nostras Litteras ad quaecumque loca deferre: volumus et dicta auctoritate harum serie decernimus, quod earum transumpto manu publica et sigillo Episcopalis vel alicujus Superioris Ecclesiasticae curiae munito, plena fides adhibeatur, et perinde stetur, ac si dictae originales Litterae forent exhibitae vel ostensae, et Excommunicationis aliaeque sententiae in illis contentae infra duos mense computandos a die, qua ipsae praesentes Litterae seu chartae vel membranae, earum tenorem in se continentes, valvis Ecclesiae Ulixbonensis affixae fuerint, perinde omnes et singulos contrafacientes supradictos liquent, ac si ipsae praesentes Litterae eis personaliter et legitime intimatae ac praesentatae fuissent.

Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostrae declarationis, constitutionis, donationis, concessionis, appropriationis, decreti, observationis, exhortationis, injunctionis, mandati et voluntatis infringere...Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, anno incarnationis Dominicae millesimo quadringentesimo quinquagesimo quarto, VI idus Januarii, Pontificatus nostri anno octavo.

8. "Inter Caetera" of Pope Callixtus III in 1456. (Source: Document of ANTT- Coleção de Bulas, Gav. 7, maco. 13, No. 7).

Callixtus Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei. Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam.

Inter caetera, quae Nobis, Divina disponente clementia, incumbunt peragenda, ad id nimirum solliciti corde reddimur, ut singulis locis, et praesertim quae Sarracenis sunt finitima, Divinus cultus ad laudem et gloriam Omnipotentis Dei, et Fidei Christianae exaltationem vigeat, et continuum suscipiat incrementum: et quae Regibus et Principibus per Praedecessores nostros, Romanos Pontifices, benemeritis concessa sunt, et causis legitimis emanarunt, ut omnibus sublatis dubitationibus robur perpetuae firmitatis obtineant, Apostolico munimine solidemus. Dudum siquidem felicitis recordationis Nicholas papa V, Preadecessor noster, Litteras, concessit tenoris sbequentis.(Aqui se inserta la Bula anterior de Nicholas V.)

Cum autem, sicut pro parte Alphonsi Regis et henrici Infantis praedictorum... ipsi supra modum affectent, quod spiritualitas in eisdem solitariis Insulis, terris, portubus et locis, et Mari Oceano versus meridionalem plagam in Guinea consistentibus, quas idem Infans de manibus Sarracenorum manu armata extraxit, et Christianae religioni, ut praefertur, acquisivit, praefatae Militiae Jesu Christi, cujus reddituum suffragio idem Infans hujusmodi conquistam fecisse perhibetur, per Sedem Apostolicam perpetuo concedatur: et declaratio, constitutio, donatio, concessio, appropriatio, decretum, obsecratio, exhortatio, munitio, inhibitio, mandatum et voluntas, necnon Litterae Nicolai Praedecessoris hujusmodi, ac omnia et singula in eis contenta confirmentur. Quare pro parte Regis et Infantis praedictorum nobis fuit humiliter supplicatum, ut declarationi, constitutioni, concessioni, appropriationi, decreto, obsecrationi, exhortationi, injunctio, inhibitioni, mandato vel voluntati, ac Litteris hujusmodi, et in eis contentis pro illorum subsistentia firmiori, robur Apostolicae confirmationis addicere: Necnon spiritualitates ac omnimodam jurisdictionem ordinariam, tam in praedictis acquisitis, quam aliis Insulis, terris et locis per eosdem Regem et Infantem, seu eorum successores, in partibus dictorum sarracenorum in futurum acquirendis, praefatae militiae et Ordini hujusmodi perpetuo concedere, aliasque, in praemissis, opportune providere de benignitate Apostolica dignaremur.

Nos igitur attendentes Religionem dictae Militiae in eisdem Insulis, et in terris et locis fructus affere posse in Domino salutare, hujusmodi supplicationibus inclinati, declarationem, constitutionem, donationem, appropriationem, decretum, obsecrationem, exhorhationem, munitionem, injunctionem, inhibitionem, mandatum, voluntatem, Litteras, et contenta hujusmodi et inde sequuta quaecumque, rata et garta habentes, illa omnia et singula auctoritate

apostolica, tenore praesentium, et certa scientia confirmamus et approbamus, ac robore perpetuae firmitatis subsistere decernimus: Supplentes omnes defectus, si qui forsitan intervenerint in eisdem, et nihilominus auctoritate et scientia praedictis perpetuo decernimus, statuimus et ordinamus, quod spiritualitas et omnimoda jurisdictio ordinaria, dominium et potestas in spiritualibus dumtaxat, Insulis, villis, portibus, terris et locis a Capitibus de Bojador et de Nam usque per totam guineam, et ultra illam Meridionalem plagam usque ad Indos, acquisitis et acquirendis, quorum situm, numerum, qualitatem, vocabula, designationes, confines et loca praesentibus pro expressis haberi volumus, ad Militiam et Ordinem hujusmodi perpetuis futuris temporibus spectent atque pertineant, illaque eis ex nunc tenore, auctoritate et scientia praedictis concedimus et elargimur.

Ita quod Prior major pro tempore existens Ordinis dictae Militiae et omnia et singula Beneficia Ecclesiastica, cum cura et sine cura, saecularia et Ordinum quorumcumque Regularia in Insulis et terris et locis praedictis fundata et instituta, seu fundanda et instituenda, cujuscumque qualitatis et valoris existant seu fuerint, quoties illa in futurum vacare contigerit, conferre, et de illis providere. Necnon Excommunicationis, suspensionis, et interdicti aliasque Ecclesiasticas sententias, censuras et poenas, quoties opus fuerit, ac rerum et negotiorum pro tempore ingruentium qualitas id exegerit, proferre, omniaque alia et singula, quae locorum Ordinariis in locis, in quibus spiritualitatem habere censentur, de jure vel consuetudine facere, disponere et exequi possint et consueverunt, pariformiter absque ulla differentia facere, disponere, ordinare et exequi possit et debeat: super quibus omnibus et singulis ei plenam et liberam tenore praesentium concedimus, decernentes Insulas, terras et loca acquisita et acquirenda hujusmodi, nullius Dioecesis existere: ac irritum et inane, si secus super his a quoquam, quavis auctoritate, scienter vel ignoranter, contigerit attentari.

Non obstantibus Constitutionibus et Ordinationibus Apostolicis, necnon statutis, consuetudinibus, privilegiis, usibus et naturis dictae Militiae juramento, confirmatione Apostolica vel quavis alia firmitate roboratis, caeterisque contrariis quibuscumque. Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostrorum confirmationis, approbationis, constitutionis, suppletionis, decreti, statuti, ordinationis, voluntatis, concessionis, elargitionis infringere, vel ausu temerario contraire. Si quis autem...Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, anno Incarnationis Dominicae millesimo quadringentesimo quinquagesimo sexto, Idibus Martii, Pontificatus nostri anno primo.

9. “Aeterni Regis” of Pope Sixtus IV in 1481. (Source: Document of ANTT- Coleção de Bullas, maço, 26, No. 10)

Sixtus Episcoporum Servus Servorum Dei. Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam.

Aeterni Regis clementia, per quam Reges regnant, in Suprema Sedis Apostolicae specula collocati, Regum Catholicorum omnium, sub quorum felice gubernaculo Christifideles in justitia et pace foventur, statum et prosperitatem ac quietem et tranquillitatem sinceris desideriis appetimus, et inter illos pacis dulcedinem vigere ferventer exposcimus, ac iis, quae per Praedecessores nostros Romanos Pontifices, et alios propterea provide facta fuisse comperimus, ut firma perpetuo et illibata permaneant, et ab omni contentionis scrupulo procul existant, Apostolicae confirmationis robur favorabiliter adhibemus.

Dudum siquidem ad audientiam felicitis recordationis Nicholai Papae V, Praedecessoris nostri, deducto, quod quondam Henricus Infans Portugalliae Charissimi in Christo Filii nostri Alphonsi Portugalliae et Algarbii Regnorum Regis illustris patruus, inhaerens vestigiis clarae memoriae Joannis dictorum Regnorum Regis, ejus genitoris, ac zelo salutis animarum et Fidei ardore plurimum succensus, tanquam Catholicus et verus omnium Creatoris Christi miles ipsiusque Fidei acerrimus ac fortissimus defensor et intrepidus pugil, ejusdem Creatoris gloriosissimum nomen per universum terrarem Orbem, etiam in remotissimis ac incognitis locis divulgari, extolli, venerari, necnon illius, ac vivifica, qua redempti sumus, Crucis inimicos perfidos Sarracenos, ac quoscumque alios Infideles ad ipsius Fidei gremium reduci ab ejus ineunte aetate totis viribus aspirans, post Ceptensem Civitatem in Africa consistentem per dictum Joannem Regem ejus subactam domino, et post multa ipsum Infantem, nomine tamen dicti Regis, contra hostes et Infideles praedictos, quandoque etiam in propria persona, non etiam absque maximis laboribus et expensis, ac rerum et personarum periculis et jactura, plurimorumque naturalium suorum caede gesta bella, eis tot tantisque laboribus, periculis et damnis non fractus nec territus, sed hujusmodi laudabilis et pii propositi sui prosecutionem in dies magis exardescens, in Oceano Mari quasdam solitarias Insulas Fidelibus populaverat, ac fundari et construi inibi fecerat Ecclesias et alia loca pia, in quibus Divina celebrabantur Officia, ex dicti quoque Infantis laudabili opera et industria quamplures diversarum in dicto Mari existentium Insularium incolae seu habitatores ad veri Dei cognitionem venientes Sacrum Baptisma susceperant ad ipsius Dei laudem et gloriam ac plurimorum animarum salutem, Orthodoxae quoque Fidei propagationem, Divinique cultus augmentum.

Praeterea, cum olim ad ipsius Infantis pervenisset notitiam, quod nunquam, vel saltem a memoria hominum non consevisset per hujusmodi Oceanum mare versus Meridionalem et Orientalem plagas navigari, illudque nobis Occiduis adeo foret incognitum, ut nullam de partium illarum gentibus certam notitiam habere, credens se maximum in hoc Deo praestare obsequium, si ejus opera et industria mare ipsum usque ad Indos, qui Christi nomen colere dicuntur, navigabile fieret, sicque cum eis participare, et illos in Christianorum auxilium adversus Sarracenos et alios hujusmodi Fidei hostes commovere posset: ac nonnullos Gentiles seu paganos nefandissimi Mahometi Secta minime infectos populos inibi medio existentes continuo debellare, eisque incognitum Christi Sacratissimi nomen praedicare ac facere praedicari, Regia semper auctoritate munitus a viginti quinque annis ex tunc exercitum dictorum ex Regnorum gentibus, maximis cum laboribus, periculis et expensis in velocissimis navibus caravelis nuncupatis, ad perquirendum Mare et Provincias maritimas versus Meridionales partes et Polum Antarcticum annis singulis fere mittere non cessaverat: sicque factum fuit, ut cum naves hujusmodi quamplures portus, Insulas et maria perlustrassent, et ad Guineam Provinciam tandem pervenisset, occupatisque nonnullis Insulis, portibus ac Mari eidem Provinciae adjacentibus, ulterius navigantes, ad ostium cujusdam magni fluminis, Nili communiter reputati, pervenissent, et contra illarum partium populos, nomine ipsorum Alphonsi Regis et Infantis, per aliquos annos guerra habita extiterat, et in illa quamplures inibi vicinae Insulae debellatae et pacifice possessae fuissent, prout adhuc tunc cum adjacenti possidebantur: exinde quoque multi Guinaei et alii Nigri capti, quidam etiam non prohibitarum rerum permutatione, seu alio legitimo contractu emtionis ad dicta erant Regna transmissi, quorum inibi in copioso numero ad Catholicam Fidem conversi extiterant, sperabaturque, divina favente clementia, quod si hujusmodi cum eis continuaretur progressus, vel populi ipsi ad Fidem converterentur, vel saltem multorum in eis animae Christo lucrifierent.

Et per eundem Praedecessorem accepto quod, licet Rex et Infans praefati, qui cum tot et tantis periculis, laboribus et expensis, necnon perditione tot naturalium Regnorum hujusmodi, quorum inibi quamplures perierant, ipsorum naturalium dumtaxat freti auxilio, Provincias illas perlustrari fecerant, ac portus, Insulas et maria hujusmodi acquisiverant et possederant, ut praefetur, ut illorum veri Domini, timentes ne tunc aliqui cupiditate ducti, ad partes illas navigassent, et operis hujusmodi perfectionem, fructum et laudem sibi usurpare, vel saltem impedire cupientes: propterea lucri commodo, aut malitia, ferrum, arma, ligamina aliasque res et bona ad Infideles deferri prohibita portassent vel transmisissent, aut ipsos Infideles navigandi modum edocerent, propter quae eis hostes fortiores ac duriores fierent et hujusmodi prosecutio vel impediretur, vel penitus forsitan cessaret, non absque Dei magna oofensa et ingenti totius

Christainitatis opprobrio: ad obviandum praemissis, ac pro suorum juris et possessionis conservatione sub certis tunc expressis gravissimisque poenis prohibuerant, et generaliter statuerant quod nullus nisi cum suis nautis et navibus et certi tributi solutione, obtentaque prius desuper expressa ab eodem Rege vel Infante licentia, ad dictas Provincias navigare, aut in earum portibus contractare, seu in mari piscari praesumeret.

Tamen, succssu temporis evenire potuisset, quod aliorum Regnorum seu Nationum personae invidia, malitia et tributi solutione hujusmodi ad provincias accedere, et in sic acquisitis Porvinciis, portibus, Insulis, ac Mari navigare, contractare et piscari praesumerent: et exinde inter Alphonsum Regem et Infansem, qui nullatenus se in iis sic deludi paterentur, et praesumentes praedictis quamplura odia, rancores, dissensiones, guerrae et scandala in maximam Dei offensam et animarum periculum verosimiliter subsequi potuissent et subsequerentur.

