

Date: 1519, September 15

Theme: Amputation of the tips of some toes to three enslaved blacks in Santo Domingo City, as punishment for a homicide they had been convicted of

Source: Archivo General de Indias, Justicia 43, Número 1, fos. 71r. – 71v., and 77v. – 78r., CUNY DSI Dominican Colonial Documents Collection

[fo. 71r.]

71 /

Report given to Figueroa /
of []s in regards to the [] /
[] [complaint] about the said Zuazo and [] /
report about it witnesses before [notary]

r In the city of Santo Domingo, on fifteen days of the month of September /
of one thousand and five hundred and nineteen years. The noble *señor licenciado* /
Rodrigo de Figueroa, above said judge, gave and delivered to me Francisco de Orduña, /
notary of their highnesses and notary of the said audit inquiry a sheet and part /
of another writing about certain warning that he said had been given /
for this audit inquiry by me the said Francisco de Orduña. /
Also from other notaries of his audiencia he received certain witnesses. The /
content of all of it, one after the other, is this that /
follows:

i as to the hawks /

hawks /
r Firstly, [the witness] must be asked if he or she knows that about more or less /
[] time ago Fernando Cerón and Gonzalo Rascón /
Denizen of the village of San Juan de la Maguana gave to the licenciado Alonso /
Zuazo, while being judge of this Española island, six very good /
falcons, which were brought to him by the said Gonzalo Rascón to this /
city at his expense. The said licenciado received them without /
paying for them. They could be worth two hundred pesos of gold, a bit /
more or less. The [witnesses] must say what whappens and they know about this /
and what they could be worth /

ii
hawks
r Also, whether they know, etc., that the said licenciado had the said /
falcons in his house a long time in his house until he /
sent them to the kingdoms of Castille with a servant with many /
other things, and cats and parrots that he also /
mandated to be given to him /

iii
r Also whether they know that, at the time he received from the said Fernando Ceron /
and from the said Gonzalo Rascon the said falcons, the said Fernando /
Cerón was imprisoned and had three slaves imprisoned because, /

[71v.]

following his orders, they had killed a man beating him with a stick. The *licenciado*, /
in agreement with the said Fernando Cerón, and because the señora vicerein ordered him to
do it this way, he sentenced them with vanishing from this island and having their feet
severed /.

iiii^o r Also, whether they know, etcetera, that the said *licenciado*, after thus /
sentencing them to have their feet severed, mandated and pointed out to /
sever only part of the tips of the toes from /
the nails onwards, which was done accordingly, so that the said /
slaves did not receive any punishment in what was severed /
from them, rather they said whether they were removing *niguas*, making /
fun they [themselves] and others of what been thus done. /
The said slaves were sent by the said Hernando Cerón to the island /
of Cuba, where with much difficulty there is license for carrying /
slaves, because there they are worth much more than here [] . /

[...]

[fo. 77v.]

[...]

[...]

8th witness r And after what was said in the said city of Santo Domingo /
on the said day, and in the said month and year, the said gentleman *licenciado* /
Rodrigo de Figueroa in the presence of me, the said notary, for the investigation /
of the said secret inquiry, ordered to have appear before him /
Antón de Angulo, surgeon, from whom he took and received oath /
in due legal form, under which he said the following:

4th r To the fourth question he said that while these slaves were in prison, before they received
justice, the said Ceron spoke with this witness because he was a surgeon in charge of curing
some of the black prisoners that were wounded when they were caught for some felonies
they had committed, and he told him that these black men were going to be taken out to be
punished so he had to be ready with whatever was necessary to cure them, and that this
witness in order to assure himself what had to be done said he wanted to speak first with the
said *licenciado* Zuazo, and this witness and the said Ceron went to the house of said
licenciado and this witness asked him where to make the cut in the feet of the slaves, and
that the said *licenciado* Zuazo responded that this witness since he was a surgeon should
indicate where to make the cut, and that this witness then went to the prison and when he
arrived they had already been taken out to the streets, and that this witness, while there were
being brought, prepared all that was necessary to cure them and then the said black men
arrived at the pillory, and this witness left the prison and went there, and that one of the said
black men had his big toe, which is the main toe, already tied [?] which was tied at its first
joint, and that they cut the said black man the tip of the big toe, and other toes of the same
foot at the tip of the same toes, and that all the other blacks were cut the toes in the same
manner as the first one. And he said he does not remember whether as many toes to one as
to the others, because to all of them only the tip of the toes were cut, and that the said black
did not suffer so much injury in the feet if they had been cut as they cut them in Castille or
in other places. Also that he overheard that the said slaves had been sent to Cuba by the said
Cerón because he does not know it nor he knows anything else about this question. Also
that at the time this witness asked to the said *licenciado* where the said blacks should have
their feet cut, he told him: sir, because Cerón says that nothing else but the toes should be
cut, and that the said *licenciado* replied to this witness: you must mark wherever you prefer,
and that this he knows. Antón Angulo /

[fo. 78r.]

[...]