

Date: 1579, April 22

Theme: Excerpts of a letter by Gaspar de Torres, prosecutor of the *Audiencia* of Santo Domingo, to the Spanish Crown

Source: PARES, Portal de Archivos Españoles--Archivo General de Indias, SANTO_DOMINGO, 51, R. 2, N. 34

[fo. 1r.]

+
Catholic Royal Majesty /

1 Around the last past month of November, after I was ordered by your president /
and *oidores* to serve your majesty in the office of prosecutor of this royal /
audiencia resulting from the promotion of doctor Diego de Villanueva Zapata, I wrote /
to your majesty and implored some things that for the good of this land/
[] are in need of remedy. I will do the same now repeating /
at the most briefly the past ones and adding what I deem /
to be most convenient to the service of your majesty [...]

[...]

[fo. 1v.]

[...]

[fo. 2r.]

[...]

it would be very important for your majesty to send here certain number, not small, /
of blacks that may be distributed and entrusted to those that engaged/
in digging gold, and for there to be someone that took care that they did not /
engage in anything else and forced them to not stop /
working in the mines, both so that the land /
recovers and so that your revenues and taxes grow. /

[...]

[fo. 2v.]

[...]

[fo. 3r.]

[...]

[fo. 3v.]

The village of La Yaguana is a town located on the *Banda del Norte* almost /
at the end of this island facing the island of Cuba, which is no /
more than twelve leagues away where it is closest to this one. About /
eighty or ninety denizens inhabit the said village, most of them rich or of /
medium wealth because there are very few poor people. They have /
their wealth in [the form of] tame cattle and [alzadas] from which they get great /
growth. The hides they make surpass forty thousand every /

iii year, according to public opinion and belief, of which there cannot be in this case /
any other proof. Of all these, none go to your kingdoms /
but to France, Portugal and England and other nations, /
enemies or non friends of your royal crown. Due to this every year /
arrive in this island and in those harbors fifteen and twenty *naos* /
which hide in rivers and other harbors and estuaries close /
from there, and they barter with the denizens of La Yaguana blacks, [lencería], /
wines, cloths, silks, and all type of merchandises with so much /
shamelessness and daring that this royal *audiencia* has no power to /
impede it or punish it, nor even to investigate the crimes clearly /
because they live all conspired among themselves to not say any truth, even /
[when] examined as witnesses. And even if a judge visits, none of the denizens /
listed goes out of the town neither by night nor by day. They have their subordinates /
to whom they call *tangomaos*, through whom they do business. And it is /
almost impossible discovering who these are, or they never show up in the town, if /
they have news that somebody could damage them with their comment. They /
set up a trip against them, with which they throw them out of the island in secret /
or they ultimately kill them, giving order so that they are not found neither in heaven nor
earth. /
[...]

[fo. 4r.] [fo. 4r.]

[...]

[fo. 4v.] [...]

[...] Nothing else happens /
of which to alert your majesty , whose very high and very powerful person our lord may
guard/
for very long and joyful years, with acquisition of greater kingdoms and lordships. From Santo
Domingo and /
on 22nd of April of 1579 /
Cesarean Royal Majesty/
your servant the *licenciado* Gaspar de Torres /
kisses the feet of your majesty /