Idem Praedecessor praemissa omnia et singula debita meditatione pensans, et attendens quod cum olim praefato Alphonso Regi quoscumque Sarracenos et paganos aliosque Christi inimicos ubicumque constitutos, ac Regna, Ducatus, Principatus, Dominia, possessiones et mobilia ac immobilia bona quaecumque detenta ac concessa invadendi, conquirendi, expugnandi, debellandi et subjugandi illorumque personas in perpetuam servitute redigendi, ac Regna, Ducatus, Comitatus, Principatus, Domina, possessiones, bona, sibi et successoribus suis applicandi, appropriandi, ac in suos successorumque usus et utilitatem convertendi, aliisque suis Litteris plenam et liberam inter caetera concesserit facultatem: dictae facultatis obtentu idem Alphonsus Rex, seu ejus auctoritate praedictus Infans juste et legitime Insulas, terras, portus et maria hujusmodi acquisiverat et possederat et possidebat, illaque ad eundem Alphonsum Regem et ipsius successores de jure spectabant et pertinebant, nec quis alius, etiam Christifidelis, absque ipsorum Alphonsi Regis et successorum suorum licentia speciali, de illis se eatenus intromittere licite poterat quoquo modo, ut ipse Alphonsus Rex ejusque successores et Infans eo ferventius huic tam piissimo, praeclaro et omni aevo memoratu dignissimo operi, in quo cum in illo animarum salus, Fidei augmentum, et illius hostium depressio procurantur, Dei ipsiusque Fidei, ac Reipublicae universalis Ecclesiae rem agi conspiciens, insistere valerent et insisterent: quo sublatis quibusvis dispendiis amlioribus se per eundem Praedecessorem et Sedem Apostolicam favoribus et gratiis munitos fore conspicerent, de praemissis omnibus et singulis plenissime informatus, motu proprio, maturaque prius desuper deliberatione praehabita auctoritate Apostolica et ex certa scientia, de Apostolicae potestatis plenitudine, Litteras facultatis praefatas, quarum tenores de verbo ad verbum haberi voluit pro insertis, cum omnibus et singulis in eis contentis clausulis, ad Ceptensem et praedicta ac quaecumque alia ante datam dictarum facultas Litterarum acquisita,

et ea quae in posterum, nomine dictorum Alphonsi Regis suorumque successorum et Infantis, in ipsis ac illis circumvicinis et ulterioribus ac remotioribus partibus, de Infidelium seu paganorum manibus acquiri poterant, Provincias, Insulas, portus et maria quaecumque extendi, et illa sub eisdem facultatis Litteris comprehendi, ipsarumque facultate et dictarum Litterarum vigore jam acquisita, et quae in futurum acquiri contingeret, postquam acquisita forent, ad praefatos Regem et successores ac Infantem ipsamque conquistam, quam a Capitibus de Bojador et de Nam usque per totam Guineam et ultra versus illam Meridionalem plagam extendi declaravimus, etiam ad ipsos Alphonsum Regem et successores suos et Infantem, et non ad aliquos alios spectasse et pertinuisse, ac in perpetuum spectare et pertinere. Necnon Alphonsum Regem et successores ac Infantem praedictos in illis et circa ea quaecumque prohibitiones, statuta et mandata etiam poenalia, et cum cujusvis tributi impositione, facere ac de ipsis, ut de rebus propriis et aliis ipsorum dominis, disponere et ordinare, et potuisse, ac tunc et in futurum posse libere et licite, decrevit et declaravit, ac pro potioris juris et cautela suffragio jam acquisita, et quae in posterum acquiri contingeret, Provincias, Insulas, portus, loca et maria quaecumque, quotcumque et qualiacumque forent, ipsamque Conquistam a Capitibus de Bojador et de Nam praedictis, Alphonso Regi et successoribus suis Regibus dictorum Regnorum ac Infanti praefatis perpetuo donavit, concessit et appropriavit.

Praeterea cum ad perficiendum opus hujusmodi multipliciter esset opportunum, quod Alphonsus Rex et successores ac Infans praedicti, necnon personae, quibus hoc ducerent, seu aliquis eorum duceret committendum, illius dicto Joanni Regis per felicis recordationis Martinum V, et alterius indultorum, inclytae memoriae Eduardo eorundem Regnorum Regi, ejusdem Alphonsi Regis genitori, per pia memoriae Eugenium IV, Romanos Pontifices, Praedecessores nostros, concessorum versus dictas partes, cum quibusvis Saracenis et Infidelibus, de quibuscumque contractus inire, transgere, pacisci, mercari et negotiari, et merces quascumque ad ipsorum Sarracenorum et Infidelium loca, dummodo ferramenta, ligamina, funes, naves seu armaturarum genera non possent deferre, et ea dictis Sarracenis et Infidelibus vendere, omnia quoque alia et singula in praemissis et circa ea opportuna vel necessaria facere, gerere vel exercere, ipsique Alphonsus Rex, successores, et Infans, in jam acquisitis et per eum acquirendis Provinciis, Insulis, et locis, quascumque Ecclesias, Monasteria et alia pia loca fundare ac fundari et construi, necnon quascumque voluntarias personas Ecclesiasticas saeculares, et quorumvis, etiam Mendicantium Ordinum, Regulares, de Superiorum tamen suorum licentia, ad illa transmittere, ipsaeque personae inibi etiam, quoad viverent, commorari, ac quarumque in dictis partibus existentium vel accedentium Confessiones audire, illisque auditis in omnibus, praeterquam Sedis praedictae reservatis casibus,

debitam absolutionem impendere, ac poenitentiam salutarem injungere, necnon Ecclesiastica Sacramenta ministrare valeret libere et licite, decrevit.

Ipsisque Alphonso et successoribus suis Regibus Portugalliae, qui essent in posterum et Infanti praefato concessit et indulsit, ac universos et singulos Christifideles Ecclesiasticos saeculares et Ordinum quorumcumque Regulares ubilibet per orbem constitutos, cujuscumque status, gardus, ordinis, conditionis vel praeminentiae forent, etiamsi Archiepiscopali, Episcopali, Imperiali, regali, Reginali, ducali seu aliqua quacumque majori Ecclesiastica vel mundana dignitate praefulgerent, obsecravit in Domino, et per aspersionem sanguinis Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, cujus, ut praemittitur, res agebatur, exhortatus fuit, eisque in remissionem suorum peccaminum injunxit, necnon perpetuo prohibitionis edicto districtius inhibuit, ne ad acquisita seu possessa nomine Alphonsi Regis, aut in Conquista hujusmodi consistentia, Provincias, Insulas, portus, maria et loca quaecumque seu alias ipsis Saracenis, Infidelibus vel paganis arma, ferrum, ligamina, aliaque de jure, Sarracenis deferri prohibita, quoquo modo vel etiam absque speciali ipsius Alphonsi Regis et successorum suorum et Infantis licentia, merces et alia a jure permissa deferre, aut in illis piscari, seu de Provinciis, Insulis, portibus, maribus et locis, seu aliquibus eorum, aut de Conquista hujusmodi se intomittere, vel aliquid per quod Alphonsus Rex et successores sui ac Infans praedicti quominus acquisita et possessa pacifice possiderent, et in Conquistam hujusmodi prosequerentur, et facerent per se vel alium seu alios, directe vel indirecte, vel consilio facere aut impedire quoquo modo praesumerent.

Qui vero contrarium faceret, ultra poenas contra deferentes arma et alia prohibita Sarracenis quibuscumque a jure promulgatas, quas illos incurrere voluit ipso facto: si personae forent singulares Excommunicationis sententiam incurrerent, si Communitas, vel Universitas Civitatis, castrum, villae seu loci, ipsa Civitas, castrum, villa seu locus Ecclesiastico interdicto subjaceret eo ipso, nec contrafacientes ipsi vel aliqui eorum ab Excommunicationis sententia absolventur, nec interdicti hujusmodi relaxationem Apostolica vel alia quavis auctoritate obtinere possent, nisi ipsis Alphonso, et successoribus suis, ac Infanti prius pro praemissis congrue satisfecissent, aut desuper amicabiliter concordassent cum eisdem, praefatus Praedecessor Venerabilibus Fratibus, Archiepiscopo Ulixbonensi, et Sylvensi ac Ceptensi Episcopis, suis Litteris dedit in mandatis, quatenus ipsi vel duo aut unus eorum, per se vel alium seu alios, quoties pro parte Alphonsi Regis et illius successorem ac Infantes praedictorum, vel alicujus eorum desuper forent requisiti, vel aliquis ipsorum foret requisitus, illos, quos Excommunicationis interdicti sententias hujusmodi incurrisse constaret, tandiu Dominicis aliisque festivis diebus in Ecclesiis, dum major inibi populi multitudo convernerit ad Divina, excommunicatos et interdictos ac aliis poenis praedictis innodatos fuisse et esse auctoritate Apostolica declararent et

denuntiarent, necnon ab aliis nuntiari, et ab omnibus arctius evitari facerent, donec pro praemissis satisfecissent, seu concordassent, ut praefertur, contradictores per censuram Ecclesiasticam appellatione postposita compescendo.

Postmodum vero, cum inter praelatum Alphosus Regem, et Charissimum in Christo Filium nostrum Fredinandum Castellae et Legionis Regem illustrem eorumque subditos humani generis hostis cuasatae versutia guerra, aliquandiu viguissent, tandem, Divina operante clementia, ad pacem et concordiam devenerunt, et pro pace inter ipsos firmanda et stabilienda nonnulla capitula inter se fecerunt: inter quae unum capitulum fore dignoscitur hujusmodi tenoris Item: voluerunt praefati Rex et Regina Castellae, Aragoniae et Siciliae, et illis placuit ut ista pax sit firma et stabilis ac semper duratura, promiserunt ex nunc, et in futurum, quod nec per se, nec per alium secrete seu publice, nec per suos haeredes et successores turbabunt, molestabunt nec inquietabunt, de facto vel de jure, in judicio vel extra judicium, dictos Dominos Regem et Principem Portugalliae, nec Reges, qui in futurum in qua sunt, in omnibus commerciis, terris, et permutationibus, sive resignatis Guineae, cum suis miniis, seu aurifodinis, et quibuscumque aliis Insulis, littoribus seu costis maris, terris detectis seu detegendis, inventis et inveniendis, Insulis de la Madera, de Portus Santo, et Insula Deserta, et omnibus Insulis dictis de los Acores id est Accipitrum, et Insulis Florum, et etiam Insulis de Cabo Verde, id est, Promontorio Viridi, et Insulis, quas nunc invenit, et quibuscumque Insulis, quae deinceps invenientur, aut acquirentur ab Insulis de Canaria ultra et citra, et in conspectu Guineae: itaque quidquid est inventum, vel inveniatur, et acquiretur, ultra in dictis terminis id quod est inventum et detectum remaneat dictis Regi et Principi de Portugalliae et suis Regnis, exceptis dumtaxat Insulis de Canaria, Lanzarote, la Palma, Forte Ventura, la Gomera, Hofierro, la Graciosa, la gran Canaria, Tenerife, et omnibus aliis insulis de Canaria acquisitis aut acquirendis, quae remanerent Regnis Castellae, et ita non turbabunt nec molestabunt nec inquietabunt quascumque personas, quae dicta mercimonia et contractus Guineae, nec dictas terras et littora aut costas inventas et inveniendas, nomine aut potentia, et manu dictorum Dominorum Regis et Principis Portugalliae vel suorum successorum tractabunt, negotiabuntur vel acquirent quocumque titulo, modo vel maniere, quod sit aut esse possit.

Immo per istam praesentem et assecurant bona fide, sine dolo malo, dictis Dominis Regi et Principi Portugalliae et successoribus suis, quod non mittent per se nec per alios, nec consentient, immo defendent quod sine licentia dictorum Dominorum Regis et Principis portugalliae non vidant ad negotiandum dicta commercia et tractus, nec Insulis, terris Guineae inventis, vel inveniendis gentes suas naturales, vel subditos in quocumque loco, in quocumque tempore, et in quocumque casu, inopinato vel opinato, nec

quascumque alias gentes exteras, quae morarentur in suis Regnis et Dominiis, vel in suis portibus armarent, vel caperent victualia et necessaria ad navigandum, nec dabunt illis aliquam occasionem favorem, locum, auxilium nec assensum, directe vel indirecte, nec permittent armari nec onerari ad eundem illuc aliquo modo. Et si aliqui ex naturalibus, vel subditis Regnorum Castellae, vel extranei, quicumque sint, irent ad tractandum, impediendum, damnificandum, acquirendum in dicta Guinea, et in dictis locis mercimoniarum et premutationum et minorum seu aurifodinarum, et terris et Insulis, quae sunt inventae et in futurum inveniendae, sine licentia et expresso consensu dictorum Dominorum Regis et Principis Portugalliae vel suorum successorum, quod tales sint puniendi, eo modo, loco et forma, quod ordinatum est per dictum capitulum istius novae reformationis, tractatus pacis, quae servabuntur et debent servari in rebus maritimis contra eos, qui descendunt in littora et portus sive ad depraedandum, damnificandum vel ad male agendum, vel in mari medio dictas res faciant.

Praeterea Rex et Regina Castellae et Legionis promisserunt, et concesserunt modo supra dicto pro se et suis successoribus, ut se non intromittant ad acquirendum, et intendendum aliquo modo in Conquista Regni de Fez, sicut se non intromiserunt Reges antecessores sui praeteriti Castellae, immo libenter dicti Domini Rex et princeps Portugalliae, et sua Regna, et sui successores poterunt prosequi dictam Conquistam, ut eam defendant quomodo illis placuerit: et promiserunt et consenserunt in omnibus dicti Domini Rex et Regina Castellae, nec per se nec per alios, nec in iudicio nec extra iudicium, nec de facto nec de iure, non movebunt super praemissis, nec in parte, nec super re, quae ad illud pertineat, litem, dubium, quaestionem, nec aliquam contentionem, immo totum praeservabunt, complebunt integre, et facient observari et compleri sine aliquo defectu. Et ne in posterum possit allegari ignorantia de vetatione et poenis dictarum rerum contractarum, dicti Domini miserunt illico Iustitiis, et Officialibus portuum dictorum suorum Regnorum, ut totum, quod dictum est, servent, compleant et fideliter exequantur, et mittant ad praeconisandum et publicandum in sua Curia, et in dictis portibus maris eorum supradictorum Regnorum et Dominiorum, ut id perveniat ad eorum notitiam.

