

OPINION

## When Europe landed...

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In order to take the full measure of current debates, those who would make Montreal a not ceded Aboriginal territory, it seems to me that it is necessary to understand the mental framework of the Europeans at the end of the XVIe at the beginning of the XVIIe century.

The historian is not to judge, but to analyze, to put events into context in order to understand and illuminate. To do this, we cannot settle for a single witness; need, such as during a police investigation, multiply the sources and compare them. Do not expect know the depths of history. Historian does not work on the past, but in his footsteps, then what do they tell us? The method who presides over such work to fit the over-interpretation derivatives.

When they landed in America, Europeans will quickly determine that this territory belongs to them. Christophe Colomb, which affects land in Hispaniola and became viceroy and Governor of the lands he discovered. This is a conquest in a military context that this first expedition into the ground American. Less than two years later, Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon are swift recognition by the Pope Alexandre VI, a Spaniard, sovereignty over land to 100 leagues West and South. The Treaty of Tordesillas is signed June 7, 1494 and share all new land between Castile and the Portugal.

The European presence is so legitimate because it is sanctioned by the Pope, we think. For those who cross the Atlantic, they are in their own right.

Then come Vasco da Gama, Petro Alvarez Cabral and others. The time of exploration is not finished, already begins the operation. The France does not intend to be left for account, as the Netherlands and England making the Treaty of 1494 obsolete by their attempt to settle. Verrazzano, Cartier, Champlain landed and want to build. Native Americans are present, they are negotiating with them, but, beyond these exchanges, how do view them? Champlain contrasts with his contemporaries, who wants to unite both races.

An event, which takes place in Spain between 1550 and 1551, helps us to understand the look that we ask about native Americans, but even more dominant attitudes. The controversy of Valladolid between two great minds of the time: Juan Ginés Sepúlveda, humanist and historiographer to the King Charles v, and Bartolomé de Las Casas, Dominican.

The two must discuss and decide: is - this legitimate reduce native Americans into slavery?

For the first, reduction of least developed nations because slavery is legitimate, the war against them is just because it is intended to protect them from themselves by entering a more

benevolent humanity which will bring them the means of salvation. To Las Casas, the universality of God's natural law must extend to all. The verdict of the legate of the Pope decides in favour of the position of Las Casas: Native Americans have a soul.

This doctrine became the official position of the King of Spain by the Catholic Church, which legitimised converting them for their own good, where Montreal in 1642, is make an enclave of evangelization.

Because they have a soul, they must be converted, those who do not want must be fought. That's where we are at the Foundation of Montreal. Physical and mental territory merge, one doesn't go without the other.

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