

Date: 1518, January 26. Santo Domingo, La Española

Theme: In a letter to the Crown, La Española's *oidor* Alonso Zuazo criticized the fears about potential rebellions by enslaved blacks, boasting of how his harsh style of ruling, with severe punishments, had reportedly stopped the stealing and running away by enslaved blacks in this Spanish colony

Source: PARES, Portal de Archivos Españoles, Archivo General de Indias, PATRONATO,174, R. 8,F.50R,52R-52V,55V.

[fo. 50r.]	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Very [] Catholic and / Very powerful lord /</p> <p>r These Indies, which more appropriately may be called another New World, have felt / so much joy with the glorious coming of your majesties to the kingdoms of yours that with / deep love were waiting for you, that I would not know how to express or declare to your highness / the kinds of pleasures, the types of happiness, the styles of the / festivities that in these regions have been conceived in your honor, and not without a cause since it is the / newest thing that has occurred after God our lord shaped the world and it is that in / lands so distant, so remote, such a wanted coming of their king and lord was formalized / with so much delight, because if Alexandre was said to have the world as [his] domain, / he did not distance himself so much from Macedonia that he was not close to it, and if the Romans / prospered in their empire, their monarchy did not exceed, at it furthest from Rome, seven hundred leagues, and all the others that came afterwards retracted themselves rather than expanded, then what will we say, very powerful lord, but that to your greatness fits/ the title and dignity of truly Semper Augustus of which all emperors benefited [...] / [...]</p>

[fo. 52r.]	
	<p>p It is also necessary, because the indians have much diminished and / []ed, that besides the diligence that the []te fathers and I have / put into the conservation of this people, like they write at more length to / your highness on this matter, that also your highness on your part orders / to favor us, ordering that a general license is given so that black slaves may come, / as many as may come, because they are persons of strength and of much work / and with this they will be able to bear all the burden that is thrown upon them in making the <i>montones</i> and / farms, which is a toil that the Indians cannot bear, because there are blacks that / do in a day one hundred and forty <i>montones</i>, and the most manicato (which means strong or man of much strength) indian does not do more than twelve <i>montones</i>. / There are other tasks that are hard in which the Indians [?] nothing / and if they force the Indians to dig on the rocks they drop dead over / the hole they have done. So there are, very powerful lord, other light tasks / which the Indians will be able to fulfill without damage to their persons, which are like / washing the gold; looking for it in the rivers and ravines, and in the soil that is extracted / from the mines; harvesting the yucca, which is the bread of this land; weeding the <i>conucos</i>, as the farms / are called; harvesting the corn; with other similar toils, so that /</p>

	<p>altogether one with the other, the Indians may live and be very happy and content, / and the blacks very resigned, from which two very important things will follow: / one, the large population that will grow and increase in these places / due to the blacks, and the great growth that will occur in the revenues of your highness, / which will be the other one.</p> <p>p As to the reasons that some ill-intended from here have raised so that / these blacks would not come, which was that being the blacks many they would not rise / and take over the island, I respond that it will not be in this island and in the other places / of these your kingdoms than it is in the islands of the King of Portugal and Cabo Verde and Cabo / Blanco, and the timber and others where there is a widow without a son that has under her / Rule eight hundred black slaves, so quiet and peaceful like/ your majesty would have the poorest small village among all its kingdoms. / And in / this I know the laws that in those places the lord King of Portugal has, with which / even if there were two hundred thousand slaves, they will be as controlled as a single one / would be to a gentleman of great wealth. And this is considered to be a very true / experience. And so it has seemed at the time I came. I found some slaves / in this island turned into robbers and others that wandered in the wilderness. And / I quickly ordered that they were apprehended and to some I had them flogged, and to another to have his ears cut off/</p>
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[fo. 52v.]	
	<p>with other penalties that made so much warning among the said blacks, that up to now / there has been no complaint, nor has it been said that any black has done anything / he should have not. / [...]</p>

[fo.55v.]	
	<p>r Our lord all mighty that has put your majesty at such high throne and / dominion, may he want to preserve you with happiness in it, with much / greater growth of empires and dominions, in these places by means of my / humble services, as well as in winning the [saint site?] of Jerusalem, and / Turkey and Constantinople and other much larger kingdoms that must be won / by Spain, in accordance to what I have read, after the year twenty four, / which will be a year much worth recording. From this your city of Santo Domingo of the Española / island on 26 of January of 1518 years. /</p> <p style="text-align: center;">from this humble servant that kisses your royal feet and hands / [Rubric] El liçençiadº Çuaço [Rubric] /</p>