Nos igitur, quibus cura universalis Domini gregis coelitus est commissa, quique, ut tenemur, inter Principes et Populos Christianos pacis et quietis suavitatem vigere et perpetuo durare desideramus, cupientes, ut Litterae Nicolai et Callixti, Praedecessorum huiusmodi, ac praesertim capitulum, necnon omnia et singula in eis contenta ad Divini nominis laudem, ac Principum et Populorum singulorum regnorum praedictorum perpetuam pacem, firma perpetuo et illibata permaneant, motu proprio, non ad alicujus nobis super hoc oblatae petitionis instantiam, sed de nostra mera liberalitate ac providentia, et ex certa scientia, necnon de Apostolicae potestatis plenitudine, Litteras Nicolai et

Callixti, praedecessorum hujusmodi, ac capitulum, praedicta, rata et grata habentes, illa, necnon omnia et singula in eisdem contenta, auctoritate Apostolica, tenore praesentium, approbamus, et confirmamus, ac praesentis scripti patrocinio communimus: decernentes, illa omnia, et singula plenum firmitatis robur obtinere, ac perpetuo observari debere...Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, anno Incarnationis Dominicae millesimo quadringentesimo octogesimo primo, XI Kalendas Julii, Pontificatus nostri anno decimo.

10. “Eximiae Devotionis” of Pope Alexander VI in 1493 (Source: Document of the Archives of the Indies at Seville, Patronato, 1-1-1, No. 4)

Alexander Episcopus, Servus Servorum Dei. Carissimo in Christo filio Ferdinando Regi et Carissime in Christo filie Elisabeth, Regine Castelle, Legionis, Aragonum, et Granate, illustribus, salute et Apostolicam Benedictionem.

Eximiae devotionis sinceritas et integra fides quibus nos et Romanam reveremini ecclesiam non indigene merentur ut illa vobis favorabiliter concedamus per que sanctam et laudabile propositum vestrum et opus inceptum in querendis terris et insulis remotis ac incognitis in dies melius et facilius ad honorem Omnipotentis Dei et imperii Christiani propagationem ac fidei Catholice exaltationem proseguere valeatis. Hodie siquidem omnes et singulas terras firmas et insulas remotas et incognitas, versus partes occidentales et mare oceanum consistentes, per vos seu nuncios vestros, ad id propterea non sine magnis laboribus, periculis, et impensis destinatos, repertas et reperendas imposterum, que sub actuali dominio temporali aliquorum dominorum Christianorum constitute non essent, cum omnibus illarum dominiis, civitatibus, castris, locis, villis, juribus, et jurisdictionibus universis, vobis, heredibusque et successoribus vestris, Castelle et Legionis regibus, imperpetuum, motu proprio et ex certa scientia ac de apostolice potestatis plenitudine donavimus, concessimus, et assignavimus, prout in nostris inde confectis litteris plenius continetur. Cum autem alias nonnullis Portugalliae regibus qui impartibus Africe, Guinee, et Minere Auri, ac alias, insulas etiam ex similibus concessione et donatione apostolica eis facta repererunt et acquisiverunt, per Sedem Apostolicam diversa privilegia, gratie, libertates, immunitates, exemptiones, facultates, litterae et indulta concessa fuerint; nos volentes etiam, prout dignum et conveniens existit, vos, haeredesque et successors vestros predictos, non minoribus gratiis, prerogativis, et favoribus proseguere, motu simili, non ad vestram vel alterius pro vobis super hoc oblate petitionis instantiam sed de nostra mera liberalitate ac eisdem scientia et

apostolice potestatis plenitudine, vobis et haeredibus et successoribus vestris predictis, ut in insulis et terries per vos seu nomine vestro hactenus repertis hujusmodi et reperiendis imposterum, omnibus et singulis gratis et privilegiis, exemptionibus, libertatibus, facultatibus, immunitatibus, litteris et indultis regibus Portugalliae concessis hujusmodi, quorum omnium tenores, ac si de verbo ad verbum presentibus insererentur, haberi volumus pro sufficienter expressis et insertis, uti, potiri, et gaudere libere et licite possitis et debeatis in omnibus et per Omnia perinde ac si illa Omnia vobis ac haeredibus et successoribus vestris praefatis specialiter concessa fuissent, auctoritate apostolica, tenore presentium de specialis dono gratie indulgemus, illaque in omnibus et per omnia ad vos haeredesque ac successores vestros predictos extendimus partier et ampliamus, ac eisdem modo et forma perpetuo concedimus, non obstantibus constitutionibus et ordinationibus apostolicis, nec non omnibus illis que in litteris Portugalliae regibus concessis hujusmodi concessa sunt, non obstare ceterisque contrariis quibuscumque. Verum, quia difficile foret presents litteras ad singular queque loca in quibus expendiens fuerit, deferri, volumus, ac motu et scientia similibus decernimus, quod illarum transumptis, manu publici notarii inde rogati subscriptis et sigillo alicujus persone in ecclesiastica dignitate constitute, seu curie ecclesiastice, munitis, ea prorsus fides indubia in iudicio et extra, ac alias ubilibet, adhibeatur, que presentibus adhiberetur, si essent exhibite vel ostense.

Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostrorum indulti, extensionis, ampliacionis, concessionis, voluntatis, et decreti infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Siquis autem hoc attemptare presumpserit, indignationem Omnipotentis Dei ac Beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum ejus se noverit incursum. Datum Romae apud Sanctum Petrum, anno Incarnationis Dominice millesimo quadringentesimo nonagesimo tertio, quinto nonas Maii, Pontificatus nostri anno primo.

11. “Inter Caetera” of Pope Alexander VI in 1493 (Source: Document of the Archives of the Indies at Seville, Patronato, 1-1, No. 3)

Alexander VI. Epsicopus, Servus Servorum Dei: Charissimo in Christo filio Ferdinando Regi, & Charissimae in Christo filiae Elizabeth Riginae Castellae, Legionis, Aragonum, Siciliae, & Granatae, illustribus: Salutem & Apostolicam benedictionem.

Inter caetera Divinae Majestatis beneplacita opera, et cordis nostri desiderabilia, illud profecto potissimum existit, ut fides catholica et Christiana Religio nostris praesertim temporibus exaltetur, ac ubilibet ampliatur et dilatetur,

animarumque salus procuretur, ac barbaricae nationes deprimantur, et ad fidem ipsam reducantur. Unde cum ad hanc sacram Petri Sedem, Divina favente clementia, meritis licet imparibus, evecti fuerimus, cognoscentes Vos tamquam veros Catholicos Reges et Principes, quales semper fuisse novimus, et a vobis praeclare gesta toti pene jam Orbi notissima demonstrant, nedum id exoptare, sed omni conatu, studio et diligentia, nullis laaboribus, nullis impensis, nullisque parcendo periculis, etiam proprium sanguinem effundendo efficere, ac omnem animum vestrum, omnesque conatus ad hoc jamdudum dedicasse, quemadmodum recuperatio Regni Granatae a tyrannide Saracenorum hodiernis temporibus per vos, cum tanta Divini nominis gloria, facta testatur, digne ducimus non immerito et debemus illa vobis etiam sponte et favorabiliter concedere, per quae hujusmodi sanctum et laudabile ab immortali Deo coeptum propositum in dies ferventiori animo ad ipsius Dei honorem et imperii Christiani propagationem prosequi valeatis.

Sane accepimus quod vos dudum animum proposueratis aliquas insulas et terras firmas remotas et incognitas, ac per alios hactenus non repertas, quaerere et invenire, ut illarum incolas et habitatores ad colendum Redemptorem nostrum et Fidem Catholicam profitendum reduceretis, sed hactenus in expugnatione et recuperatione ipsius Regni Granatae plurimum occupati hujusmodi sanctum et laudabile propositum vestrum ad optatum finem perducere nequivistis, sed tandem sicut Domino placuit, Regno praedicto recuperato, volentes desiderium adimplere vestrum, dilectum filium Christophorum Columbum, virum utique dignum et plurimum commendandum, ac tanto negotio aptum, cum navigiis et hominibus ad similia instructis, non sine maximis laboribus et periculis ac expensis destinatis, ut Terra firmas, et insulas remotas et incognitas hujusmodi, per Mare ubi hactenus navigatum non fuerat, diligenter inquireret.

Qui tandem (Divino auxilio facta extrema diligentia in mari Oceano navigantes) certas insulas remotissimas, et etiam terras firmas, quae per alios hactenus repertae non fuerant, invenerunt, in quibus quamplurimae gentes pacifice viventes, et ut asseritur, nudi incedentes, nec carnibus vescentes inhabitant, et ut praefati Nuntii vestri possunt opinari, gentes ipsae in insulis et terris praedictis habitantes credunt unum Deum Creatorem in Coelis esse, ad Fidem Catholicam amplexandum, et bonis moribus imbuendum satis apti videntur, spesque habetur quod si erudirentur, nomen Salvatoris Domini nostri Jesu Christi in terris et insulis praedictis faterentur, ac praefactus Christophorus in una ex principalibus insulis praedictis, jam unam turrim satis munitam, in qua certos Christianos, qui secum inerant, in custodiam, et ut alias insulas et terras firmas, remotas et incognitas inquirerent posuit, construi et aedificare fecit.

In quibus quidem insulis et terris jam repertis, aurum, aromata, et aliae quamplurimae res pretiosae diversi generis, et diversae qualitatis reperiuntur.

Unde omnibus diligenter, et praesertim Fidei Catholicae exaltatione et dilatatione (prout decet Catholicos Reges et Principes) consideratis, more progenitorum vestrorum clarae memoriae Regum, terras firmas et insulas praedictas, illarumque incolas et habitatores vobis, divina favente clementia, subjicere, et ad Fidem Catholicam reducere proposuistis.

Nos igitur hujusmodi vestrum sanctum et laudabile propositum plurimum in Domino commendantes, ac cupientes, ut illud ad debitum finem perducat, et ipsum nomen Salvatoris nostri in partibus illis inducatur, hortamur vos quamplurimum in Domino, et per sacri lavacri susceptionem, qua mandatis Apostolicis obligati estis, et viscera misericordiae Domini nostri Jesu Christi attente requirimus, ut cum expeditionem hujusmodi omnino prosequi et assumere proba mente orthodoxae Fidei zelo intendatis, populos in hujusmodi insulis et terris degentes ad Christianam Religionem suscipiendam inducere velitis et debeatis, nec pericula, nec labores ullo umquam tempore vos deterreant, firma spe fiduciaque conceptis, quod Deus omnipotens conatos vestros feliciter prosequetur.

Et ut tanti negotii provinciam Apostolicae gratiae largitate donati liberius et audacius assumatis, Motu proprio, non ad vestram vel alterius pro vobis super hoc nobis oblatae petitionis instantiam, sed de nostra mera liberalitate, et ex certa scientia, ac de Apostolicae potestatis plenitudine, omnes insulas et terras firmas inventas et inveniendas, detectas et detegendas versus Occidentem et Meridiem, fabricab'ndo et construendo unam lineam a Polo Arctico, scilicet Septentrione, ad Polum Antarcticum, scilicet Meridiem, sive terrae firmae et insulae inventae et inveniendae sint versus Indiam, aut versus aliam quamcumque partem, quae linea distet a qualibet Insularum, quae vulgariter nuncupantur de los Azores y Cabo Verde, centum leucis versus Occidentem et Meridiem, ita quod omnes insulae et terrae firmae repertae et reperiendae, detectae et detegendae, et praefata linea versus Occidentem et Meridiem, per alium Regem aut Principem Christianum non fuerint actualiter possessae usque ad diem Nativitatis Domini nostri Jesu Christi proxime praeteritum, a quo incipit Annus praesens Millesimus quadringentisimus nonagesimus tertius, quando fuerunt per Nuntios et Capitaneos vestros inventae aliquae praedictarum insularum, auctoritate omnipotentis Dei Nobis in beato Petro concessa, ac Vicariatus Jesu Christi, qua fungimur in terris, cum omnibus illarum Dominiis, Civitatibus, Castris, Locis, Juribusque et Jurisdictionibus, ac pertinentiis unversis, Vobis, haeredibusque et successoribus vestris in perpetuum tenore praesentium donamus, concedimus, et assignamus. Vosque et haeredes ac successores praefatos illarum dominos cum plena, libera et omnimoda potestate, auctoritate et jurisdictione, facimus, constituimus et deputamus.

Decernentes nihilominus per huiusmodi donationem, concessionem et assignationem nostram nulli Christiano Principi, qui actualiter praefatas insulas et terras firmas possederit usque ad dictum diem Nativitatis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, jus quaesitum sublatum intelligi posse, aut auferri debere. Et insuper mandamus vobis in virtute sanctae obedientiae ad terras firmas et insulas praedictas viros probos et Deum timentes, doctos, peritos et expertos, ad instruendum incolas et habitatores praefatos in Fide Catholica et bonis moribus imbuendum destinare debeatis, omnem debitam diligentiam in praemissis adhibentes.

Ac quibuscumque personis cujuscumque dignitatis, etiam Imperialis et Regalis, status, gardus, ordinis vel conditionis, sub excommunicationis latae sententiae poena, quam eo ipso si contrafecerint incurrant, districtius inhibemus, ne ad insulas et terras firmas inventas et inveniendas, detectas et detegendas versus Occidentem et Meridiem, fabricando et construendo lineam a Polo Arctico ad Polum Antarcticum, sive terrae firmae et insulae inventae et inveniendae sint versus aliam quamcumque partem, quae linea distet a qualibet insularum, quae vulgariter nuncupantur de los Azores et Cabo-Verde, centum leucis versus Occidentem, et Meridiem, ut praefertur, pro mercibus habendis, vel quavis alia de causa accedere praesument absque vestra ac haeredum et successorum vestrorum praedictorum licentia speciali.

Non obstantibus constitutionibus et ordinationibus Apostolicis, caeterisque contrariis quibuscumque. In illo a quo imperia et dominationes ac bona cuncta procedunt confidentes, quod dirigente Domino actus vestros, si huiusmodi sanctum et laudabile propositum prosequamini, brevi tempore cum felicitate et gloria totius populi Christiani, vestri labores et conatus exitum felicissimum consequentur.

Verum quia difficile feret praesentes litteras ad singula quaeque loca, in quibus expediens fuerit deferri, volumus, ac motu et scientia similibus discernibus, quod illarum transumptis manu publici Notarii roagti subscriptis et sigillo alicujus personae in Ecclesiastica dignitate constitutae, seu Curiae Ecclesiasticae munitis, ea prorsus fides in iudicio et extra, ac alias ubilibet adhibeatur, quae praesentibus adhiberetur, si essent exhibitae vel ostensae.

Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostrae commendationis, hortationis, requisitionis, donationis, concessionis, assignationis, constitutionis, decreti, mandati, inhibitionis et voluntatis infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Si quis autem hoc attentare praesumpserit, indignationem omnipotentis Dei, ac beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum ejus, se noverit incursum. Datum Romae apud S. Petrum, Anno Incarnationis Dominicae, Millesimo quadringentesimo nonagesimo tertio, quarto nonas Maii, Pont. Nostri anno primo.

12. “Praecelsae Devotionis” of Pope Leo X in 1514 (Source: Document of ANTT- Coleção de Bullas, maço 29)

Leo Episcopus, Servus Servorum Dei. Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam.

Praecelsae devotionis et indefessum fervorem, integer fidei puritatem, ingeniique in Sanctam Sedem Apostolicam observantiam, excelsarumque virtutum flagrantiam, quibus charissimus in Christo filius noster, Emmanuel Portugalliae et Algarbiorum rex illustris, sese nobis et dicte sedi multipliciter gratum, obsequiosum, et acceptum prebuit, apud archana mentis nostre digne revolventes, presertim cum, magistra rerum experientia teste, perpendimus ac apertis documentis in dies clare conspicimus, quam sedula vigilantia sua Sublimitas et Serenitas suorum predecessorum Portugalliae regum gesta sequendo, plerumque in persona, non sine gravissimis laboribus et expensis, nixa sit et continuo ferventius enititur, ut Salvatori nostro ac nomini Christiano infensa Maurorum et aliorum infidelium immanitas nedum a fidelium finibus arceatur quinimo suis flagitiis male perditam, et arctetur funditus et deleatur, et Christiana religio, optata pace freta, votiva in omnibus suscipiat incrementa; his considerationibus et pleisque aliis legitimis causis suadentibus, congruum et opera pretium existimamus, ea que a predecessoribus nostris, romanis pontificibus, ipsius Emmanuelis Regis predecessoribus prefatis concessa comperimus, nostro etiam munimine confovere ac alia etiam de novo concedere, ut exinde Celsitudo sua, Apostolice Sedi predictae ulteriori munificentia premunita, in prosecutione promissorum non solum ardentius inflametur, sed et liberali ac munifica compensatione accepta ceteros reddat et faciat ad similia promptiores, et ejus erga nos et sedem predictam devotione augeatur, et pro laboribus quos Universali Ecclesiae circa Catholicae et Apostolicae fidei exaltationem bene serviendo sustinet condignos honores et gratias reportet.

Dudum siquidem a felicis recordationis Nicolao Papa V. et Sixto IV. Romanis pontificibus, predecessoribus nostris, emanarunt diverse littere, tenoris subsequentis.

(Here follows a word for word insertion of the Bulls of Nicholas V in 1452 and 1455, the Bull of Callistus III in 1456 and that of Sixtus IV in 1481 respectively as already presented above.)

Nos igitur, qui ejusdem Emmanuelis Regis, fidei augmentum et propagationem jugiter procurantis, commode et utilitates supremis desideriis affectamus, motu proprio, non ad ipsius Emmanuelis Regis vel alicujus alterius pro eo nobis super hoc oblate petitionis instantiam, sed de nostra mera deliberatione et ex certa nostra scientia ac de apostolicae potestatis plenitudine, omnes et singulas litteras predictas ac Omnia et singularia in eis contenta et inde secuta quaecumque

rata et grata habentes, auctoritate apostolica, tenore presentium approbamus et innovamus ac confirmamus, suppletes omnes et singulos defectus, tam juris quam facti, siqui forsan intervenerint in eisdem, ac perpetuae firmitatis robur obtinere debere decernimus.

Et pro potiori cautela, Omnia et singular in eisdem litteris contenta, ac quecumque alia imperia, regna, principatus, ducatus, provincias, terras, civitates, opida, castra, dominia, insulas, portus, maria, littora, et bona quecumque, mobilia et immobilia, ubicunque consistentia, per eundem Emmanuelem Regem et predecessores suos a dictis infidelibus, etiam solitaria quecumque recuperate, detecta, inventa, et acquista, ac per ipsum Emmanuelem Regem et successores suos in posterum recuperanda, acquirenda, detegenda, et invenienda, tam a Capitibus de Bogiador et de Naon usque ad Indos quam etiam ubicunque et in quibuscunque partibus, etiam nostris temporibus forsam ignotis, eisdem auctoritate et tenore de novo concedimus; litterasque supradictas ac Omnia et singular in illis contenta ad premissa etiam extendimus et ampliamus, ac in virtute sanctae obedientie et indignationis nostre pena quibuscunque fidelibus Christianis, etiam si imperialis regali, et quacunque alia prefulgeant dignitate, ne eundem Emmanuelem Regem et successores suos quomodolibet in permissis impedire, ac eisdem infidelibus auxilium, consilium, vel favorem prestare presumant, auctoritate et tenore premissis inhibemus.

Quocirca venerabilibus fratribus nostris archiepiscopo Ulixbonensi, et Egiptanensi ac Funchalensi episcopis, per apostolica scripta motu simili mandamus quatinus ipsi, vel duo aut unus eorum, per se vel alium seu alios, presentes litteras ac Omnia et singulara in eis contenta, ubi et quando expedierit, ac quotiens pro parte Emmanuelis Regis et successorum suorum predictorum fuerint super hoc requisiti solemniter publicantes, ac eisdem Emmanueli Regi et successoribus in premissis efficacia defensionis presidio assistentes, faciant auctoritate nostra presentes et alias litteras et in eis contenta hujusmodi inviolabiliter observari, non permittentes eos super illis per quoscunque quomodolibet molestari; contradictores per censuram ecclesiasticam, appellation postposita, compescendo; invocato etiam ad hoc, si opus fuerit, auxilio brachii secularis. Et nihilominus, legitimis super his habendis servatis processibus, illos quos censuras et penas per eos pro tempore latas eos incurrisse constiterit, quotiens expedierit, iteratis vicibus, aggravare procurent.

Non obstantibus recolende memorie Bonifaci Pape VIII., similiter predecessoris nostril, quia inter alia cavetur ne quis extra suam civitatem et diocesim, nisi in certis exceptis casibus, et in illis ultra unam dietam a fine sue diocesim ad iudicium evocetur, seu ne justices ab Apostolica Sede deputati, extra civitatem et diocesim in quibus deputati fuerint, contra quoscunque procedure, aut alii, vel aliis vices suas committere presumant, et de duabus dietis in concilio generali edita ac aliis apostolicis constitutionibus ac omnibus illis que

idem Nicolaus et alii predecessores, qui similes eidem Regi Portugalliae fecerunt concessiones, in eorum litteris voluerunt non obstare, contrariis quibuscunque; aut si aliquibus, communiter vel divisim, ab eadem sit sede indultum quod interdicti, suspendi, vel excommunicari non possint per litteras apostolicas non facientes plenam et expressam ac de verbo ad verbum de indulto hujusmodi mentionem.

Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostre approbationis, innovationis, confirmationis, suppletionis, decreti, concessionis, extensionis, ampliacionis, inhibitionis, et mandate infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Siquis autem hoc attemptare presumpserit, indignationem Omnipotentis Dei ac Beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum ejus se noverit incursum. Datum Romae apud Sanctum Petrum, anno Incarnationis Dominice millesimo quingentesimo quartododemo, tertio nonas Novembris, pontificatus nostri anno secundo.

B. Documents of the Papal Magisterium against the Enslavement of Peoples Used in this Work. (1435-1839)

1. “Sicut Dudum” of Pope Eugenius IV in 1435. (Source: Baronius *Annales Ecclesiastici*, ed. O. Raynaldus, Vol. 28, Pp. 226-227)

Eugenius Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei. Venerabilibus fratribus Pacem. Sicut dudum venerabilis fratris nostri Fernandi Robicensis episcopi inter Christifideles, ac habitatores insularum Canariae interpretis, et ab eis ad sedem Apostolicam nuncii destinati, aliorumque fideidignorum insinuatione intelleximus; licet in insulis praedictis quaedam de Lancellot nuncupata, et nonnullae aliae circumadiacentes insulae, quarum habitatores et incolae solam legem naturalem imitantes, nullan antea infidelium nec haeticorum sectam noverant a paucis citra temporibus, divina cooperante clementia, ad orthodoxam catholicam fidem sint reductae, pro eo tamen, quod labente tempore, in quibusdam aliis ex praedictis insulis gubernatores ac defensores idonei, qui illarium habitores et incolas in spiritualibus et temporalibus ad rectam fidei observantiam dirigerent, ac eorum res et bona concite tuerentur defuerunt, nonnulli Christiani, quod dolenter referimus, diversis confictis coloribus et captatis occasionibus, ad praefatas insulas cum eorum navigiis, manu armata accedentes, plures inibi etiam juxta ipsorum simplicitatem, incaute repertos utriusque sexus homines, nonnullos iam tunc baptismatis unda renatos, et alios ex eis sub spe, ac pollicitatione, quod eos vellent sacramento baptismatis insignire, etiam quandoque fraudulentem et deceptorie, secularitatis fide promissa, et non servata, secum captives, etiam ad partes cismarinas

duxerunt, bonis eorum usus, et utilitatem converses, nonnullos quoque ex habitatoribus et incolis praedictis subdiderunt perpetuae servituti, ac aliquos personis aliis vendiderunt, et alias contra eos diversa illicita et nefaria commiserunt, propter quae quamplurimi ex residues dictarum insularum habitatoribus servitutum huiusmodi plurimum execrantes, prioribus erroribus remanent involuti, se propterea ab suscipiendi baptismatis proposito retrahentes, in gravem Divinae majestatis offensam, et animarum periculum, ac Christianae religionis non modicum detrimentum.

Nos igitur, ad quos pertinet, praesertim in praemissis, et circa ea, peccatorem quemlibet corrigere de peccato, non volentes ex sub dissimulatione transire, ac cupientes, prout ex debito pastoralis tenemur officii, quantum possumus, salubriter providere, ac ipsorum habitatorum et incolarum afflictionibus pio et paterno compatientes affectu, universos et singulos, principes temporales, dominos, capitaneos, armigeros, barones, milites, nobiles, communitates, et alios quoscumque Christifideles cuiuscumque status, gradus, vel conditionis fuerint, obsecramus in Domino, et per aspersionem Sanguinis Jesu Christi exhortamur, eisque in remissionem suorum peccaminum injungimus, ut et ipsi a praemissis desistant, et eorum subditos a talibus retrahant, rigideque compescant. Et nihilominus universes, et singulis eisdem utriusque sexus Christifidelibus praecipimus, et mandamus, quatenus infra quindecim dierum spatium a die publicationis praesentium in loco, in quo ipsi degunt faciendae computandorum, omnes et singulos utriusque sexus dictarum insularum olim habitatores Canarios nuncupatos, tempore captionis eorum captos, quos servituti subditos habent, pristinae restituant libertati, ac totaliter liberos perpetuo esse et absque aliquarum pecuniarum exactione sive receptione, abire dimittant, alioquin lapsis diebus eisdem excommunicationis sententiam ipso facto incurrant, a qua nec apud sedem Apostolicam, vel per archiepiscopum Hispatensem pro tempore existentem, seu Fernandum episcopum antedictum, ac nisi personis captivatis huiusmodi prius et ante omnia libertati deditis, et bonis eorum primitus restitutis, absolvi nequeant, praeterquam in mortis articulo constituti. Similem excommunicationis sententiam incurrere volumus omnes et singulos, qui eosdem Canarios baptizatos, aut ad baptismum voluntarie venientes, capere, aut vendere, vel servituti subiicere attentabunt, a qua aliter, quam ut praefertur, nequeant absolutionis beneficium obtinere. Illi vero, qui exhortationibus, et mandatis nostris huiusmodi humiliter paruerint cum effectu, praeter nostram et Apostolicae sedis gratiam, et benedictionem, quam proinde uberius consequantur, aeternae beatitudinis professors fieri mereantur, et a dextris Dei cum electis, perpetua requie collocari, etc. Datum Florentiae anno incarnationis Dominicae MCDXXXV, id. Januarii.

2. “Sublimis Deus” of Pope Paul III in 1537. (Source: Document of Archivo Secreto Vaticano (ASV), A.A.Arm. XXXVII, Vol. 15, Fl. 145rv)

Paulus Episcopus, Servus Servorum Dei, Universis Christi fidelibus praesentes litteras inspecturis, Salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem.

Sublimis Deus sic delexit humanum genus, ut hominem talem condiderit qui non solum boni sicut ceterae creaturae particeps esset, sed ipsum Summum inaccessible et invisibile Bonum attingere et facie ad faciem videre posset. Et cum homo ad vitam et beatitudinem eternam obeundam etiam Sacrarum Scripturarum testimonio creatus sit et hanc vitam et beatitudinem aeternam nemo consequi valeat nisi perfidem Domini nostri Jesu Christi- fateri necesse est hominem talis conditionis et naturae esse ut fidem Christi recipere possit, et quecumque, qui naturam hominis sortitus est, ad ipsam Fidem recipiendam habilem esse. Nec enim quisquam adeo desipere creditur, ut sese credat finem obtinere posse et medium summe necessarium nequaquam attingere.

