

Las Casas tells the Native Perspective

“Learning that Spaniards were coming, one day [the cacique] gathered all his people together to remind them of the persecutions that the Spanish had inflicted on the people of Hispaniola:

“Do you know why they persecute us?”

They replied: “They do it because they are cruel and bad.”

“I will tell you why they do it,” the cacique stated, “and it is this – because they have a lord whom they love very much, and I will show him to you.”

He held up a small basket made from palms full of gold, and he said, “Here is their lord, whom they serve and adore...To have this lord, they make us suffer, for him they persecute us, for him they have killed our parents, brothers, all our people. Let us not hide this lord from the Christians in any place, for even if we should hide it in our intestines, they would get it out of us; therefore let us throw it in this river, under the water, and they will not know where it is.”

Whereupon, they threw the gold into the river.”

Las Casas, oral history collected from Tainos, in Williams, *Documents of West Indian History*, I:17, 92-93.