

Date: 1520, August 20

Theme: Excerpts of letter from the colonial treasury officials of Santo Domingo to the Crown, commenting on the status of the colonial government and the colony's population

Source: PARES, Portal de Archivos Españoles--Archivo General de Indias, PATRONATO,174,R.24

[fo. 121r.]	<p>Seen</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+ / very high and very / powerful lord /</p> <p>We [received?] the letter that your majesty ordered to be written to us from La Coruña at the/ time of your departure, and together with the <i>provisión real</i> from your highness / whereby you order that the three judges of the royal <i>audiencia</i> that were suspended / before may return to their jobs and act in the said <i>audiencia</i> as / it was done in life of the Catholic King father and grandfather of your majesty, may he be in glory. We and all the denizens / of these parts kiss many and many times the very royal feet / and hands of your majesty for such a great grace as you have done / in ordering the return to the said royal <i>audiencia</i> / was so great that we are certifying to / your highness that [...] you have redeemed all of us who were in these lands, [] / since by being [absent?] from your majesty and so far away from your royal person, most of us / that reside on them did not have our thoughts very settled on the peopling of these lands. From now on since we have the set <i>audiencia</i> the royal person of your majesty, and to whom [] all the denizens of these / lands to achieved justice, I am certain that all, in general, / have determined to remain in these lands without thinking / about going to those kingdoms especially to get married there, since / our Lord has been pleased to uncover the business of sugar / which, being of buildings [] they are devoting to it. And again, we kiss the hands of your majesty for having made the set audience so noble for mandating that there is a president in it. And also [] after we received the said <i>provision real</i> / we gave it to <i>licenciados</i> Villlobos and Matienzo /</p>
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[fo. 121v.]	<p>[...]</p> <p>r We have begged your majesty many times to mandate for / a grace to be granted to these lands of some things that were convenient to your / royal service and to the good and growth of your royal revenues / and peopling of these lands. And because every day we see the / extreme need that these islands have of it, we will again / report shortly about it. And the first thing we notified / to your majesty was the how very great damage these / lands have received from the grace that you had granted to the governor /</p>
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	<p>of Bresa with the license that you granted to him to pass to these islands / four thousand male blacks, and therefore / how much and in which manner it had touched and would touch your royal / revenues for the reasons we reported to your highness, / and they are very notorious for your majesty to order the same, / since [your majesty] did not please to suspend it, so that all / the denizens of these lands could pass to them the male black slaves / that they might need, paying as licenses for / each head at a rate of twenty five thousand / <i>ducados</i> to the said governor de Bresa. We reported /</p>
<p>[fo. 122r.] The 10th for six/ years</p>	<p>Also to your majesty how convenient it was to your royal / service and to the growth of royal revenues to mandate that, out / of all the gold that might be collected in the mines by black male slaves and / indians and <i>yucayos</i> and giants, the tenth part be paid, / because this way your highness would be better served than if you collected / the fifth, since because many people would devote themselves to collecting / gold and buying slaves, and many Spaniards would come / to collect it, which is not done as of now, and will be done less / from now on by taking from them the fifth. Also, besides / the growth of the royal revenues it will result from this / that [...] that Spaniards would come to collect the said gold / this island would be safer from black slaves / that will rebel in it or make some scandal / in it, besides that these lands will populated without your / majesty spending what you spend in passing farmers to this / island. This is very convenient that [...] orders a grace / to be granted to these lands and also, so that there is no confusion in paying / the tithe from the gold of black slaves and indians and / the fifth of the gold collected by the indians of the <i>repartimiento</i>, / since there are almost no Indians any longer, and there will be / less in two years, [it is convenient] that your majesty grant to them that all / the gold that is collected by any blacks or indians of / any kind they may be, that they do not pay more than the / said tenth part /</p> <p>p Furthermore, we reported to your majesty that it would be beneficial to your royal / service to soon order that the <i>naos</i> that were loaded / with sugar at this island could go straight and do / their unloading at the other kingdoms and dominions of your highness, without / first going to Seville, for there the sale of / sugar will not be like in the county of Flanders or other places /</p>
<p>[fo. 122v.]</p>	<p>Of your kingdoms because if [this] was not granted it is clear that all / the sugars would be lost, or at least that all this will be spent [] in freights taking it from /</p>

	<p> this island to Seville and from there to the parts where / it is to be sold, and that if they were to see / that your highness does not grant this grace, many would stop / engaging in the business of the said sugar. We beg your majesty / to order that it is done this way and soon, since / this business, our Lord willing must be of such quality/ that your highness should benefit very much and your revenues be much / increased / </p> <p> r Likewise we plead with your majesty to [order?] to grant license / to [go to] these parts so that their denizens may freely / carry carved silver from the kingdoms of Castile for their service and that of / their [homes?], and also the carved gold jewelry / that they may want [...], so that all the carved and damaged silver that they may thus / carry [] may be carved and fixed again in this island with / license [] from your highness' officials and in the presence / of your inspectors of foundries, since the denizens of the other kingdoms and / dominions of your majesty that are populated since long ago, / have the same freedom. And to these lands that now again begin / to be populated your highness should grant the freedoms and / privileges that your other kingdoms have and others much / greater to encourage them, since they have abandoned their lands and / landscapes and have readied themselves to populate and remain / in these parts/ </p> <p> Also, that your highness grant us license so that in this island / copper may be melted and carved for the sugar / mills since, given that currently it is brought from / your kingdoms of Castile, we see from experience / </p>
<p>[fo. 123r.]</p> <p>May they melt/ copper only for the sugar mills, making sure it is not / melted but in the foundry and in the presence of the inspector/</p>	<p> r that it is necessary in the sugar mills every month to repair and prepare, / and even make anew many things of copper, and if they were to / wait before requesting it from Castile, it would be a loss of all / that has been spent and may be spent in it, and this we beg to your majesty/ [] soon for it is something highly beneficial. / </p> <p> Many times we have [...] to your highness to order / for a <i>cédula</i> to be sent to your justices so they urge / <i>licenciado</i> Zuazo, who was your audit judge in this island, / to return what [...] by <i>cédula</i> / from the Cardinal [...] that was of these kingdoms regarding / his salary for the causes that we reported about to your/ </p>

fiat /		<p>highness. We again beg your majesty to order / for a <i>cédula</i> to be sent to us and for your judges of your royal audiencia to quickly / do justice to us in the litigation that we have with the said <i>licenciado</i> Zuazo / about it, since what was paid to him was from the revenues / of your highness /</p> <p>[...] that according to the decrease / [...] in the revenues of this island there will not be [enough] for / paying them all, unless your majesty does grant this island / all the things [...] that it pleads, because this way we hope / in our Lord that your royal revenues will be very augmented / and in great amount, and these parts [will be] very populated /</p>
[fo. 123v.]	r	
[fo. 124r.]	p p	<p>Our lord may protect and preserve the life and very high and royal state / of your majesty as your Royal heart wishes /</p> <p>From Santo Domingo of the Española island on the twentieth of August of / year Fifteen and twenty / /</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Of Your Cesarean and Catholic Royal Majesty /</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Very humble servants that kiss / your Royal feet and hands /</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 ~Pasamonte ~ x Ampies x x Al[onso?] Davila x /</p>
[fo. 124v]		<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>/to the very high and powerful / lord the emperor / and King of Spain our lord/</p> <p><i>[On the right margin of the folio:]</i> To your highnesses / 1520 August 20. From the officials of La Española, 20th day of / August 1529 / In Burgos /</p> <p>seen /</p>