Hinc Veritas ipsa quae nec falli, nec fallere potest, cum Praedictores fidei ad officium praedicationis destinaret, dixisse dignoscitur: euntes docete omnes gentes. Omnes dixit, absque omni defectu, cum omnes fidei disciplinae capaces existant. Quod videns et invidens ipsius humani generis aemulus, qui bonis omnibus, ut pereant, semper adversatur, modum excogitavit hactenus inauditum quo impediret, ne verbum Dei gentibus, ut salvae fierent, praedicaretur, ac quosdam suos satellites commovit, qui suam cupiditatem adimplere cupientes, occidentales et meridionales Indos et alias gentes, quae temporibus istis ad nostram notitiam pervenerunt, sub praetextu, quod fidei catholicae expertes existant, utri bruta animalia ad nostram obsequia redigendos esse passim asserere praesumunt. Et eos in servitutem redigunt, tantis afflictionibus illos urgentes quantum vix bruta animalia illis servientia urgeant. Nos igitur, qui ejusdem Domini nostri vices, licet indigni, gerimus in terris, et oves gregis sui nobis commissas, quae extra ejus ovile sunt, ad ipsum ovile toto nisu exquirimus, attendentes Indos ipsos, utpote, veros homines, non solum Christianae fidei capaces existere, sed, ut nobis innotuit, ad fidem ipsam promptissime currere, ac volentes super his congruis remediis providere, praedictos Indos et omnes alias gentes ad notitiam Christianorum in posterum deventuras, licet extra fidem existant, sua tamen libertate ac rerum suarum domino privatos seu privandos non esse, imo libertate et domino hujusmodi uti, et potiri et gaudere libere et licite posse, nec in servitutem redigi debere: ac quidquid secus fieri contigerit, irritum et inane nulliusque roboris vel momenti, ipsosque Indos et alias gentes verbi Dei praedicatione et exemplo bonae vitae ad dictam fidem Christi invitandos fore. Et praesentius litterarum transumptis manu alicuius Notarii publici subscriptis, ac sigillo alicuius personae in dignitate

ecclesiastica constitutae munitis, eadem Fidem adhibendam esse quae originalibus adhiberetur. Auctoritate Apostolica per praesentes decernimus et declaramus, non obstantibus praemissis, coeterisque contrariis quibuscumque. Datum Romae anno 1537, quarto Nonas Junii, Pontificatus nostri anno tertio.

3. “Cum Sicuti” of Pope Gregory XIV in 1591. (Source: Document of *Archivo Secreto Vaticano (ASV)*, Sec. Brevis, Vol. 178)

Gregorius Papa XIV Servus Servorum Dei. Ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Cum, sicuti nuper accepimus, in primaeva conversione Indorum insularum Philippinarum tanta vitae pericola propter ipsorum Indorum ferocitatem adeunda fuerint, ut multi contra ipsos Indos arma su mere et in bonis damna dare coacti extiterint, ipsique Indis postea, relictis falsis Deorum cultibus, et verum Deum agnoscentes, fidem catholicam amplexit sint, et qui haec damna in bonis ipsorum Indorum dederunt, cupiant bona ablata hujusmodi restituere licet id faciendi facultatem non habeant.

Nos serenitati conscientiarum dictarum personarum consulere, et periculis ac incommodis hujusmodi obviare cupientes, venerabili fratri nostro Episcopo manilan per praesentes committimus et mandamus, quatenus auctoritate nostra curet ut supradictae personae et domini, quibus facienda est restituito, inter se desuper componant, ipsisque dominis, si certi domini non extiterint, eadem compositio per eundem Episcopum fiat in utilitatem et subventionem pauperum Indorum, si illi, qui, restituere tenentur, id comode facere potuerint, si vero pauperes fuerint, satisfaciant, cum ad meliorem conditionem seu fortunam pervenerint pinguiores.

Et ne constitutiones et determinationes a dicto Episcopo et Religiosis ac Doctoribus insimul congrgatis, ad felicem progressum christianorum factae, ab illis pro suo libito et re vel affectu particulari infringantur, volumus et Apostolica auctoritate decernimus, ut quae ab ipsa Congregatione per suffragia majoris partis in favorem fidei christianae vel salutem animarum, pro bono ipsorum Indorum conversorum redimine ordinata et mandata fuerint, firmiter ac inviolabiliter observentur, donec et quousque ab eadem Congregatione aliter ordinatum vel mandatum fuerit...

Postremo cum, sicut accepimus, carrissimus in Christo filius noster, Philippus, Hispaniarum Rex catholicus, prohibuerit quod nullus Hispanus in praedictis insulsi Philippinis mancipia sive servos, etiam jure belli justis et injustis, aut emptionis, vel quovis alio titulo vel praetextu, propter multas fraudes inibi committi adhuc eadem mancipia, apud se, contra ipsius Philippi Regis edictum vel mandatum detineant. Nos, ut ipsi Indi ad doctrinas christianas, et ad proprias aedes et bona sua libere et secure absque ullo servitutis metu ire et

redire valeant, ut rationi congruit et aequitati, omnibus et singulis, cujuscumque status, gradus, conditionis, ordinis et dignitatis existant, in eisdem insulis existentibus, personis, in virtute sanctae obedientiae et sub excommunicationis poena praecipimus et mandamus, quatenus, publicatis praesentibus, quaecumque mancipia et servos Indos, si quos habent, seu apud se detinent, ac omni dolo et fraude cessante, liberos omnino dimittant et in posterum nec captivos, nec servos ullo modo faciant aut retineant, kuxta dicti Philippi Regis edictum seu mandatum...Datum Romae apud S. Petrum sub annulo Piscatoris die 18 Aprilis 1591, Pontificatus nostri anno primo.

4. “Commissum Nobis” of Pope Urban VIII in 1639. (Source: Bullarum Diplomatum Pontificum, Vol. X-14, Pp. 712-714)

Dilectio Filio Jurium et Spoliorum Camerae Apostolicae in Portugalliae et Algarbiorum Regnis debitorum Collectori Generali. Urban Papa VIII. Dilecte Fili Noster, salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem. Commissum nobis a Domino Supremi Apostolatus officii ministerium postulat, ut, nullius hominis salutem a cura nostra alienam ducentes, non solum in Christifideles, sed etiam in eos qui adhuc in ethnicae superstitionis tenebris ex gremio Ecclesiae versantur, paternae nostrae caritatis affectus diffundamus, et quae eis, quominus ad Christianae veritatis et fidei agnitionem perducantur, quoquomodo obstaculo esse possunt, quantum cum Domino possumus, amovere studeamus.

Alias siquidem fel. Rec Paulus III, Praedecessor Noster, statui Indorum occidentalium et meridionalium, quos in servitatem redigi, suisque bonis privari, eaque de causa ab amplectenda Christi fide averti, acceperat, consulere cupiens; universis et singulis cujuscumque dignitatis, status conditionis, gradus et dignitatis existentibus, sub excommunicationis latae sententiae poena eo ipso incurrenda, a qua non nisi ab eo vel Romano pontifice pro tempore existente, praeterquam in mortis articulo et satisfactione praevia, absolvi possent, prohibuit, seu prohiberi mandavit, ne praedictos Indos quomodolibet in servitatem redigere, aut eos bonis suis spoliare quoquomodo praesumerent, et alias prout in ejusdem Pauli Praedecessoris in simili forma Brevis die 29 Maji 1537, desuper expeditis litteris, quarum tenor plenius continetur. Cum autem sicut accepimus causae propter quas Litterae Pauli Praedecessoris praedicti emanarunt, etiam de praesenti vigeant, dicirco Nos ipsius Pauli Praedecessoris vestigiis inharrendo, ac impiorum hominum ausus, qui Indios praedictos, quos omnibus christianae caritatis et mansuetudinis officiis ad suscipiendam christi fidem inducere oportet, inhumanitatis actibus ab illa deterrent, reprimere volentes, tibi per praesentes committimus et mandamus, ut per te vel alium seu

alios omnibus Indis, tam in Paraquariae et brasiliae provinciis ac ad flumen de la Plata nuncupatae, quam in quibusvis aliis regionibus et locis in Indis occidentalibus et meridionalibus existentibus, in praemissis efficaciae defensionis praesidio assistens, universis et singulis personis, tam saecularibus etiam ecclesiasticis, cujuscumque status, sextus, gradus, conditionis et dignitatis, etiam speciali nota et mentione dignis existentibus, quam cujusvis ordinis, congregationis, societatis, religionis et instituti, mendicantibus et non mendicantibus, ac Monachal. Regular.. sub excommunicationis latae sententiae, per contravenientes eo ipso incurrenda, poena, a qua non nisi a Nobis vel pro tempore esistente Romano Pontifice, praeterquam in mortis articulo constituti et satisfactione praevia, absolvi possint, districtius inhibeas, ne de cantero praedictos Indos in servitutem redigere, vendere, ab uxoribus et filiis suis separare, rebus et bonis suis spoliare, ad alia loca deducere et transmittere, aut quoquomodo libertate privare, in servitute retinere, necnon praedicta agentibus consilium, auxilium, favorem et operam quocumque praetextu et quesito colore prestare, aut id licitum predicare seu docere, ac alios quomodolibet praemissis cooperari audeant seu praesumant. Contradictores quondam et rebelles, ac Tibi in praemissis non parentes in poenam excommunicationis hujusmodi incidisse declarando, ac per alias etiam censuras et poenas ecclesiasticas, aliaque opportuna juris et facti remedia, appellatione postposita, compescendo etc. Datum Romae apud S. Petrum sub Annulo Piscatoris die 22 Aprilis 1639, Pontificatus nostri anno decimo sexto.

5. “Immensa Pastorum” of Pope Benedict XIV in 1741. (Source: Benedict XIV Bullarium, Vol. I, Sac. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 99-102)

Venerabilibus Fratribus, Antistitibus Brasiliae, aliarumque Ditionum Carissimo in Cristo Filio Nostro Johanni Portugalliae, et Algarbiorum Regi, in Indiis Occidentalibus, et America subjectarum. Venerabiles Fratres, Salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem.

Immensa Pastorum Principis Jesu Christi, qui, ut homines vitam abundantius haberent, venit, et seipsum tradidit redemptionem pro multis, caritas urget nos, ut, quemadmodum ipsius vices plane immerentes gerimus in terris, ita majorem caritatem non habeamus, quam ut animam nostram, non solum pro Christifidelibus, sed pro omnibus etiam omnino hominibus ponere, satagamus...

Ea propter non sine gravissimo paterni animi nostri maerore accepimus, post tot inita ab iisdem Praedecessoribus Nostris Romanis Pontificibus Apostolicae providentiae consilia, post editas Constitutiones, opem et subsidium ac

praesidium Infidelibus omni meliori modo praestandum esse, non injurias, non flagella, non vincula, non servitutem, non necem inferendam esse, sub gravissimis poenis, et Ecclesiasticis censuris, praescribentes, adhuc reperiri, praesertim in istis Brasiliæ regionibus, homines Orthodoxæ Fidei cultores, qui veluti caritatis, in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum diffusæ sensuum penitus obliti, miseros Indos non solum Fidei luce carentes, verum etiam sacro regenerationis lavacro ablutos, in montanis, asperrimisque earumdem, quam meridionalium, aliarumque regionum desertis inhabitantes, aut in servitutem redigere, aut veluti mancipia aliis vendere, aut eos bonis privare, eaque inhumanitate cum iisdem agere praesumant, ut ad amplectenda Christi Fide potissimum avertantur, et ad odio habendam maximopere obfirmantur...

Deinde Fraternitates Vestras rogamus atque in Domino hortamur, ut nedum debitam ministerii vestri vigilantiam, sollicitudinem, operamque vestram hac in re, cum nominis dignitatisque vestrae detrimento, deesse non patiamini, quinimmo, studia vestra Regionum Ministrorum officiis conjungentes, unicuique probetis, Sacerdotes, animarum pastores quanto prae Laicis ministris, ad Indis hujusmodi opem ferendam, eosque ad Catholicam Fidem adducendos, ardentiori Sacerdotalis caritatis aestu ferveant.

Praeterea Nos, auctoritate Apostolica, tenore praesentium, Apostolicas in simili forma Brevis Litteras a fel. rec. Paulo Papa III Predecessore nostro, ad tunc existentem Johannem Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalem de taveræ nuncupatum Archiepiscopum Toletanum die 28 mensis Maji anno 1537 datas, et a rec. mem. Urbano Papa VIII ibidem Predecessore nostro, tunc esistenti jurium et spoliõrum Camerae Apostolicae in Portugalliae et Algarbiorum Regnis debitorum Collectori Generali, die 22 mensis Aprilis anno 1639, scriptas renovamus, et confirmamus; necton eorumdem Pauli, et Urbani Praedecessorum vestigiis inhaerendo, ac impiorum hominum ausus, qui Indos praedictos, quos omnibus Christianae Caritatis et mansuetudinis officiis ad suscipiendam Christi Fidem inducere oportet, inhumanitatis actibus ab illa deterrent, reprimere, volentes, unicuique Fraternitatum vestrarum, vestrisque pro tempore Successoribus committimus et mandamus, ut unusquisque vestrum, vel per se ipsum, vel per alium, seu alios, editis atque in publicum propositis affixisque edictis, omnibus Indis, tam in Paraquariae et Brasiliæ Provinciis ac ad Flumen de la Plata nuncupatum, quam in quibusvis aliis regionibus, et locis in Indiis occidentalibus et Meridionalibus, existentibus, in praemissis efficacis defensionis presidio assistentes, universis et singulis personis, tam saecularibus, etiam Ecclesiasticis cujuscumque status, sextus, gradus, conditionis, et dignitatis, etiam speciali nota, et mentione dignis existentibus, quam cujusvis Ordinis, Congregationis, Societatis, etiam Jesu, Religionis et Istituti, Mendicantium, et non Mendicantium, ac Monachalis, Regularibus, etiam quarumcumque Militiarum, etiam Hospitalis Sancti Johannis Hierosolymitani,

Fratribus Militibus, sub excommunicationis latae sententiae per Contarvenientes eo ipso incurrenda poena, a qua, nonnini a Nobis, vel pro tempore esistente Romano Pontifice, praeterquam in mortis articulo constituti, et satisfactione previa, absolvi possint, districtius inhibean; ne de coetero praedictos Indos in servitutum redigere, vendere, emere, commutare, vel donare, ab Uxoribus, et Filiis suis spoliare, ad alia loca deducete et transmitters, aut quoquo modo libertate privare, in servitute retinere, neq[ue] praedicta agentibus consilium, auxilium, favorem et operam quocumque praetextu, et quesito colore prestare, aut id licitum predicare, seu docere, ac alias quomodolibet praemissis cooperari audeant, seu praesumant; Contradictores quoslibet et rebelles, ac unicuique Vestrum in praemissis non parentes, in poenam excommunicationis huiusmodi incidisse declamando, ac per alias etiam censuras et poenas Ecclesiasticas, aliaque opportuna juris, et facti remedia, appellatione postposita, compescendo legitimisque super his habendis servatis processibus, censuras et poenas ipsas etiam iteratis vicibus aggravando, invocato etiam ad hoc, si opus fuerit, auxilio brachii saecularis. Nos einm unicuique Vestrum, vestrorumque pro tempore Successorum, desuper plenam, amplam et liberam facultatem tribuimus, et impertimur. Non obstantibus, etc... Datum Romae apud S. Mariam Majorem sub annulo Piscatoris die 20 Decembris 1741. Pontificatus Nostri Anno Secundo.

6. “Inter tot ac Tantas” of Pope Pius VII in 1814 (Source: *Iuris Pontificii De Propaganda Fide, Pars Prima*, ed. Raphaelis de Martinis, Vol. IV, MDCCCXCI, No. XLIV, Pp. 524-525)

Pius PP. VII charissimo in Christo filio nostro Ludovico, Francorum regi christianissimo. Charissime filii noster, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem.

Inter tot ac tantas, quae nos ad Petri Cathedram evectos perpetuo affecerunt, sollicitudines, suam quoque partem sibi vindicavit infelix Nigritarum natio, ad quam a miserrimo statu sublevandam enitendum nobis esse hoc praesertim tempore duximus, quo illustra et saluberrima reddendae orbi universo pacis et calamitatum, quantum fieri potest, ab humano genere depellendarum studia maxime fervant.

Iisdem, quibus nos, animi sensibus te etiam, carissime in Christo filii noster, penitus animari, explorata nobis iamdudum religio et humanitas tua, qua et Francorum felicitatem indefesse curas, et omnium nationum ardentem expetis, dubitare non sinit. Quare officia nostra pro allevanda Nigritarum sorte pronis auribus libentique prorsus animo te excepturum omnino confidimus. Ad interponenda vero huiusmodi officia religio nos ipsa movet, quae improbat execraturque illud commercium, quo Nigritae, tanquam si non homines sed

pura putaque animantia forent, emuntur, venduntur, ac miserrime vitae durissimisque laboribus usque ad mortem exantlandis devoventur.

Itaque inter maxima, quae sanctissima eadem religio orbi contulit, bona, servitutis magnam partem abrogatae aut mitius exercitae beneficium merito ab omnibus recensetur. Hinc factum est, ut Summi Pontifices decessores nostri, doctrina non minus quam pietate clarissimi, hominum barbarae servituti subiiciendorum consuetudinem aversati constantissime fuerint. Quod autem servitutis genus fingi aut excogitari potest illo tetrius ac miserabilius, quo Nigritae in tantam humanitatis europeae gloriam adhuc opprimuntur? Sapientissime ergo et magna cum Anglici nominis Laude probosus et numquam satis abominandus Nigritarum mercatus in Britannicis coloniis denique abolitus et severissime vetitus est. Quare age, carissime in Christo fili noster, insitae in Borbonio sanguine pietati obsequere: foedam negotiatorum cupiditatem, qui humanitatis iustitiaeque iura nefario questui postponunt, compesce: pudendissimum, uno verbo, Nigritarum commercium, perpetuam bellorum, seditionum, nefandorumque omnis generis criminum scaturiginem, in eam, quae ad tuas ditiones spectat, parte radicius extirpa. Quo citius id feceris, eo de religione deque genere hominum universo praeclarius mereberis, uberioresque nec ulla oblivione delendam tuo nomini gloriam comparaveris.

In quarum rerum auspiciis apostolicam tibi, carissime in Christo fili noster, benedictionem amantissime impertimur. Datum Romae, apud S. Mariam Majorem, sub annulo Piscatoris, die XX. Septembris MDCCCXIV, Pontificatus nostri anno XV.

7. “Etsi Perspecta” of Pope Pius VII in 1823 (Source: *Iuris Pontificii De Propaganda Fide, Pars Prima, Vol. IV, MDCCCXCI, No. CXIII, P. 633*)

Pius PP. VII carissimo in Christo filio nostro Joanni regni uniti Portugalliae, Brasiliae et Algarbiorum Regi fidelissimo. Carissime in Christo fili noster, salutem et benedictionem.

Etsi perspecta majestatis tuae virtus monitis atque hortationibus nostris minime indigere videtur, ipsa tamen religionis simul atque humanitatis ratio nos excitat, ut tuum gravissimam in re studium atque operam requiramus. Quod quidem officium pietatis per se aequitatisque plenissimum eo libentius apud maiestatem tuam gerendum suscipimus, quod et gratissimum tibi fore confidimus, et non parum etiam, ubi illud pro tua virtute fueris secutus, utilitatis ac gloriae apud tuas externasque gentes tibi comparaturum.

Summo cum animi nostri moerore accepimus, Nigritarum commercium, quod in tantam christianorum principum humanitate ac sapientiam sublatum penitus

atque extinctum putabamus, in nonnullis ditionum tuarum partibus acerbiori etiam, quam antea, ratione adhuc exerceri. Quamquam enim a maiestate tuam (id quod summae tibi laudi vertendum) nonnullae cum pluribus Europae principibus conventiones initaе fuerint ad miserissimam Nigritarum sortem allevandam, ac leges etiam aliquae poenaeque sancitae, quibus ipsorum commercium vetatur, eas tamen saluberrimas legum sanctiones non omnes ditionum tuarum partes aequè amplecti ac devincere cognovimus.

Neque vero solitudinem nostram fugare potuerunt acerbissima cruciatuum ac molestiarum genera, quibus perditii negotiatores, omnem prorsus humanitatis sensum exuentes, Nigritas ipsos miserandum in modum sollicitant. Quibus sane auditis, animo vehementer commoti, ac nobiscum etiam reputantes quantum decessores nostri, doctrinam non minus quam pietate clarissimi, nefariam huiusmodi hominum servitutem, utpote religioni atque humanitati in primis infensam, constantissime sint aversati, pontificiae nostrae caritati paternoque amoris omnino congruere duximus, a tot tantisque malis miserissimam illam hominum partem, quibuscumque possumus mediis, eripere.

Itaque ad maiestatem tuam, cuius egregiam erga nos voluntatem cognitam penitus planeque perspectam habemus, paterna haec officia dirigimus, eamque intimo cordis affectu hortamur in Domino atque obsecramus, ut, singulari suam prudentiam in consilium advocatam, omnem det operam, uti opportunaе illae hac de re legum poenarumque sanctiones in omnibus suarum, qua late patent, ditionum partibus accurate serventur, ac probrosum demum Nigritarum commercium summo eam religionis atque humani generis commodo radicitus extirpetur. Quo praeclarissimo quidem opere nihil erit maiestatis tuae virtute dignius nihil ad tuam pietatem aequitatemque prodendam atque exterarum praesertim gentium studia tibi devincienda opportunius.

In firmam itaque spem erigimur fore, ut maiestas tua ad tam eximium opus, satis iam suam sponte excitata, nostris modo hisce accedentibus votis, pro filiali suam erga nos et Apostolicam hanc Sedem observantiam, id ipsum alacrius etiam atque enixius urgere velit. Quare age, carissime in Christo filii noster, insitae in regio tuo sanguine pietati ac virtuti obsequere, foedam negotiatorum cupiditatem, qui omnia iustitiae atque humanitatis iura nefario quaestui postponunt, sapienter compsece, tibi que omnino persuade, te in hoc strenue suscipiende negotio, atque ad optatum exitum perducendo, rem quidem Deo primum acceptam, iucundissimam nobis, tibi vero maxime gloriosam esse facturum. Nos interim diuturnam tibi incolumitatem felicitatemque adprecantes a Domino cum peculiaribus paternae caritatis nostrae significationibus Apostolica Benedictionem bonorum omnium auspiciem tibi, carissime filii noster, amantissime impertimur. Datum Romae, apud S. Mariae Majorem, sub annulo Piscatoris, die XV. Martii MDCCCXXIII, Pontificatus nostri anno XXIV.

8. “In Supremo Apostalatus” of Pope Gregory XVI in 1839 (Source: Document of Archivio Storico di Propagande Fide (APF), Fondo Brevi, Vol. 4, Fls. 317r-320r)

Gregorius Papa XVI Servus Servorum Dei. Ad Futuram Rei Memoriam. In Supremo Apostolatus fastigio constituti, et, nullis licet suffragantibus meritis, gerentes vicem Jesu Christi Dei Filii, qui propter nimiam caritatem suam Homo cactus, mori etiam pro mundi redemptione dignatus est, ad Nostram pastoraalem sollicitudinem pertinere animadvertimus, ut fideles ab inhumano Nigritarum seu aliorum quorumcumque hominum mercatu avertere, penitus studeamus. Sane cum primum diffondi coepit Evangelii lux, senserunt alleviari plurimum apud christianos conditionem suam miseri illi, qui tanto tunc numero, bellorum prasertim occasione, in servitutem durissimam deveniebant. Inspirati enim a divino spiritu Apostoli servos quidam ipsos docebant obbedire dominis carnalibus sicut Cristo, et facere voluntatem Dei ex animo; dominis vero praecipiebant, ut bene erga servos agerent, et quod justum est et aequum eis praestarent, ac remitterent minas, scientes quia illorum et ipsorum Dominus est in coelis et personarum acceptio non est apud Eum. Universim vero cum sincera erga omnes caritas Evangelii lege summopere commendaretur, et Christus Dominus declarasset habiturum se tamquam factum aut denegatum sibi ipsi quidquid beninittatis et misericordiae minimis et indigentibus praestitum anegatum fuisset, facile inde contigit, nedum cristiani servos suos praesertim christianos, veluti fratrum loco haberent, sed etiam ut proniores essent ad illos, qui mererentur, libertate donandos, quod quidam occasione in primis Paschaliolum solemnum fieri consuevisse indicat Gregorius Nyssenus. Nec defuerunt qui, ardentiore caritate excitati, se ipsos in vincula conjecerunt, ut alios redimerent, quorum multos se novisse testatur Apostolicus vir, idemque sanctissimae recordationis, praedecessor Noster Clemens I. Igitur progressu temporis, ethnicarum superstitionum caligine plenius dissipata, et rudiorum quoque populorum moribus, fidei per caritatem operantis beneficio, mitigatis, res eo tandem devenit, ut jam a pluribus saeculis nulli apud plurimas christianorum gentes servi habeantur. Verum dolentes admodum dicimus, fuerunt su binde ex ipso fidelium numero, qui sordidioris lucri cupidine turpiter obcaecati, in dissitis remotisque terris Indos, Nigritas, miserosve alios in servitutem redigere, seu istituto ampliatioque commercio eorum, qui captivi facti ab aliis fuerant, indignum horum facinus juvare non dubitarent. Haud sane praetermiserunt plures gloriosae memoriae Romani Pontifices, praedecessores Nostri, reprehendere graviter pro suo munere illorum rationem, utpote spiritali ipsorum saluti noxiam et cristiano nomini probrosam, ex qua etiam illud consequi pervidebant, ut infidelium gentes ad veram nostram religionem odio habendam magis magisque obfirmarentur. Quo spectant Apostolicae

litterae Pauli III die 13 Maji 1537 sub Piscatoris annulo datae ad Cardinalem Archiepiscopum Toletanum, et aliae deinceps eisdem ampliores ab Urbano VIII datae die 22 aprilis 1639 ad Collectorem Jurium Camerae Apostolicae in Portugallia, quibus in litteris in nominatim gravissime coercentur, qui Occidentales vel Meridionales Indos in servitum redigere, vendere, emere, commutare vel donare, ab uxoribus et filiis suis separare, rebus et bonis suis spoliare, ad alia loca deducere et transmittere, aut quoquomodo libertate privare, in servitute retinere, nec non praedicta agentibus consilium, auxilium, favorem et operam quocumque praetextu et quesito colore prestare, aut id licitum predicare seu docere, aut alias quomodolibet praemissis cooperari audent, seu prae sumerent.

Has memoratorum Pontificum sanctiones confirmavit postmodum et renovavit Benedictus XIV novis apostolicis litteris ad Antistites Brasiliane et aliarum quarumdam regionum datis die 20 Decembris 1741, quibus eundem in finem ipsorum praesulum sollicitudinem excitavit. Antea quoque alius his antiquior Praedecessor Noster, Pius II, cum sua aetate Lusitanorum imperium in Guineam, nigritarum regionem, proferretur, litteras dedit die 7 Octobris 1462 ad Episcopum Rubicensem eo profecturum: in quibus nedum Antistiti ipsi opportunas ad sacrum ministerium inibi cum majori fructu exercendum, facultates impertitus fuit, sed eadem occasione garviter in christianos illos animadvertit, qui Neophytos in servitum abstraherent. Et nostris etiam temporibus Pius VII eodem, qui sui Decessoris, religionis et caritatis spiritu inductus, officia sua apud potentes viros sedulo interposuit, ut Nigritarum commercium tandem inter christianos omnino cessaret.

Hae quidem Praedecessorum Nostrorum sanctiones et curae profuerunt, deo bene juvante, non parum Indis aliisque praedictis a crudelitate invadentium, seu a mercatorum christianorum cupiditate tutandis: non ita tamen ut sancta haec sedes de pleno quorum in id studiorum exitu laetari posset: quum imo commercium Nigritarum, etsi nonnulla ex parte imminutum, adhuc tamen a christianis pluribus exercentur. Quare Nos, tantum hujusmodi probrum a cunctis christianorum finibus avertere cupientes, ac re universa nonnullis etiam venerabilibus Fratribus Nostris Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalibus in consilium adhibitis, mature perpensa, Praedecessorum Nostrorum insistentes vestigiis, auctoritate Apostolica, omnes cujuscumque conditionis Christi fideles admonemus et obtestamur in domino veementer, ne quis audeat in posterum Indos, Nigritas, seu alios hujusmodi homines injuste vexare, aut spoliare suis bonis, aut in servitum redigere, vel aliis talia in eos patrantibus auxilium aut favorem prestare, seu exercere inhumanum illud commercium, quo Nigritae, tanquam si non homines, sed pura, putaque animantia forent, in servitum utcumque redacti, sine ullo discrimine contra justitiae et humanitatis jura emuntur, venduntur, ac durissimis interdum laboribus exantlandis devoventur,

et in super lucri spe, primis Nigritarum occupantoribus per commercium idem proposita, dissidia etiam et perpetua quodammodo in illorum regionibus praelia foventur.

Enimvero Nos praedicta omnia, tamquam cristiano nomini prorsus indigna, auctoritate Apostolica reprobamus, eademque auctoritate districte prohibemus atque intericimus, ne quis ecclesiasticus vel laicus ipsum illud Nigritarum commercium, veluti licitum sub quovis obtentu aut quesito colore tueri aut aliter contra ea, quae nostris hisce Apostolicis litteris monuimus, predicare, seu quomodolibet publice vel privatum docere praesumat.

Ut autem eadem hae Nostrae litterae omnibus facilius innotescant, nec quisquam illarum ignorantiam allegare possit, decernimus et mandamus illas ad valvas Basilicae publicari...Datum Romae apud S. Mariam Majorem sub annulo Piscatoris die 3 Decembris 1839, Pontificatus nostri anno nono.

C. Letters of the Kings of Portugal used to gain Support and Approval of the Papacy Regarding the Transatlantic Enslavement of Black Africans. (Source: Documents of ANTT)

1. Carta Porque o Senhor Rey Dom Duarte fez Merce ao Infante Dom Henrique das Ilhas de Porto Santo, e Outras (1433). (Source: ANTT- Chancelaria de Don Duarte, Liv. I, Fl. 18)

Dom Eduarte, etc. A quantos esta carta virem fazemos saber que nós querendo fazer graça e merce ao Infante Dom Henrique meu Irmão temos por bem e damos Ihe que tenha e haja de nós em todollos dias de sua vida as nossas Ilhas convem a saber a Ilha da madeira e do Porto Santo e da Desserta com todollos direitos e rendas dellas assy como as nós de direito havemos e devemos daver com sua jurição civil e crime salvo em sentença de morte ou raihamento de membro mandamos que a Alçada sique a nos e venha a Caza do Civel de Lisboa outro si Ihe damos poder que elle possa mandar fazer nas ditas Ilhas todollos proveitos e bemfeitorias aquella que entender por bem e proveito das ditas Ilhas e dar im perpetuum ou a tempo ou asrar todas as dittas terras a quem Ihe aprover com tanto que seja feito sem prejuizo da forma do foro per nos dado as ditas Ilhas em parte nem em todo nem em alheamento do dito foro porem queremos e damos lugar ao dito Infante Dom Henrique que elle possa quitar parte ou todo do dito foro aos que vierem as ditas Ilhas morar em sua vida do dito Infante porque no ditto tempo.

Ihe temos de todo feita merce com tanto que depois da morte do dito Infante elles paguem o dito foro secundo em elle he conheudo e mais nos pras por

bom povoramento da dita terra se o dito Infante quitar o dito foro em sua vida a algum ou a alguas pessoas dos que forem a dita terra que Ihe seja quite com tanto que como a pessoas morrer que seus herdeiros paguem logo o dito foro segundo em ella he contheudo e rezervamos para nos que o dito Infante nom possa mandar fazer em ellas moeda mas prasnos que a nossa Fe corra em ellas e pro mayor firmeza Ihe mandamos dar esta nossa carta assinnade por nosa mão e assellada do nosso sello de chumbo. Dante em Sintra vinte seis dias de Setembro ElRey o mandou Affonço Cotrim a fez era de mil quatro centos trinta e tres annos.

2. Carta de Dom Afonso V ao Ordem de Cristo (1439). (Source: ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fl. 153v)

Dom Afonso, etc. A quantos esta carta virem fazemos saber que nós, querendo fazer graça e merçee a Ordem de nosso Senhor Ihesu Christo, de que é Regedor e Governador o Infante dom Anrrique, duque de Viseu e Senhor de Covilhaam, meu muito prezado e amado tio. Temos por bem e confirmamos Ihe todallas cousas e privilegios, graças e mercees e liberdades que Ihe foram dadas e outorgadas por cartas dos Reys que ante nós foram, de que estiverom em posse e husarom ate morte do mui virtuoso da gloriosa memoria el Rey meu Senhor e Padre: cuja alma Deus aja.

E porem mandamos a quaaesquer nossos officiaaes e pessoas que o conhecimento desto pertencer, que assy Iho compram e guardem e façam comprir e guardar. E al non façades.

Dada em Almada, primeiro dia de junho, ElRey o mandou com autoridade de Senhora Raynha sua madre, como sua tetor e curador que hé, e com acordo do Infante dom Pedro seu tio, defensor por el dos dictos Regnos e Senhorio. Ruy Royz a fez screver e subscreveo per sua mão. Anno do nacemento de mill e quatrocentos e trinta e nove annos.

3. Carta Regia ao Infante Dom Henrique (01.06. 1439). (Source: ANTT- Chancelaria de Don Afonso V, liv. 19, Fl. 19)

Dom Afonso etc. A quantos esta carta virem fazemos saber que da parte do Infante dom Henrique meu tio nos foy mostrada huam nossa carta seellada com o nosso seello pendente asynada per o doutor Joham Dossem do nosso consselho e chañaller moor, da quall o theor tall hé.

Dom Eduarte, etc. A quantos esta carta virem fazemos saber que nos querendo fazer graça e merçee ao Infante dom Henrique meu Irmão, teemos por bem e

quitamos Ihe o quinto que a nós perteençe dauer de todallas coussas que filharem e partirem quaaes quer navios e fustas que ell armar e trouver darmada a sua custa daquy ao dyante, em que andarem seus Capyãães.

E porem mãdamos a todollos nossos ofiçiaaes que o dicto quinto pera nos ajam de requerer e reçeber que se nõ empachem dello a Iho leixem todo liurementemente aver ao dicto Infante meu Irmãão a que dello fazemos merçee, como dicto hẽ, al nõ façades.

Dada em Sintra xxv Dias de Setembro, Gomez Martinz de Moscoso afez, era de mill e iiij centos xxxiii anos. E esto Ihe fazemos em quanto nossa merçe for.

Do qual registo o dicto Infante Dom Henrique meu tio nos pedio por merçee que Ihe mandassemos dar o trallado, por quanto o proprio oregonal se Ihe danyficara em tall guissa que se leer nõ podia. E nos vendo o que nos asy dizia e pedia mandamos Iho dar esta nossa carta.

Dada em a Cidade de Lixboa, xx de Mayo, ElRey o mandou per o doutor Joham Dossem do seu conselho e seu chançaller moor. Luis Fernandez em logar de Filipe Afonso a fez, era do nascimento de nosso Senhor Jhesu Christo de mil iiij centos xxxix anos. E emviou nos pedir de merçee o dicto Infante que Ihe confirmassemos a dicta carta pella guissa que em ella he contheudo, da qual coussa a nos praz.

E porem mandamos a quaaes quer nossos offiçiaaes e pessoas que esta pertencer per qualquer guissa que seja, que Ihe conpram e guardem e façam conprir e guardar a dicta carta segundo em ella faz meernçom, sem outro nenhum embargo que Ihe sobrello seja posto, & al nom façades. Dada em Almada, primeiro dia de Junho, ElRey o mandou com autoridade da Senhora Rayna sua madre, como sua tetor e curador que hé e com acordo do Infante dom Pedro seu tio, defensor por ell dos dictos Regnos e Senhorio. Pay Roiz a fez scprever e sob scprever per sua mããõ, ano do nascimento de nosso Senhor Jhesu Christo de mil iiij centos xxxix anos.

4. Carta de Privilegio ao Dom Henrique (20.10.1443). (Source: ANTT- Chancelaria de Dom Afonso V, Liv. 24, Fl. 61-61v)

Dom Afonso, etc. A quantos esta carta virem fazemos saber como o Infante dom Anrique meu muyto prezado e amado tyo, entendendo que fazia servio a Noso Senhor Deus e a Nós, se meteo a mandar seus navios a saber parte da terra que era alem do cabo de Bojador, por que atee entã nõ auja ninguem na christendade que dello soubese parte, nem sabiã se avia lá poborçã ou nõ, nem directamente nas cartas de marear nem mapa mundo non estavã debuxadas senon a prazer dos hommes que as faziã, des o dicto cabo de Bojador por dhiantes; e por ser cousa duvidosa e os hommes se nõ atrecerem de ir, mandou

lá bem xiiij vezes atees que soube parte da dicta terra e Ihe troverã dela per duas vezes hũs xxxbiiij mouros presos a mandou dela fazer carta de marear; e nos dies que sua vontade era de mandar seus navios mais adiante saber parte da dicta terra e que nos pedia por mercee que Ihe desemos nossa carta que nehũu no fose aquelas terras sem seu mandado e liçença, asy pera guerraa como pera mercadarias. E que daqueles a que elle asy mandase ou dese liçença Ihes desemos o direito do quinto ou dizima do que dela trovesem, segundo a Nós pertence-se.

E por quanto nós somos çerto do suso escripto e da grande despese que fecta teem e entende de fazer, defendemos que em vida do dicto meu tyo nenguem non passem alem do dicto cabo do Bojador sem seu mandado e liçença; e os que pasarem nos praz que percam pera o dicto Infante meu tyo o navio ou navios em que asy la forem e todo o que dela truverem; e mandamos ao Noso Corregedor da corte e a todalas nosas justiças que asy o compram sem alguma duvida nem embargo que a elle ponham e fazemdo o contrairo sejam çertos que tornaremos a ello como aos que nom conprem noso mandado.

E pro Ihe darmos ajuda ao que asi tem conpeçado e por Ihe queremos fazer graça e merçee, teemos por bem e Ihe damos daqui em dhante, em quanto nosa merçee for, o quinto e dizima do que asy dela troxerem os dictos navios que ell la mandar ou per sua liçença forem. E porem mandamos aos almoxarifes das Nossas alfandegas que conpram e guardem esta Nosa carta segundo em ela per Nos hé mandado e leixem aver e recadar os dictos direitos a quem o dicto dom Anrrique mandar; e all nom façades. Dada em Vila de Penela, xxij dias doutubro, per autoridade do senhor Infante dom Pedro, Regente, etc. Afonso Anes a fez, ano do Senhor de mill iij centos Riij.

5. Carta de Dom Afonso V. a Ordem de Cristo (1449). (Source: ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fls. 153v-154)

Dom Afonso etc. A quantos esta carta virem fazemos saber que da parte do Infante dom Henrique meu tio me foi mostrada huma nossa carta sellada com nosso sello pendente e assellada pello Doutor Joam Docem do nosso Conselho e nosso Chanceller mor da qual o theor tal he dom Affonço &c. A quantos esta carta virem fazemos saber que nos livros dos registos da nossa Chancellaria del Rey meu padre que Deos haja he registada huma carta da qual o theor tal he dom Duarte &c. A quantos esta Carta virem fazemos saber que nós por serviço de Deos e honra da Ordem de Christo e por on Infante dom Henrique meu Irmão Regedor e Governador da dicta Ordem que no lo requireo outorgamos e damos aa dicta Ordem deste dia para todo sempre todo o espiritual das nossas Ilhas da Madeira e do Porto Santo e da Ilha Desserta que

agora novamente o dito Infante per nossa authoridade pavora assy e pella guiza que o ha em Thomar rezalvando que sique pera nós e para a Coroa de nossos Regnos o foro e o dizimo de todo o pescado que se nas ditas Ilhas matarem e todollos outros direitos reaes e por firmidoem dello Ihe mandamos dar esta nosta carta finada per nos e sellada do nosso sello de chumbo e pedimos ao Padre Santo que praza a sua Santidade outorgar e confirmar aa dita Ordem de Christo as ditas Ilhas pella guiza suso dita.

Dada em Santarem vinte seis dias de Outubro Lopo Affonço a fez Anno do Senhor de mil quatro centos trinta e quatro annos. Do qual registo o dito Infante dom Henrique me pedio que Ihe mandassemos dar o treslado por quanto o proprio original se Ihe danificara em guiza que se ler non podia e nos vendo o que nos assy dizia e pedia mandamosIho dar em esta nossa carta. Dado em Lisboa vinte de Mayo ElRey o mandou per o Doutor Joam Docem do seu Conselho e seu Chanceler mor Luis Fernandes em logo de Felipe Affonço a fez Anno do Senhor Jezu Christo de mil quatro centos trinta e nove annos e emviou nos pedir de merçe o dito Infante que Ihe confirmassemos a dita carta como em ella he contheudo da qual couza anos praz e porem mandamos a qualquer nossos officiaes e pessoas a que esto pertencer por qualquer guiza que seja que Ihe cumpram e guardem e façam cumprir e guardar a dita carta segundo em ello faz mençom sem outro embargo. Dada em Santarem doze de Março ElRey o mandou Ruy Dias a fez Anno do Senhor de mil quatrocento quarenta e nove.

6. Doação da Administração Espiritual da Guine ao Ordem de Cristo (07.06. 1454). (Source: ANTT- Ordem de Cristo, Cod. 235 [Livro das Escrituras da Ordem de Cristo], Fls. 12-12v)

Dom Afonso pella graça de Deos Rey de Portugal e do Algarve e senhor de Ceita. A quantos esta carta virem, fazemos saber que ao Ordem da Cavallaria de nosso Senhor Jesu Christo em nossos Regnos fundada per divinal ordenança, assi virtuosamente foy em nossos dias pello muy ilustre Infante dom Henrique meu muito prezado e amado tio Administrada, que alem do divino culto e spiritual acrecentamento em que certamente recebeo manifesta melhria, ainda as cousas temporaes, sem as quaes a spiritualidade nem a militar disciplina, per hũa devota e riligiosa vontade recebida, sosteuda ser non pode, foy tão muito acrecentada, que saindo longe dos seus antigos termos, cobrasse miutas ilhas grandes e proveitosas, per hũa singular prudencia e maravilhosa industria do dito Infante novamente povoradas.

E por que a graça daquelle Senhor que todallas cousas pode, todallas cousas ordena a louvor do seu sancto nome, nom pode ser ouciosa, cujos juizos

profundos e escondidos aos mortaaes, de pequenos começos, per desuairados meynos e proseguimentos muy alongados das humanaes conjeituras trazer sõe proveitosos fins. O dito Infante, de muitas virtudes e singular devaçom illustrado e da graça obrador divinal tangido, per autoridade nossa conquistou as prayas de Guinea, de Nubia e Ethiopia, querendo trazer aa igreja de Deos sancta e aa nossa obediencia aquelles barbaros poboos, a que nunca per mar nem per terra, christãos alguns chegar ousarom, a qual cousa certamente, nom foy sem especial ajudoiro do Senhor Deus e hé maravilhosa em nossos olhos.

Porem consirando nós, como com algũas despesas da dicta Ordem da Cavallaria de Jesu Christo, e por contemplaçõ sua, a dita conquista foy proseguida e começada, razom nos pareceo a ella pertencer a spiritualidade das terras conquistadas.

E por tanto querendo nós satisfazer ao que devemos ao todo poderoso deos das hostes, Senhor dos vencimentos, de cuja mão recebemos o principado e esta nova vitoria, queremos e outorgamos, quanto com direito podemos, que a dita Ordem de Jesu Christo, per o dito Infante e pollos administradores que depois delle veerem pera todo sempre, aja daquellas prayas, costas, ilhas, terras conquistadas e por conquistar e de Gazulla, Guinea, Nubia, Ethiopia, e per quaesquer outros nomes que sejam chamadas, toda espiritual administraçom e jurisdiçom, assi como a há em Thomar, que hé cabeça da dita Ordem, aa qual as ditas terras, assi como membros de novo encorporados e ajuntados, devem seer anexas.

E faça prover aqueles poboos que conquistados forem, de pregadores e reitores, que Ihe ministrem os ecclesiasticos sacramentos. E por que o padre sancto seja mais ligeiramente demovido a esto outorgar, como quer que a cousa em si tam honesta e tam piedosa seja, que sem longas prezes devia ser impetrada, pois justamente se pode outorgar, e sem alheo perjoizo. A nós praz porem de noteficar ao dito santo padre este nosso aprazimento e consentimento, e de suplicar muy humildosamente a sua sanctidade, que ho quira assi outorgar.

E por guarda do direito da dita Ordem, mandamos dar ao dito Infante esta nossa carta de nossa determinaçom, consentimento, vontade e decreto, per nós asinada e sellada do nosso sello do chumbo, pera ficar em perduravel memoria. Dada em a Cidade de Lixboa, vij dias de Junho. Guonçalo Anes afez. Anno do naçimento de nosso Senhor Jesu Christo, de mil, cccc liiij.

7. Doação da Vintena dos Escravos ao Ordem de Cristo (1457). (Source: ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fl. 151)

Eu o Infante dom Emrique filho dos muy virtuosos e de scrareada memoria meus Senhores padre e madre El Rey dom Juam e Raynha dona Filipa que Deus aja, Regedor e Governador da hordem da Cavallaria de nosso Senhor Ihesu Christo, duque de Vjseu e Senhor de Coujlhã, faço saber a quamtos esta minha carta virem que comsiramdo eu os trabalhos dos homeens, principalmente deverem seer por serviço de nosso Senhor Deus e assy de seu Senhor porque ajam de receber gualardom de gloria em este mundo honrra e estado.

E dessy seemdo certo como des a memoria dos homes se non auja alguia noticia na cristiandade dos maeres, terras e jemtes que eram aalem do cabo de Naam contra o meo dia e esguardando quamto serviço se a Deus em ello fazer podia e bem assy a el Rey dom Afomso meu Senhor e Sobrinho que Deus mantenha, me fundei de emquerer e saber parte de muitos anos passados acá, do que era des o dito cabo de Naam em diamte, non sem grandes meus trabalhos e infindas despensas, especialmente dos direitos e remdas da dita hordem, cuja governança asi tenho, mandando per os ditos anos muitos navios e caravelas com meus criados e servidores, os quaeës per gracia de Deus passando o dicto cabo de Naam auante e fazendo grandes guerras, algũus recebendo morte e outros postos em grandes perigoõs, prouve a nosso Senhor me dar certa emformaçom e sabedoria daquellas partes des o dito cabo de Naam ataa passante toda a terra de Berberia e Nubia. E asi mesmo per terra de Guinea bem trezemas legoas de honde até a ora, asi no começo per guerra, como despois per maneira de traauto de mercadoria e resgates hé viiundo aa cristendade muy grande numero de infiees cativos, do quall dando grandes louvores a nosso Senhor a moor parte som tornados aa sua sancta fee. E está bem aparelhado pera mujtos mais virem e seendo factos christããos aalem das mercadorias, ouro e outras mujtas cousas que da laa vem e se cada dia descobrem, mujto proveitosas a estes regos e a toda a cristiandade.

E seendo bem em conhecimento de todo o suso dito, o mujto poderose, excelente e virtuoso dicto el Rey dom Afomso meu senhor e sobrinho, dozeno Rey destes Regnos e oytavo do Algarve, terceiro Senhor da Cidade de Cepta e primeiro das dictas partes de Guinea, movido de sua grande benenidade e husando de nobreza real me fez pura doaçom em minha vida desta dicta terra com todallas remdas, proões, interesses, direitos que se della aver podesse. E a dicta hordem, vistas as grandes despesas que se assi dos direitos remdas della sobre as dictas terras de Guinea fizeram, como dicto hé, toda a espiritualidade que ella aja pera todo sempre. E esto tam emteiramente quamto em elle fosse de Iha poder dotar: asi do direito do padroado como de quallquer outro direito

que a elle pertença, em maneira que a dicta hordem aja a dicta espiritualidade das dictas terras de Guinea des o dicto cabo de Naam pera avante, tam compridamente como ho ella tem na sua casa de Tomar, sopricando a nosso Senhor e sancto Padre Calisto terçeiro, ora presidente na Ygreja de Deus, que o assy quisesse outogar.

O quall de seu moto proprio e per auctoridade apostolica dotou e outorgou a espiritualidade da dicta terra de Guinea a dicta hordem, asi liurementemente como ha ella há na dicta sua casa de Tomar, segundo directamente hé comtheudo em sua doaçom que a hordem dello tem.

E ora veendo eu as dictas doaçoões e outrosy os desuairados custumes que há nos direitos que a o espiritually pertencem, que a hũus se pagam a dizema e a outros em outra maneira, detrijmjnei per bem do carregio e manjstraçom que da dicta hordem e cousas suas e que a elle pertencem tenho, estamdo em cabidoo per campaa tamgida, com acordo do comendador mōõr, craveiro, comendadores, dom prioll e o procuradoe da dicta hordem e freires: que de todallas cousas que se em a dita terra de Guinea, des o dicto cabo de Nam por diante, resgatarem e ouverem per quallquer guisa e modo que seja, asi descravos, escravas, ouro pescarias como quaẽes quer outras cousas e mercadorias, dem á dicta hordem e paguem em loguo de dizema de cada hũas das dictas cousas de Vinte hũa. E o mais direito aja o Senhor como ora eu ey, per bem da doaçom que me per o dicto Rey meu Senhor hé fecta em minha aida, como suso dictor hé. O qual despoys de meu falicimento a elle fica a aa sua coroa. E porem Ihe peço por merçee que por guarda e declaraçom deste direito que a dita hordem as há dauer por a dita espiritualidade, Ihe praza de me mandar da sua carta de comfirmaçom, na qual demtro em ella seja emcorporado o trallado desta minha de verbo a verbo. E muito Iho teerey em merçee. Feita em a minha villa xxvj dias do mes de Dezembro anno do nascimento de nosso Senhor Ihesu Christo de mill e iiij centos Lvij.

8. Carta Testamentaria de Dom Henrique Sobre a Espiritualidade da Guine (18.09.1460). (Source: ANTT- Codice 516 [Livaria], P. 27-28.)

Eu o Infante dom Anrrique, Regedor e Governador da hordem da Cavallaria de nosso Senhor Jhesu Christo, Duque de Vjseu et Senhor de Coujlhaa, faço saber aos que esta minha carta virem, que nosso Senhor o Santo Padre Calisto iij^o Ihe prove por sua santidade, de seu moto proprio, dar toda espiritualidade de Guinea á dicta hordem, que a aja assy e tam cõpridamente como tem a sua casa de Tomar, esguardando como eu era governador della e os mujtos trabalhos e

despesas que de mim e de meus foram factas e o mujto serviço que se a Deus em ello fez, segundo a dicta ordem dello tem compridamente sua carta.

E por quanto minha tençom hé de acreçentar ã a dicta hordẽ, por os mujtos beês que della reçby, Ihe outorgo todo o dicto que eu podia aver desta terra de Guinea da espiritualidade, assy per maneira de padroado como per qual quer outra guisa que possa seer.

E mandei fazer esta carta pera ficar no cartorio da hordem e emcomendo a qual quer que for Vigairo, ou Prior ou capellaam soldadado pella ordem em cadhuũ Igreiario daquellas terras, que Ihe praza em cada huã somana ao sabado por sempre, assy em minha vida como depouis de minha morte, dizer huã missa de sancta Maria e a comemoraçom seja de Santo Espiritu con seu Responso e a oraçom de fidelium Deus, dizendo ante do começo da dicta missa, alta voz, com o rosto pera os que a ella estiverem, que diguam o Pater Noster e Ave Maria por aalma minha e dos da hordem e daqueles por que thiudo som rogar. E disy vaa per sua missa endiante. E logo e encomendo aos meestres, governadores que depois de mim forem, que en gualardom do acrecentamento e bem que em ella fiz, Ihes praza averem por bem por sempre mandarem assy dizerem a dicta missa como dicto hé. Feita em a minha villa, xbiij^o dias de Setembro, Joham de Moraaes a fez, anno de nosso Senhor Jhesu Christo de mill e iiij centos Lx.

List of Abbreviations

ACA	Archivo de la Corona de Aragón
a.k.a	Also known as
ANFa	Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANTT	Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo
ASV	Archivo Secreto Vaticano
A.A.Arm	Archivium Arcis Armadio
ACDF	Archivium Congregationis Pro Doctrina Fidei
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
APF	Archivio Storico de Propaganda Fide
Bd.	Band
BGU	Bibliotheca Gerál da Universidade Coimbra
BJMSJP	Brother Joseph Mobberly S.J. Papers
Bk	Book
BNL	Bibliotheca Naçional Lisboa
BNP	Bibliotheca Naçional Portuguez
BUS	Bibliotheca Universitaria Serville
Bx	Baixa
c.	Circa
Cap.	Capitulum
CChr	Corpus Christianorum
CCL	Corpus Christianorum Latinorum
Cf.	Confer
Chanc.	Chancelaria
Chpt.	Chapter
Cod.	Codice
Coll.	Colleção
Col.	Collection
Cols.	Colosians
Conf.	Confessio
Cor.	Corinthians
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium

CSP	Calendar of State Papers?
Cx	Caixa
D.	Don/ Dom
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Doc.	Document
Doct. Chris.	Doctrinae Christianorum
D.P.	Descobrimentos Portugueses
ed.	Editor/ edited
eds.	Editors
Eph.	Ephesians
etc.	Et cetera
et al.	Et alia
F.C.	Fontes Christiani
ff.	Following
Fl.	Folio
Fls.	Folios
F.G.	Fundo Gerál
Fund.	Fundo
Gav.	Gavetas
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera
Ibid.	Ibidem
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
Lib.	Liber
Liv.	Livro
mac.	Maço
M.H.	Monumenta Henricina
M.M.A.	Monumenta Missionaria Africana
M.P	Motu proprio
MS	Manuscript
Mtt.	Mathew
No.	Number
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Church
Op.	Opera
Or. Dom.	Orationes Dominica
p.	Page

PO	Patrologia Orientalis
pp.	Pages
PG	Patrologia Cursus Completus (Series Graecae)
PL	Patrologia Cursus Completus (Series Latinae)
Pt	Part
r.	Recto
Reg.	Registri
Reg. Lat.	Registri Lateranensi
Reg. Vat.	Registri Vaticani
Sec. Brevi. Reg.	Secreteria Dei Brevi Registri
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SPEC. COL.	Special collections
St.	Saint
St. St.	Stanza Storica
SVF	Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta Leibzig
th	Teenth
Tom.	Tomus
Trini.	Trinitate
trans.	Translated
transl.	Translator
TMSJP	Thomas Mulledy S.J. Papers
v.	Verso
Vol.	Volume
vr.	Vari

Primary Sources

1. Manuscripts

1. Papal Bulls from Archivio Secreto Vaticano (ASV)

1.1 Collection: Registri Vaticani (Reg. Vat.)

Dudum Cum of Eugene IV of 1436, Reg. Vat. 359, Fls. 157v-158r.

Dum Diversas of Nicholas V of June 18, 1452, Reg. Vat. 431, Fls. 194v-196r.

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4.1 Collections

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-Chancelaria de Dom Duarte

-Chancelaria de Dom João I. Lib. 5-Proprio & Communs

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-Collecção Especial Bullas (As Gravatas da Torre do Tombo, Vol. II, Gav. III-XII)

-ANTT- Armario da Nova Casa da Coroa: (containing peace accords with Royal Crown in Spain in the struggle over the ownership of the discovered territories along the West Atlantic Coast of Africa).

-ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados Casa Forte: (Containing the Royal Privileges to Prince Henry the Navigator and his Military Order of Christ for Mission and Commerce in Guinea-West Africa).

-ANTT- Collecção de Bullas: (Collections containing papal Bulls to the Crown in Portugal in connection with the enslavement of Black Africans).

4.2 Papal Bulls from (ANTT) Granting to the Kings of Portugal the Right of Ownership over Africa

Romanus Pontifex of Martin V, April 4, 1417, Colleção de Bullas, maço 11, No. 13.

“Ab Eo” of Martin V, 1418, Livro 2 dos Breves da Torre do Tombo, ap. 50.

Etsi Cunctos of Eugene IV in 1442, Livro 2 dos Breves da Torre do Tombo, ap. 57.

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4.3 Portugal’s Royal Correspondences with the Papacy on the Slave Trade and Mission to Africa

Carta porque o Senhor Rei Don Duarte fez Merce ao Infante Don Henrique e Ordem de Cristo: ANTT- Chancelaria de D. Duarte, Liv. 1, Fl. 18.

Carta de Don Afonso V ao Ordem de Cristo on 01.06.1439: ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fl. 153v.

Carta de Privilegio ao Don Henrinque on 20.10.1443: ANTT- Chancelaria de D. Afonso V. Liv. 24, Fl. 61r-61v; Misticos, Liv. 3, Fl. 278v.

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Doação da Administração Espiritual da Guiné ao Ordem de Cristo on 06.07.1454: ANTT- Ordem de Cristo, cod. 235; Livro das Escrituras da Ordem de Cristo, Fl. 12-12v; ANTT- Vi-a no Cartorio da Casa de Bragança; BNL-MS 737 (F.G), Fl. 20.

Doação da Vintena dos Escravos ao Ordem de Cristo on 26.12.1457, ANTT- Livro dos Mestrados, Fl. 151; ANTT- Cod. 235 da Ordem de Cristo, Fl. 17; BNL- MS (F.G), Fl. 29.

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